



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

**FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

In the Matter of Ben Pisano, Forester
(S1018A), Statewide

CSC Docket No. 2020-2460

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: JULY 2, 2020 (RE)

Ben Pisano appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services that he was below minimum requirements in education for the open-competitive examination for Forester (S1018A), Statewide.

By way of background, applicants for the subject examination were required to meet the announced requirements as of the October 21, 2019 closing date. These requirements were graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor’s degree or higher in Forestry, Natural Resource Management, Urban Forest Management, Silviculture, Forest Biometrics, or other closely related Forestry curriculum AND one year of professional and/or technical experience in silvicultural, forest management, and or reforestation work. A Master’s degree in forestry could be substituted for the required experience. A total of 27 applicants applied for the subject examination that resulted in a list of 14 eligibles with an expiration date of March 18, 2023. The eligible list has not yet been certified.

On his application, the appellant indicated that he possessed a Bachelor’s degree in Biology, and 31 credits towards a Master’s degree in Ecology and Evolution. The appellant was credited with the experience listed on his application and met the experience requirement

On appeal, the appellant argues that his elective classes were in forestry and ecology, and he was involved in research in forestry during his senior year in college. He explains that he started on a Master’s degree in Ecology and Evolution in August 2019, which include forestry courses, and graduated in May 2020. He submitted a

letter from his thesis advisor, who states that as of March 2020 the appellant had completed his degree requirements of 24 course credits, 6 research credits and a thesis project. He attached a copy of his transcript for his graduate degree.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.3 provides that applicants shall meet all requirements specified in the examination announcement by the announced closing date.

In the present matter, a review of the record demonstrates that Agency Services correctly determined that the appellant was not eligible for the subject examination. While he meets the experience requirement, the appellant possess a Bachelor's degree in one of the required areas. In this regard, there was no substitution for the required education. The appellant's degree in Biology was not in Forestry, Natural Resource Management, Urban Forest Management, Silviculture, Forest Biometrics, or other closely related Forestry curriculum. Additionally, the appellant had not earned a Master's degree by the October 21, 2019 closing date. The appellant has nine credits from his Bachelor's degree (Bio 402 Forest Ecology, Bio 386 Field Botany, Literature Research) which are related. In his appeal, the appellant describes forestry-related research that he completed in his senior year, and that appears to be applied to the research course he took in his senior year for one credit. The appellant has nine applicable credits from his Master's degree (Urban Forestry (3), Research (6 credits per the description submitted on appeal). However, he did not complete his Master's degree by the October 21, 2019 closing date. Thus, the appellant had accrued nine, possible ten, credits from his Bachelor's degree, and three credits from his Master's degree (Urban Forestry) as of the October 21, 2019 closing date. Nonetheless, a concentration in forestry studies is not the same as a Bachelor's degree in one of the above noted fields, nor does it substitute for a major. *See In the Matter of William Love Jr.* (MSB, decided September 25, 2002). The appellant's coursework is not equivalent to a major in the required subject areas, and thus he lacks the required education.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be denied.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON
THE 1ST DAY OF JULY, 2020

Deirdre' L. Webster Cobb

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