

Know Your Collective Agreement

Finding out why you didn't pass the KSAs

One of the most frustrating aspects of the Board's recruitment system is the "debrief" session that members often request when they fail a KSA test or don't meet a resume screen.

This column answers these questions:

- Why are CEU members frustrated with debriefs?
- What can you do to ensure that you get the information you are entitled to when you're told you don't meet the KSAs?
- If you have been unfairly or incorrectly assessed, how can you ensure that the CEU gets the information it needs for your grievance?

Debriefs don't work for CEU members

These are some of the problems with debriefs:

- If a member wants to bring a steward to the meeting, Human Resources (HR) often says that this turns the debrief into the informal step of the grievance process.

This can be intimidating to some members who simply want to find out where they came up short in the testing, so they'll do better next time.

- The Board often delays in scheduling debriefs saying that they are too busy with filling the competition. This isn't a major concern for those who eventually have a debrief and then understand why they didn't pass the KSAs. But if the debrief doesn't occur within 21 days of notification of having failed testing, the Board often says the members are out of time for filing a grievance. This is not reasonable for those who still believe after the debrief that they have been unfairly or incorrectly assessed.
- The information provided in debriefs is often vague and not helpful. This is frustrating when collective agreement (CA) article 17.04, "Information to Unsuccessful Applicants", clearly says that if you ask, you will be provided with:
 - The names of the successful applicants

- The reasons why your knowledge, skills, and abilities did not make you successful in the competition
- Your test and interview scores and scores of all the unsuccessful candidates (without names attached)
- A copy of your marked test results

What to do instead of a debrief

HR set up the debrief process as their method for unsuccessful applicants to find out why they failed job competitions. You won't find the word "debrief", however, in the CA. Therefore, the debrief isn't the required way to obtain the information you have the right to under article 17.04. The CEU doesn't think you should play the employer's debrief game.

So, what should you do if you don't pass KSAs and don't understand why? Don't ask for a debrief. Instead, contact your steward as soon as you're told you didn't

meet the KSAs. Stewards have the right to investigate your complaint and can help you get the information needed to determine whether or not you have been unfairly or incorrectly assessed in a competition.

If HR doesn't provide the information to your steward as requested – or takes too long to respond – your steward can grieve

that the employer is impeding his or her ability to act as a steward. In the end, the Board will have to provide the information you are entitled to.

The CEU can get test information for grievances

If the steward's investigation confirms that you have likely been unfairly or incorrectly assessed, you can grieve this through your steward. The CEU can also obtain test and exam questions for the purpose of processing your grievance if the accuracy of marking, relevance, reliability, or fairness of the test or exam are being grieved. The test or exam information is only released to authorized CEU representatives. They must not copy or distribute this information to anyone other



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than the affected grievor, witnesses, counsel, or union representatives, involved in the grievance or a subsequent arbitration, if the grievance is not resolved to the CEU's satisfaction.

Always ask for an observer when you apply for a job

Under article 17.08 of the CA, the CEU has the right to appoint observers to selection panels for posted bargaining unit positions. Observers sit through all interviews and selection panel discussions when the panel assesses each applicant.

The observers watch, listen, and take notes during selection activities, but do not participate in the selection process in any way. Observers submit their notes on a competition to the CEU and report any concerns they have about how the selection panel conducted its activities.

An observer's notes and report can help your steward in determining whether or not a grievance is indicated on a competition. Union observers also make recruitment more transparent. When an observer sits through the selection process, you, as an applicant, have some assurance that bias won't enter into the selection panel's discussions. If it does, the observer will report it to the CEU.

To request an observer, call the CEU office at 604-278-4050. If you are concerned about privacy, please be aware:

- Observers must keep everything they see and hear strictly confidential. They may only speak about what occurred in a competition to a CEU representative assigned to act on a grievance.
- The CEU staff member who notifies the Board that the CEU is appointing an observer won't tell the Board who made the request

Approach should result in less frustration

To sum up, when you apply on a posted job, the CEU recommends that you:

- Request an observer, in case the CEU needs to know more about the selection panel's activities.
- Ask your steward to investigate if you are told that you have failed a KSA test or resume screen and want information about why.

Whenever you apply for a competition, you are focused on being successful. But if you aren't, and you have concerns about the testing, the two-pronged approach suggested in this article may help you understand why, or improve the CEU's ability to win a grievance.