

**TERMS OF REFERENCE  
PROVINCIAL SCREENING COMMITTEE FOR  
AGENCIES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

**September 2025**

**1.0 Introduction**

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to an open, transparent and accessible application process for appointments to its agencies, boards, and commissions (ABCs). To support this, the government has established a non-partisan Provincial Screening Committee to screen applications received through the provincial online application system for both adjudicative and non-adjudicative boards.

**2.0 Definitions**

Adjudicative board: an agency, board, or commission with a quasi-judicial function. A list of the province’s adjudicative boards is attached as Schedule “B”.

Advisory committee: a non-partisan body, comprised of members from the Provincial Screening Committee, that is responsible for screening applications to adjudicative boards.

Non-adjudicative board: an agency, board, or commission that does not perform quasi-judicial functions.

**3.0 Guiding Principles**

The Provincial Screening Committee supports Government’s commitment to being an organization that is free of discrimination and values diversity. This means its decisions are based on merit, and that no one is excluded for reasons unrelated to qualifications.

The screening process for adjudicative and non-adjudicative boards shall be:

- Accessible, consistent and transparent;
- Impartial, fair and based on principles of merit and equity;
- Inclusive and free of discrimination, including racism;
- Follow human resource best practices;
- Efficient and respectful of panel members’ and applicants’ time; and
- Conducted in a professional manner.

**4.0 Composition of the Provincial Screening Committee**

The Provincial Screening Committee shall be composed of lay representatives (members of the public) appointed by the Clerk of the Executive Council, civil servants appointed as part of their

employment as Governance Consultants within the Executive Council Office, and a human resource (HR) professional appointed to the Committee by the Commissioner of the Public Service.

Lay representatives are members of the public who have volunteered to serve on the Provincial Screening Committee. The qualifications for lay members are as follows:

- an ability to deal professionally with confidential and sensitive information;
- a collaborative and flexible approach to working with others;
- the capacity to make fair and objective decisions;
- effective verbal communication skills;
- high ethical standards and integrity;
- respect for the essential dignity of all persons regardless of their circumstances, and a commitment to diversity and employment equity; and
- experience in candidate recruitment and selection and/or familiarity with the work of boards is considered an asset.

Lay members shall serve for a term of up to three years, as determined by the Clerk of Executive Council, and may be reappointed.

#### **4.1 Screening Panels**

Members of the Provincial Screening Committee are responsible for screening applications to adjudicative and non-adjudicative boards.

**Adjudicative screening panels (advisory committees)** are composed of following members of the Provincial Screening Committee:

- Two lay representatives;
- Two Governance Consultants, one of which shall act as the Chair; and
- An HR professional.

**Non-adjudicative screening panels** shall be composed of the following members of the Provincial Committee:

- Two lay representatives; and
- A Governance Consultant who shall act as the Chair and record keeper.

#### **5.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

5.1 Governance Consultants are responsible for:

- a) serving as co-chairs of the Provincial Screening Committee, including lay member orientation and overseeing the screening process to ensure qualified candidates are provided to the Minister;
- b) scheduling screening meetings;

- c) chairing screening meetings;
- d) facilitating discussions among members and managing conflicts as they arise;
- e) creating screening packages using templates created by the Executive Council Office;
- f) as requested by a department or ABC, working with the PSC and members of the Provincial Screening Committee to advise on the qualifications, selection criteria, and position profiles used to screen applicants;
- g) liaising with subject matter experts as requested by a department or by the Provincial Screening Committee;
- h) maintaining all records related to the screening of an applicant; and
- i) conducting reference checks of adjudicative applicants.

5.2 The HR professional is responsible for:

- a) advising the Chair on human resource best practices;
- b) assessing applicants for qualifications established by the board member profile and the selection criteria defined in Schedule "A" for adjudicative boards; and
- c) reviewing and advising on the qualifications, selection criteria, and position profiles used to screen applicants as requested by the Committee.

5.3 Lay persons are responsible for:

- a) participating in screenings as scheduled by the Chair; and
- b) assessing applicants for qualifications established by the board member profile and the selection criteria defined in Schedule "A" for adjudicative ABCs.

## **6.0 Screening Meetings**

Screening meetings are held at least twice annually. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed.

## **7.0 Screening Process**

Each department shall maintain accurate and up-to-date position profiles for use by the Provincial Screening Committee. These position profiles shall include a description of the Board, including its objectives and composition. The position profiles shall also list any formal qualifications required and any relevant work or other experience which is required or desired.

**Screening panels may consider or give advice on one or more competitions. When assessing applicants, screening panel members shall:**

1. Consider all written materials submitted in support of an application.
2. Assess all applicants for qualifications as established in the board member profile. Committee members may make notes regarding the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate.
3. Only determine candidates qualified for chair as separate from other board members if particular qualifications for the chair have been established.
4. Provide qualified candidates to the Minister for selection.

**In addition to the above, members screening adjudicative applicants shall:**

1. Consider the criteria set out in Schedule “A” when assessing applicants.
2. Interview applicant(s) where the Chair deems appropriate.

**Reference Checks**

Prior to the submission of eligible candidates to the Minister, reference checks will be conducted by the Governance Consultants for all adjudicative candidates.

**Subject Matter Experts**

Subject Matter Experts may be invited to advise the Provincial Screening Committee members when technical or specific expertise is required in order to assess the skillsets required for a particular ABC. The Chair may invite staff from a department or government agency to advise the screening panel members prior to screening for a particular ABC.

**8.0 Conflict of Interest**

Provincial Screening Committee members must avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest when performing their duties. During the screening process, a conflict of interest occurs when a member’s personal or private interests interfere with their duties and responsibilities on the Committee. A member may have a conflict of interest if they:

- Will benefit from the outcome of a particular screening;
- Have a personal or professional connection to an applicant or ABC;
- Are a member of or have applied to be a member of the ABC being screened; or
- Feel for any reason unable to provide an impartial assessment of an applicant.

Members will be asked by the Chair to self-disclose any conflicts prior to each screening.

**9.0 Lay Member Orientation**

All lay members must attend an orientation delivered by the co-chairs of the Provincial Screening Committee before screening applications.

**10.0 Confidentiality and Records**

The Provincial Screening Committees and the information held by it are subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP) Act*. The Governance and Accountability Unit within Executive Council Office is responsible for handling matters under the *FOIPOP Act* concerning the Corporate Screening Panel/Committee, such as access to and disclosure of information.

Lay members shall keep confidential and not divulge any information concerning the screening of applications to any person, except to other members of the Provincial Screening Committee.

### **11.0 Expenses and Remuneration**

Lay members will be reimbursed by the Executive Council Office for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred while performing their duties on the Provincial Screening Committee.

### **12.0 Monitoring and Revisions of Terms of Reference**

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed and revised every three years or as required by the Senior Director of Governance and Corporate Service, Executive Council Office.

## Schedule "A"

### Selection Criteria to be used by Advisory Committees on Adjudicative Boards

Advisory committees shall, in addition to the qualifications outlined in the board profile, use the following criteria when evaluating adjudicative applicants. Applicants are asked to provide information in their application to support this assessment.

1. Respect for the essential dignity of all persons, regardless of their circumstances, and commitment to diversity and employment equity;
2. Ability to apply a broad perspective on issues, and work with a team to listen to others, constructively solve problems, make objective and fair decisions, and reach consensus in a timely manner;
3. Ability to deal professionally with confidential and sensitive information;
4. Ability to communicate effectively and write clear and concise board reports;
5. Ability to commit required time and effort, and if necessary, travel; and,
6. Peer/community recognition of high ethical standards and integrity in professional and personal interactions.

**Preference** will be given to applicants with previous involvement/experience in matters related to the board's function, for example, activities where one would acquire an understanding of related issues, interests, practice, policy, legislation, and collective agreements and/or former client of program or service; this preference will not be in violation of code of conduct and conflict of interest practices.

**In addition to the above noted criteria**, any head or chair of an adjudicative board should have a proven ability, preferably as a board or meeting chair, in leading groups to constructively solve problems and bring about fair and consensus-based decisions.

**Schedule “B”**  
**Adjudicative ABCs**  
September 2025

<b>Department</b>	<b>Board</b>
Addictions and Mental Health	Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act, Review Board under the
Advanced Education	Student Aid Appeal Committee, Nova Scotia
Agriculture	Agricultural Marshland Conservation Commission
	Animal Welfare Appeal Board
	Crop and Livestock Insurance Arbitration Board, Nova Scotia
	Farm Practices Board
	Farm Registration Appeal Committee
	Meat Inspection Board
	Natural Products Marketing Council, Nova Scotia
Education & Early Childhood Development	Certification Appeals Committee
	Tuition Appeal Board
Environment and Climate Change	Environmental Assessment Review Panel
Finance & Treasury Board	Securities Commission, Nova Scotia
Fisheries & Aquaculture	Aquaculture Review Board, Nova Scotia
Growth and Development	Building Advisory Committee, Nova Scotia
Justice	Criminal Code, Nova Scotia Review Board under the
	Judicial Council
	Police Review Board, Nova Scotia
Labour, Skills and Immigration	Elevators and Lifts Appeal Board
	Labour Board
Municipal Affairs	Assessment Appeal Tribunal, Nova Scotia
Natural Resources	Primary Forest Products Marketing Board, Nova Scotia
Opportunities and Social Development	Adoption Records Appeal Committee
	Assistance Appeal Board – Cape Breton Region
	Assistance Appeal Board - Cumberland/Colchester Region
	Assistance Appeal Board - Halifax Regional Municipality
	Assistance Appeal Board - Pictou/Antigonish/Guysborough Region
	Assistance Appeal Board - Western Region
Public Works	Motor Vehicle Appeal Board