

Employment Equity Initiatives at the Department of Foreign Affairs

Employment Equity Champion

This Department appointed an Assistant Deputy Minister level Champion for Employment Equity in October 1998. The Champion's role is to ensure that the Executive Committee gives appropriate consideration to all human resources issues related to the Employment Equity Program. The Champion also provides advice to staff responsible for Employment Equity matters concerning strategies in this regard within the Department and plays the role of EE advocate on the Executive Committee and across the Department. The Champion attends and promotes special EE events and is a key member of the Employment Equity Consultation and Collaboration Committee.

Employment Equity Consultation and Collaboration Committee

The department established a Consultation and Collaboration Committee on Employment Equity which includes representatives of management, bargaining agents, and designated groups. The responsibilities of this committee are to consult and produce recommendations on departmental employment equity issues.

Interdepartmental Employment Equity Advocacy Group

The departmental Employment Equity Champion chairs an informal Interdepartmental Advocacy Group made up of 11 Assistant Deputy Ministers. The objective of the group is to discuss common Employment Equity issues that need to be addressed, to share information and best practices, and to agree on a common approach.

Recruitment of Students in Designated Groups

A centralized budget has been established for the recruitment of Federal Student Work Experience Program students who are members of designated groups.

Reasonable Accommodation Measures

Reasonable accommodation measures are taken to retain members of designated groups both at Headquarters and at posts abroad. Measures include: flexible hours of work, telework and work sharing; redistribution of employees' hours of work to enable them to observe religious holidays, and fulfil their obligations; purchase of equipment for employees with special needs; and ensuring that the Department's premises are fully accessible and that appropriate signage is used to guide visitors and clients and inform them of the Department's facilities.

Voluntary Self-Identification Survey

The voluntary self-identification survey was conducted in February 1997, with a response rate of 79 per cent. The Department has a very efficient human resources data system and it inputs self-identification data on a daily basis. In addition, the Department reviews and updates self-identification data regularly with the Treasury Board Secretariat. Self identification forms are distributed with all letters of offer sent to new employees.