



**the dpsa**

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Public Service and Administration  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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## TO ALL HEADS OF NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENTS

### PRACTICE NOTE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRE-ENTRY CERTIFICATE FOR THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT SERVICE (SMS)


1. The circular dated 29 November 2019 in the above regard has reference.
2. The Directive on compulsory capacity development, mandatory training days and minimum entry requirements for members of the Senior Management Service (SMS) was introduced on 1 April 2015 and has been amended based on the continuous feedback received from departments during its implementation.
3. One of the minimum entry requirements for SMS is the pre-entry certificate as indicated under paragraph 10.3 of the Directive. It should be noted that the said requirement takes effect on 1 April 2020. The National School of Government in conjunction with the Department of Public Service and Administration have finalised the design and development of the on-line course for the certificate for entry into the Senior Management Service.
4. As may be noted the pre-entry requirements stems from the Directive as mentioned in paragraph 3 supra. This circular serves to provide guidance to departments on how the pre-entry certificate is to be implemented from a policy perspective.
5. The intention of the pre-entry certificate is to ensure that potential applicants for posts in the Senior Management Service have an understanding of the Public Service landscape with due regard to the competencies required for a SMS post. The Directive requires that under 10.3:
  - 5.1 *In order to ensure that potential SMS members have a background on processes and procedures linked to the SMS, a further requirement for appointment at SMS level will be the successful completion of the Senior Management Pre-entry Programme as endorsed by the National School*

*of Government. This is a Public Service specific training programme which will be applicable for appointments at SMS level.*

- 5.2 *With effect from 1 April 2020, an individual may only qualify, if they have successfully completed a Public Service Senior Management Leadership Programme for appointment at SMS level.*
- 5.3 *The content of the Public Service Senior Management Leadership Programme pre-entry will be determined by the NSG in conjunction with the DPSA.*
6. As part of the roll out of the said course, there is a need to ensure that there are no delays in the recruitment process. The filling of any SMS post with regard to an advertisement placed on or after 1 April 2020, shall not be finalised unless the recommended candidate can produce the required pre-entry certificate as issued by the National School of Government.
7. In understanding this, a department must ensure that prior to an appointment being made to any SMS post, the appointee to such a post must have completed the pre-entry certificate and must be in possession of such prior to taking up the post. Departments should also bear in mind time-frames within which posts must be filled, once becoming vacant.
8. Individuals who have completed the course already, and who are therefore in possession of a certificate are welcome to submit such, however it is not required that an applicant submit such when applying for the post prior to the closing date.
9. The certificate that will be generated once the course is completed serves as the proof of the individual undertaking and completing the course. The department may verify the certificate with the National School of Government to confirm authenticity by requesting confirmation that the successful candidate did indeed register and finalise the course prior to making an offer of employment.
10. As per paragraph 10.5 of the Directive, existing SMS members are also expected to undertake the course should they wish to progress to higher levels within the SMS.
11. Any individual may register for the course and complete such in anticipation of them wishing to apply for a SMS post in future. The course is available at the NSG under the name **Certificate for entry into the SMS** and the full details can be sourced by following the link: <https://www.thensg.gov.za/training-course/sms-pre-entry-programme/>.

12. Departments are required to ensure that the link as reflected in paragraph 11 above appears in all their SMS posts advertisements both in the Public Service Vacancy Circular as well as the media. In advertising SMS posts, departments are required to sensitise potential applicants of the necessity to complete the course as well as the associated costs. It is also requested that the relevant link be made available on the relevant departmental website, specifically where vacancies are viewed by job seekers.
13. For further information related to the on-line course, please contact [nyukela@thensg.gov.za](mailto:nyukela@thensg.gov.za).
14. For further information related to the Directive and implementation queries from a policy perspective, please contact [Hlamalani.Mavasa@dpsa.gov.za](mailto:Hlamalani.Mavasa@dpsa.gov.za)

Your co-operation is sincerely appreciated.



**PROFESSOR R LEVIN**  
**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**  
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