

B-59



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION  
OF THE  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of Helaine Thompson,  
Supervisor of Patients Accounts 2  
(PS0846K), Trenton Psychiatric  
Hospital

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2017-176

ISSUED: **DEC 13 2016**

(ABR)

Helaine Thompson appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services), which found that she did not meet the experience requirement for the promotional examination for Supervisor of Patients Accounts 2 (PS0846K), Trenton Psychiatric Hospital (TPH).

The subject examination was announced with a closing date of April 21, 2016 and was open to employees who possessed a Bachelor's degree and three years of experience in investigation work involving the collection and/or accounting of funds. Applicants who did not possess a Bachelor's degree could substitute applicable experience, as indicated, on a year for year basis. It is noted that the examination was cancelled on July 22, 2016, as all applicants for the subject examination were deemed ineligible.

On her application, the appellant indicated that she had earned 68 semester hour credits towards an Associate's degree from Mercer County Community College (MCCC), 24 semester hour credits from a Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practice certification program at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey's (UMDNJ) Center for Advanced and Continuing Education (now part of Rutgers University) and completed additional coursework at the Human Resource Developmental Institute (HRDI). The appellant also stated in her application, in relevant part, that she served as an Acting Supervisor of Patients Accounts 2 from February 2013 to the closing date of the examination (April 2016) and as a Management Assistant from May 2002 to February 2013. Agency records indicate that the appellant was provisionally appointed to the title of Supervisor of Patients

Accounts 2, effective September 5, 2015, after having served in the Management Assistant title. Agency Services determined that the appellant possessed 68 applicable education credits from MCCC, but found that the appellant's other coursework was inapplicable. Therefore, pursuant to the substitution clause for education, the appellant needed to possess four years and nine months of applicable experience. Agency Services credited the appellant with eight months of experience based upon her service as a provisional Supervisor of Patients Accounts 2. However, it found that that any applicable duties that the appellant performed in the Management Assistant title would have been out-of-title work and that her remaining experience did not constitute applicable experience for the subject examination. Therefore, she was found to be ineligible for the subject examination because she lacked an additional four years and one month of applicable experience.

On appeal to the Civil Service Commission (Commission), the appellant argues that she performed out-of-title investigation work involving the collection and/or accounting of funds as a Management Assistant from February 2011 to September 2015. She contends that the aforementioned experience should be credited as applicable experience and would allow her to satisfy the eligibility requirements for the subject examination. She submits a letter of support from Joseph Canale, her former supervisor, who served as a Supervisor of Support Services/Business Manager at TPH during the relevant time period. Mr. Canale's letter states that the appellant was assigned applicable out-of-title duties as a Management Assistant, including performing financial investigations of clients' assets and benefit entitlements; auditing all cash accounts; overseeing Client Banking Systems and Patients' Trust Fund Accounts; conferring with County Adjuster Offices on collection matters; providing technical assistance on operations reports and analyses; and supervising section staff. The appointing authority confirms that the appellant was performing those applicable out-of-title duties from February 2011 to September 2015. The appellant also contends that she possesses a total of 86 semester hour credits and seeks to have the Commission recognize those additional education credits. In support, she submits transcripts from MCCC, which indicates she earned 68 credits, and from Rutgers University, which indicates she earned 15 credits. She also submits Certificates of Completion from HRDI and UMDNJ.

Agency records indicate that the appellant continues to serve provisionally in the subject title.

### CONCLUSION

*N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.6(a) provides that applicants must meet all requirements specified in a promotional examination announcement by the closing date. *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.6(c) provides that, except when permitted for good cause, applicants for promotional examinations may not use experience gained as a result of out-of-title

work to satisfy eligibility requirements. Pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.1(g)*, the Commission can accept clarifying information in eligibility appeals.

In the instant matter, Agency Services correctly determined that the appellant was ineligible for the subject examination because, pursuant to the substitution clause for education, she lacked the requisite amount of applicable experience as of the April 21, 2016, closing date. The appellant was credited with 68 semester hour credits based upon her coursework at MCCC. Although the appellant's application indicated that she earned 24 semester hour credits through coursework at UMDNJ, she failed to provide a transcript with her application. However, on appeal she submits a transcript from Rutgers University which indicates that she possesses 15 credits. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and training courses are not considered equivalent to college level credits unless it can be demonstrated that the coursework would be accepted at an accredited college or university for college credits. *See In the Matter of Stephen Gavrell* (MSB, decided March 26, 2003). *Compare, In the Matter of Susan Stafford-Smith* (MSB, decided May 19, 2004) (Continuing education courses in pursuit of Professional Certificate in Geomatics acceptable substitute for required specialized college credits given estimation by university that such coursework equated to college credit). Therefore, since the record does not demonstrate that the HRDI coursework would be accepted at an accredited college or university for college credits, it was properly determined not to be applicable education. Since the foregoing demonstrates that the appellant possessed 83 semester hour credits from MCCC and Rutgers University, pursuant to the examination announcement's substitution clause for education, the appellant needed to possess four years and three months of applicable experience.

As noted above, Agency Services credited the appellant with eight months of experience based upon her service as a provisional Supervisor of Patients Accounts 2. On appeal, the appellant claims that she possesses sufficient additional applicable experience from her service in the Management Assistant title. In support, she submits a letter from Joseph Canale, her former supervisor, which acknowledges that the appellant was assigned relevant duties while serving in that title. The appointing authority confirms that the appellant began performing those applicable duties in February 2011. However, the appellant's performance of applicable duties while serving in the Management Assistant title would be considered out-of-title work. Ordinarily, the Commission looks to whether or not "good cause" has been established in determining whether to grant or deny appeals involving out-of-title work. Generally, the Commission finds good cause where the record evidences that the examination situation is not competitive, no third parties are adversely impacted, and the appointing authority wishes to effect a permanent appointment and verifies that the appellant has performed the relevant duties which otherwise satisfy the eligibility requirements. *See In the Matter of John Cipriano, et al.* (MSB, decided April 21, 2004). Both the appellant's former supervisor and the appointing authority confirm that the appellant possessed more

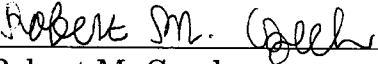
than four years and three months of experience performing applicable out-of-title duties while serving in the Management Assistant title. Moreover, the record evidences that the examination situation is not competitive since the examination was cancelled, given that all applicants were deemed ineligible. Finally, the appellant continues to serve provisionally in the subject title. As such, good cause exists in this particular case to accept the appellant's out-of-title work experience, for eligibility purposes only, and admit her to the examination.

### ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be granted, the cancellation of the examination be rescinded and the appellant's application be processed.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON  
THE 7<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF DECEMBER, 2016

  
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