

Frequently asked question:

Benchmarks in the Government of Alberta

Benchmark jobs are the only official comparators used when evaluating non-management and management jobs in the Alberta Public Service. The information below provides additional clarity on what benchmarks are and how they are used within the Alberta Public Service.

What are Benchmarks?

This Benchmarks are a key tool utilized in both the Point Rating Evaluation Plan (PREP) and the Management Job Evaluation Plan (MJEP). Benchmarks are representative jobs in the APS that provide a reference point against which all other jobs are measured to ensure consistent and equitable job classifications across the Alberta Public Service (APS) for the same type and level of work. Not all jobs are benchmarks. A sample of jobs are selected to represent types and levels of work within different occupational groupings (streams of work).

How are Benchmarks Used?

Benchmarks are used to anchor non-benchmarked positions to a stream and a classification level within the plan, increasing consistency in classifications across the APS. Job information and its organizational context are assessed to evaluate a job, using the classification plan. A benchmark analysis is completed to validate the ratings assessed for the position under review (PUR).

Benchmarks also expedite classification decisions and eliminate the need to review the classification of vacant benchmarked positions prior to recruitment. Benchmarks are the only comparators considered in a classification appeal hearing.

Benchmarks represent jobs that fall within the range of points assigned to each classification level within a stream. The ratings of benchmarked jobs are not, however, the only possible combination of points within a classification. The PUR may be comparable to a benchmark yet have a slightly different evaluation that results in a difference in points, but not a difference in classification. The classification plans allow for a variety of work to be evaluated at varying rating combinations within each classification. Evaluators compare the PUR and selected benchmark(s) with respect to type of work, individual evaluation factors, as well as overall total points.

What is a Benchmark Analysis/ Comparison?

A benchmark analysis or comparison is a validation process where the factor analysis completed on the PUR is compared to benchmark positions at the same point range (as well as higher and lower point range benchmarks as a quality assurance check) to ensure consistent application of the plan. A benchmark analysis can be based on the job as a whole, comparing all the factors and the overall size of the PUR to the benchmark; or it can focus on a portion of the benchmarked position that is comparable to the PUR, for example the knowledge

rating may be supported by one benchmark where another benchmark is a better comparison of creativity and problem solving. When using different portions of benchmarks to support an evaluation it is important to look at total points and to select benchmarks that support the evaluation from the same point range as the recommended level.

What to consider when completing a Benchmark analysis/comparison?

- A benchmark analysis/comparison is NOT a word match, i.e. matching key words like project management or strategic planning. Understanding the functions in the context of the job is important because they can differ greatly from job to job. A good benchmark analysis/comparison is not about finding an identical match; it is about a comparative job that has the same size and scope in relation to the three evaluation factors: knowledge, creativity and problem solving, and responsibility.
- Start off by looking for benchmark jobs that have a similar job focus, for example consultative, delivery or regulatory. In PREP look at jobs that have the same responsibility rating and in MJEP look at the short profile.
- Finding an exact benchmark match is unlikely, therefore it is recommended that at a minimum 2 benchmark comparisons are completed.
- A good benchmark comparator that supports the evaluation is not required to have identical points to the PUR but needs to fall within the same point range. Articulate why the PUR is rated higher or lower than the benchmark on that particular factor(s).

How are Benchmarks established and changed?

The Public Service Commission (PSC) works with managers to submit job descriptions that reflect current work for benchmarking purposes. The Classification Delivery Services (CDS) team may reach out to managers for additional or clarifying information.

PSC CDS confirm the classification of the jobs, prior to either the Quality Assurance Advisory Committee (QAAC) for non-management (PREP), or the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), for management (MJEP) to validate the classification of the positions.

More information on the bargaining unit benchmark review can be found [here](#).

If an ad-hoc change is requested to the benchmark list, PSC will assess the scope of the change and determine the approval process required. See more information on maintenance of the plan [here](#).