



Public Service Commission
of Canada

Commission de la fonction publique
du Canada

Report on the views of hiring managers and human resources specialists on the Public Service Commission of Canada's recruitment programs and inventories

Prepared for the Public Service Commission of Canada

Supplier: Ipsos Limited

Contract Number: D1120-210007/001/CY

Contract Value: \$83,746.05 (including HST)

Award Date: 2021-12-16

Delivery Date: 2022-09-27

Registration Number: POR 069-21

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Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français

This public opinion research report presents the results of an online survey and focus groups conducted by Ipsos Limited on behalf of the Public Service Commission of Canada. The research study was conducted with Government of Canada hiring managers and human resources specialists between February and March 2022.

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Mike Colledge
President
Ipsos Public Affairs

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre *Rapport sur les perceptions des gestionnaires d'embauche et des spécialistes en ressources humaines sur les programmes et répertoires de recrutement de la Commission de la fonction publique du Canada*.

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Public Service Commission of Canada
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Catalogue Number SC3-194/2022E-PDF (Electronic PDF, English)
ISBN 978-0-660-45467-2

Catalogue Number SC3-194/2022F-PDF (Electronic PDF, French)
ISBN 978-0-660-45468-9

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Executive summary

Introduction and methodology

This research was commissioned by the Public Service Commission (PSC). The purpose of the research was to help guide future PSC recruitment program efforts and marketing strategies geared towards federal public service hiring managers and human resources specialists (HR specialists)¹. The primary objectives were to:

1. measure the satisfaction levels of hiring managers and HR specialists with the PSC’s recruitment programs and inventories;
2. identify the reasons why they may or may not be hiring from the PSC’s inventories and pools;
3. explore and identify potential areas for improvement and make recommendations; and
4. obtain data to develop communications and marketing strategies.

The research involved a combination of a quantitative survey and qualitative discussions with hiring managers and HR specialists across the federal public service.

The quantitative portion of the research was an online, open-link survey. PSC disseminated the survey broadly across the target population of hiring managers and HR specialists. The survey invited both users and non-users of PSC recruitment programs and inventories to participate. The survey was offered in both official languages and was hosted on an accessible and device agnostic survey platform. The survey was pre-tested in late February 2022 and launched on March 1, 2022. The survey was promoted for 4 weeks and closed on March 30, 2022. The median length of the survey was 9 minutes. No incentives were offered for participation.

A total of n=1,262 surveys were completed, representing a participation rate of 15.7%. While the responses reflect a cross-section of users and non-users by region, department or agency, language and tenure, the open-link survey methodology does not allow for the results to be generalized to the target population, and inferential statistics must not be applied when reporting on the collected data. This methodology also does not allow for non-response analysis. However, it is possible that respondents and non-respondents may differ. Further details on the survey methodology are included in section 1, Introduction and methodology.

The survey was complemented by a mix of qualitative online focus group discussions and interviews (see table below). Twenty-two departments and agencies were included in the qualitative research.

Method	Language	Number of participants
4 focus group discussions with hiring managers and HR specialists	English	25
2 focus group discussions with hiring managers and HR specialists	French	8
8 interviews with heads of HR, HR specialists and a director general of a department	English and French	12

¹ A hiring manager is responsible for hiring new employees to fill new or existing positions within the federal public service based on one or more criteria. A human resources specialist’s role is to counsel managers and employees on the interpretation and application of human resource legislation, policies and procedures.

All participants had experience with using **at least one** PSC program and several participants had not used **some** of the PSC programs and inventories.

It should be noted that qualitative research findings are exploratory and directional in nature.

Summary of key findings

Key challenges facing hiring managers and HR specialists

Federal public service hiring managers and HR specialists are facing a significant challenge in filling open positions, consistent with the current labour shortage in Canada. Seven in 10 (72%) indicated that they are having a difficult time (very or somewhat) filling open positions in their department or agency. Most of the challenges are about finding available, quality candidates and are not related to the process of accessing or using PSC's recruitment programs and inventories. Bilingualism requirements were more frequently noted as a barrier to hiring than lack of technical skills or experience.

In the qualitative research, there was consensus that "it's a job-seeker's" market, while at the same time several participants reported that their departments have been growing. Participants spoke of the challenges of attracting "fresh blood" to the public service, and often this was attributed to hiring requirements and processes, including the priority system, bilingualism criteria and an archaic and outdated application process that is not aligned with what today's candidates are used to.

Familiarity with PSC recruitment programs and inventories

Familiarity with PSC student recruitment programs and inventories was reasonably high; most (77%) hiring managers and HR specialists were at least somewhat familiar with PSC's recruitment programs and inventories for hiring students (full-time high school, CEGEP, college or university student). However, significantly fewer were familiar with PSC's recruitment programs and inventories for hiring non-students, including 62% who were familiar with graduate (college or university graduates) programs/inventories. Familiarity was even lower with more focused recruitment programs and inventories. Just over half of hiring managers and HR specialists were familiar with PSC recruitment programs and inventories for hiring students from specific employment equity groups (53%) or pools or inventories aimed at one employment equity group (52%). Just 1 in 3 (34%) indicated familiarity with PSC recruitment programs and inventories for hiring candidates for mid and senior level positions in policy.

Familiarity with PSC's recruitment programs and inventories contributes to program/inventory usage and thus is an important part understanding how to increase usage. There is a correlation between tenure within the federal public service and familiarity with PSC recruitment programs and inventories. Those who have been in a federal public service hiring role for longer are more familiar than those with less time in a hiring role.

More communication and marketing of PSC recruitment programs and inventories was welcomed by participants in the qualitative research. Reactions to current marketing of post-secondary recruitment (PSR) programs as free, offering year-round access and available across Canada were lukewarm at best. There was a clear sense that these were basic expectations and do not add value to users.

Overall satisfaction and experiences with using PSC recruitment programs and inventories

Overall, a majority (62%) of public service hiring managers and HR specialists (who have made at least 5 new hires in the past 2 years) reported that none of their 5 most recent hires were discovered through PSC recruitment programs or inventories.

On average across PSC's 6 main programs and inventories, 60% indicated being satisfied (greater than 3 out of 5) with the PSC's recruitment programs and inventories they have tried to access, and among those who tried to access at least one of the programs and inventories in the past year, 62% were satisfied.

Users were most satisfied with the quality of student (63%) and graduate (56%) candidates and least satisfied with PSC advice and guidance on finding suitable candidates (28%). Just under half were satisfied with their familiarity with how to access candidates through PSC programs and inventories (46%) and how quickly they can access candidates through PSC programs and inventories (48%). Slightly fewer participants (43%) were satisfied with their familiarity with what is available through PSC programs and inventories, how easy it is to access candidates through PSC programs and inventories and the diversity of candidates. Just under 2 in 5 were satisfied with the interest of candidates (38%), whereas closer to 1 in 3 were satisfied with the information provided by the PSC about their programs and inventories (36%), the availability of candidates (34%) and the quality of candidates for mid-senior level positions (31%).

The strongest correlations with satisfaction are availability of candidates, quality of student candidates and interest level of candidates. The extent to which hiring managers and HR specialists can find available candidates who are interested in open positions at the time the positions need to be filled drives satisfaction with PSC's programs and inventories more than other aspects.

Participants in the qualitative research shared mixed experiences with using PSC recruitment programs and inventories, and a number of cross-cutting themes emerged in the discussions:

- Past experience with using PSC recruitment programs and inventories matters. Lack of success in hiring candidates from PSC programs and inventories coloured interest and usage in future.
- A main factor in the perceived lack of success is candidates either accepting alternative offers or the pools and inventories contain candidates that are no longer actively looking for a position.
- PSC pools and inventories suffered from the perception that screening is too broad or "simply checking a box" with no validation that candidates do indeed have the skills and experience.
- There are not enough candidates in pools targeting equity groups.

Nuances by program and inventory type

Federal Student Work Experience Program

It was evident in the qualitative research that a core value proposition of the Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP) is the opportunity to develop relationships with students who can be bridged² into longer-term positions. Moreover, participants valued the ability to access a healthy number of diverse students, resulting in successful placements, and FSWEP's easy, quick and efficient process for accessing candidates. "The lottery system" was a main source of dissatisfaction with FSWEP.

² Student bridging generally refers to the non-advertised appointment of a student who was employed in the federal public service through a student program such as the Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP), the Post-Secondary Co-op/Internship Program (CO-OP) or the Research Affiliate Program (RAP).

Having enough candidates who reflect one or more employment equity groups is also a driver of satisfaction with FSWEF (the strength of the correlation with satisfaction is 0.488).³

Post-Secondary Co-operative Education and Internship Program

Access to high quality candidates with relevant specialized skillsets was the main perceived value of the Post-Secondary Co-operative Education and Internship Program (CO-OP) in the qualitative research. In terms of negatives, CO-OP processes were described as “labour intensive” when compared to FSWEF. Platforms, timelines and submission dates vary by institution, which creates more “legwork” for managers.

Research Affiliate Program

The common perception was that the Research Affiliate Program (RAP) is applicable only to science-based positions or research-heavy departments and agencies. Therefore, many qualitative participants did not see RAP as relevant to their departments. Among participants with some experience of RAP, there was appreciation of the stability the program provides.

Post-Secondary Recruitment

HR specialists (56% versus 39% of hiring managers), those who have been in their current position for at least 5 years (46% versus 25% less than 5 years) and those who have made 21 or more hires over the past 2 years (57% versus 35% 20 hires or less) were more likely to have tried accessing the Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR) program.

Many qualitative research participants admitted to knowing very little about this inventory and the people who are in it. This was the main reason that underpinned lack of PSR use. Among the few participants with at least some awareness of or experience with PSR, they shared limited success of recruiting candidates in the past and showed little interest in using the inventory again. The “freshness” of the inventory was one of the main concerns.

Recruitment of Policy Leaders

Just 12% have tried accessing the Recruitment of Policy Leaders (RPL) program, of which a little less than 2 in 5 (37%) have tried doing so within the past year. The top 7 departments and agencies that reported using RPL were:

- Public Services and Procurement Canada
- Canada Border Services Agency
- Health Canada
- Impact Assessment Agency of Canada
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Infrastructure Canada
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

Just under 2 in 5 (38%) were satisfied with the RPL program, and about as many (37%) were dissatisfied.

The high calibre of candidates was the main draw of RPL for qualitative research participants. However, having to go through a mentor felt cumbersome and participants did not appreciate being on the mentor’s timelines. Several participants would have benefitted from more information about RPL.

Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity

³ Correlation coefficients are used to measure the strength of the linear relationship between 2 variables, and range between 0 and 1. The closer to 1, the stronger the correlation.

Only 1 in 5 (22%) have tried accessing the Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity (ISEO) program, however, most (84%) of those have been in the past 2 years (58% in the past year). The top 7 departments and agencies using ISEO based on the sample of survey respondents included:

- Canada Border Services Agency
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Indigenous Services Canada
- Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Public Services and Procurement Canada
- Supreme Court of Canada

A little more than 4 in 10 (43%) were satisfied with the program. By comparison, 3 in 10 (30%) were dissatisfied.

Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities

Only 17% have tried accessing the Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities (EOSD) program. However, most (83%) of these hiring managers and HR specialists have done so within the past 2 years (57% in the past year). About half (47%) say they were satisfied with the program. By comparison, almost 3 in 10 (28%) were dissatisfied.

Inventories aimed at one employment equity group

Familiarity with PSC's graduate or focused recruitment programs and inventories tended to be lower, which is a barrier to access. One in 4 have tried accessing inventories aimed at one employment equity group (26%), of which 85% have tried to access in the past 2 years and two-thirds (63%) within the past year.

Future improvements

While the level of satisfaction between recruitment programs and inventories varies substantially, the reasons contributing to satisfaction largely do not. The strongest correlates to satisfaction relate to the availability, quality and interest of candidates. With these results, Ipsos recommends taking the view that two of 3 can be remedied with more frequent contact with candidates to update their availability for work and interests in working for the federal public service and in which roles and capacities. The issue of quality and qualifications can also, at least partly, be improved by having more frequently updated information from candidates about their latest qualifications and experience.

Below are the key recommendations made by hiring managers and HR specialists in the qualitative research, which are supported by the survey findings.

1. Quality control of pools and inventories
 - a. Include mechanisms and prompts that require applicants to update their profile on a regular basis.
 - b. A feedback mechanism where HR specialists and managers who access programs and pools report back to PSC on which candidates should be removed because they are no longer interested in a position.
2. Streamlined processes
 - a. Ensure the same candidates do not end up showing up in spreadsheet pulls multiple times.
 - b. Simplify the process for applicants so they submit only a single application and then PSC funnels their information into whichever PSC or departmental pool or inventory is most relevant, in alignment with their profile and interests.
 - c. Provide tips, tricks and other guidance toolkits to help applicants through the application process.
3. Enhanced pre-screening and assessment of candidates
 - a. Pre-screen candidates in pools or inventories for statement of merit criteria.
 - b. Include basic pre-assessments that allow managers to filter and hone in on specific competencies.

4. Modernization of tools

- a. Provide a centralized, user-friendly, interactive tool (perhaps an app) where managers can easily review and access candidates (without having to request lengthy spreadsheets) and where the candidate profiles are up to date and provide a more complete picture of the person (over and above a CV).

Future communications and marketing of PSC programs and inventories

Given the importance of having access to quality candidates, the research suggests that PSC should consider undertaking a review of the specific qualifications and qualities most desired by hiring managers and HR specialists to have up-to-date information on those skills and experiences. That will allow PSC to consider new or supplementary communications, marketing and/or outreach strategies for attracting the most sought-after qualifications. This likely is perceived as requiring greater marketing and promotion among the public to attract interest in working for the federal public service broadly and in specific positions and roles available.

The following recommendations by hiring managers and HR advisors have implications for future communications and marketing of PSC programs and inventories among users.

- A one-stop shop where information for all PSC inventories and pools can be found and increasing awareness of this.
- Testimonials from past managers and specialists who have used PSC programs and inventories; these audiences can act as credible voices to mitigate negative “bureaucratic mysteries” associations that act as a barrier to use.
- More information on the specific profile of candidates in each pool and inventory and tailoring that profile to each department or agency’s needs.
- More communications on what is being done to create programs and inventories that are diverse.
- More information on how and whether PSC programs and inventories are kept fresh, especially if there is a certain time of the year when programs and inventories are refreshed. For example, a newsletter can be issued when there is a batch of new candidates. This would allow departments to better align their usage of those programs with whenever the lists are being refreshed.
- Both HR specialists and hiring managers think they would benefit from more communication on all of the above items.

1. Introduction and methodology

1.1 Background

Hiring managers and HR specialists are underutilizing Public Service Commission (PSC) recruitment programs and inventories. Although anecdotal information is available, there is no evidence-based information available on the reasons why PSC recruitment programs and inventories are not used more widely or frequently. There is limited and insufficient data to guide evidence-based, multi-year efforts to maximize PSC’s investment in these service offerings and to evaluate and improve the programs and inventories as well as the effectiveness of communications, marketing strategies and material that target hiring managers and HR specialists. Additionally, since the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the Government of Canada’s recruitment needs (temporary hires, etc.), the research is an opportunity to gather feedback on the current needs of hiring managers and HR specialists across the public service.

The total cost of this research was \$83,746.05 (including HST).

1.2 Rationale of research

This research will help inform data-driven recruitment efforts which are essential to finding and retaining talent as well as building a diverse, inclusive and representative public service. The results of the research will also be shared with program areas and will be used to improve program design, delivery and promotion. In addition, the PSC will develop an evidence-based marketing strategy to better reach hiring managers and HR specialists, with the goal of increasing the use of programs and inventories. This project will help meet several Government of Canada priorities:

- Reduce staffing time frames and improve the job seeker experience
- [Public Service Renewal: Beyond2020](#)
- [Many Voices One Mind: A Pathway to Reconciliation](#)
- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada - Call to Action # 7](#)
- [Building a Diverse and Inclusive Public Service: Final Report of the Joint Union/Management Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- [2022/2023 Deputy Minister Commitments on Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- [Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion in the Federal Public Service](#)
- [Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#)

Alternate approaches and information sources were considered, but these do not allow for the opinions of public servants on recruitment programs and inventories and their specific needs to be at the centre of the learning.

The risks associated with information gathering and dissemination were low, as this project focused on program assessment and public servants' needs.

The risks associated with failure to secure information were also low given that no sensitive information was collected.

1.3 Research objectives

The purpose of the research was to help guide future recruitment program efforts and marketing strategies geared towards hiring managers and HR specialists. The primary objectives were to:

1. measure the satisfaction levels of hiring managers and HR specialists with the PSC's recruitment programs and inventories;
2. identify the reasons why they may or may not be hiring from the PSC's inventories and pools;
3. explore and identify potential areas for improvement and make recommendations; and
4. obtain data to develop communications and marketing strategies.

1.3.1 Primary audience

Hiring managers within the Government of Canada

1.3.2 Secondary audience

HR specialists within the Government of Canada

1.4 Quantitative research methodology

1.4.1 Survey sample

The PSC was provided with an online open-link survey, which they disseminated widely. An open-link approach was used because:

1. a comprehensive list of public servants with hiring responsibilities and/or HR specialists who would be targeted users of PSC recruitment programs and inventories was not available; and
2. there was a desire for a snowball sampling strategy whereby those invited to the survey could forward the survey to other individuals within the public service and external partners they felt would have valuable feedback to share.

The target population for the survey was hiring managers and HR specialists within the Government of Canada. The scope included both users and non-users of PSC programs and inventories:

1. The invitation was shared widely across the public service in all provinces and territories and across more than 200 departments.
2. It is not clear if any segments of the target population were not covered in the dissemination.
3. An open-link survey can be considered a non-probability survey. To qualify for the survey, respondents were required to self-identify as either a hiring manager or an HR specialist with hiring responsibilities within the Government of Canada.
4. A review of responses by internet protocol (IP) capture was conducted to ensure no single IP was found to have an excessive number of completed surveys. Multiple responses from the same IP address were permitted given that individuals from the same department or agency may use a common IP address.
5. We estimate PSC outreach (survey shared on network platforms and direct emails) reached 8,800 group members of the target population. Many duplications may have occurred, as an individual can be a member of several networks. A total of 1,262 surveys were completed. While a formal participation rate cannot be calculated due to the open-link approach, a rough calculation of completed surveys divided by the total number of invitations arrives at a ratio of 15.7% (1,262 / approximately 8,000). This can be considered a successful response, particularly considering that reminder emails and other forms of promoting and encouraging participation could not be targeted to those who started but did not complete the survey, and were sent generically only to the broad population in scope. Moreover, the survey was circulated at the end of the fiscal year, a historically busy time for managers, which may have impacted participation in the survey.
6. The sample size of 1,262 reflects responses from across the public service by:
 - a. Role (93% hiring managers, 7% HR specialists)⁴
 - b. Geography (58% National Capital Region, 41% outside the National Capital Region)
 - c. Language (74% English, 26% French)
 - d. Department or agency (44 unique departments and agencies)
 - e. Years in the role (13% 2 years or less, 13% 3 to 4 years, 26% 5 to 10 years, 48% more than 10 years)
7. No statistical weighting was applied to the data.

The results of this survey are not statistically projectable to the target population because the sampling method used does not ensure that the sample represents the target population with a known margin of sampling error.⁵ Reported percentages are not generalizable to any group other than the sample studied, and therefore no formal statistical inferences can be drawn between the sample results and the broader target population it may be intended to reflect. This methodology also does not allow for non-response analysis. However, respondents and non-respondents may differ. Despite these limitations, the data is useful evidence of the perceptions and experiences of HR specialists and hiring managers across the federal public service who participated in the survey.

⁴ Many HR specialists also identify themselves as hiring managers, which could explain the much higher participation of hiring managers compared with HR specialists.

⁵ In the absence of a list of all HR specialists and hiring managers, this survey provides valid and valuable insights into the audience, even if it is not projectable to this universe.

To improve future efforts to survey the population of hiring managers and HR specialists, Ipsos recommends that PSC work toward keeping an up-to-date database of all hiring managers and HR specialists organized by department and agency and type of programs and inventories accessed in order to have an accurate profile of the population and of users and non-users of individual programs and inventories specifically.

1.4.2 Data collection

As noted above, the quantitative portion of the research was an online, open-link survey. The survey was offered in both official languages and was provided on an accessible and device agnostic survey platform. The survey was pre-tested in late February 2022 and launched on March 1, 2022. The survey was promoted for 4 weeks and closed on March 30, 2022. The median length of the survey was 9 minutes. No incentives were offered for participation.

The survey questionnaire was designed for both users and non-users of PSC programs and inventories. Survey respondents who have used multiple PSC programs and inventories were invited to offer their feedback on individual programs and inventories they have used, as their experiences with each may be quite different.

1.4.3 Quality controls

The survey was pre-tested in both official languages prior to launching. A total of 40 surveys were completed as part of the pre-test. No major edits were made to the survey following the pre-test. A review of the data within 3 days of the launch was conducted to ensure the survey logic was working correctly and no issues were found. At the end of the fieldwork, the data was analyzed by department and geographic location to evaluate the coverage across the public service. IP addresses were reviewed to identify the number of completed surveys per address. No individual address had an excessive number of completed surveys.

1.5 Qualitative research methodology

Qualitative research was conducted in tandem with the quantitative survey. The qualitative research offered the opportunity to hear first-hand about experiences with using PSC recruitment programs and inventories and explore ideas for enhancing programs and inventories.

As can be seen from the table below, a mix of online focus group discussions and interviews were conducted. Online discussions lasted 90 minutes and interviews lasted 60 minutes.

Method	Language	Number of participants
4 focus group discussions with hiring managers and HR specialists	English	25
2 focus group discussions with hiring managers and HR specialists	French	8
8 interviews with heads of HR, HR specialists and a director general of a department	English and French	12

PSC took the lead in disseminating information about the qualitative research by leveraging relevant internal hiring and human resources email groups. It also put together meeting forums. Ipsos provided a link to register for the discussions and then followed up with interested individuals and invited them to the sessions.

A broad range of departments and agencies were included in the qualitative research, including:

- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- Parks Canada
- Immigration Refugee Board of Canada
- Department of National Defence
- Treasury Board
- Public Safety Canada
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Canadian Heritage
- Transport Canada
- Elections Canada
- Health Canada
- Canada Border Services Agency
- Shared Services Canada
- Public Service Commission of Canada
- Natural Resources Canada
- Office of the Secretary to the Governor
- Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada
- Employment and Social Development Canada

The qualitative findings are presented in section 3 of this report. It should be noted that the qualitative research findings are exploratory and directional in nature. Consequently, all qualitative findings should be interpreted as uncovering the depth and range of opinions on the topics; they are intended to complement the quantitative findings.

All participants in the qualitative discussions had experience with using **at least one** PSC program, while several participants had not used **some** of the PSC programs and inventories. Final attendance at some of the discussions was lower than expected. This was partly due to the timing of discussions, which took place around fiscal year end, a busy time for hiring managers and HR specialists. These two limitations to the research should be borne in mind when interpreting the results.

2. Quantitative findings

2.1 Key challenges faced by hiring managers and HR specialists

The data confirms federal public service hiring managers and HR specialists are facing a significant challenge in filling open positions, consistent with the overall labour shortage in Canada. This aligns with the challenges of recruiting and retaining talent in the private sector that have been documented in the media and industry literature. Seven in 10 (72%) indicated that they are having a difficult time (very or somewhat) in filling open positions in their organization.

Notably, the top 6 users of the Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP), and most other PSC programs and inventories, by organization based on the sample of survey respondents, indicated greater difficulty filling open positions than those who have not used FSWEP (74% say it is difficult versus 66%). The top 6 users of FSWEP based on the sample of survey respondents were:

- Public Services and Procurement Canada
- Canada Border Services Agency
- Health Canada
- Shared Services Canada
- Correctional Service Canada
- Supreme Court of Canada

Challenges in hiring students

A large majority of survey respondents have used PSC student recruitment programs and inventories (greater than 80%) and most of the challenges related to using these are related to the candidates and not to the process of accessing or using programs and inventories. In fact, only 3% indicated that the student recruitment programs and inventories are an administrative burden. When asked to describe the main challenges in using these programs and inventories, finding interested (40%) and bilingual (33%) candidates were most frequently cited as a challenge. Other challenges include:

- finding candidates with the required experience (25%);
- finding available candidates for specific geographic locations (22%);
- finding candidates with the required technical skills (22%); and
- finding candidates from employment equity or equity-seeking groups (21%).

Only 18% mentioned PSC recruitment programs take too long to get referrals and 15% mentioned PSC information on recruitment programs is hard to find.

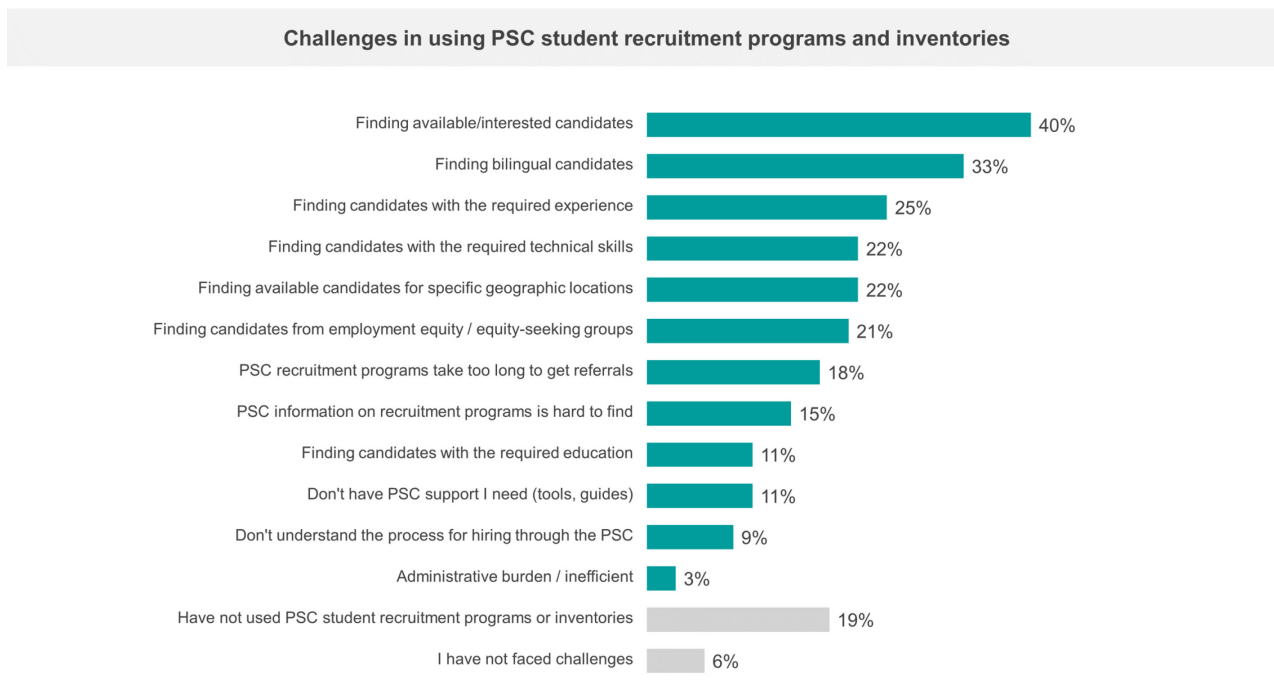


Figure 1. Answer to question 5: What are the main challenges in using Public Service Commission (PSC) student recruitment programs and inventories (Federal Student Work Experience Program, Indigenous Student Employment

Opportunity, Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities, etc.)? (Select all that apply)

Base: All respondents (n=1,262). Chart does not include responses under 3%.

Challenges in hiring graduates and filling mid-to-senior positions

Similar with hiring students, the main challenges in using PSC graduate and focused recruitment programs and inventories to fill entry to mid-to-senior positions (Post-Secondary Recruitment, Recruitment of Policy Leaders, etc.) were finding interested (30%) and bilingual (27%) candidates. Finding candidates with the required experience was also mentioned frequently (24%). Only 18% mentioned PSC recruitment programs are not timely or take too long to create.

Notably, compared with the student programs and inventories, fewer survey respondents have experience with graduate and targeted recruitment programs and inventories (67% versus 81%).

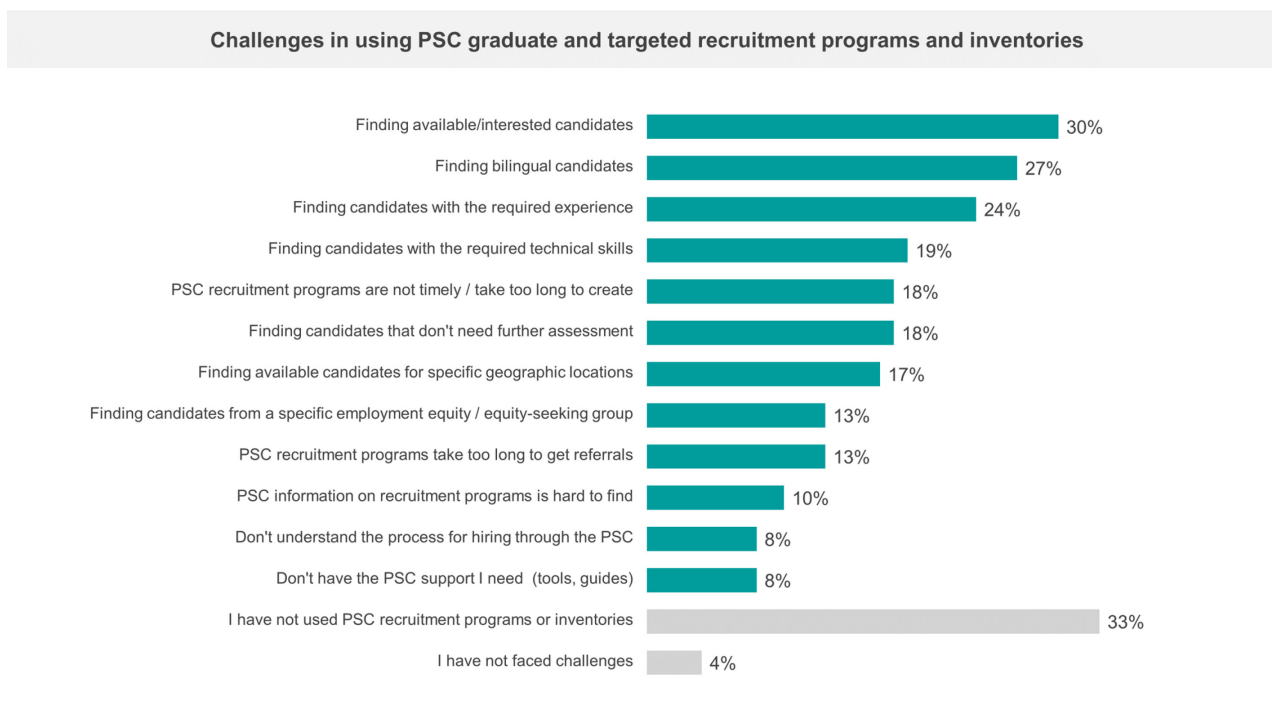


Figure 2. Answer to question 6: What are the main challenges in using PSC graduate and targeted recruitment programs and inventories to fill entry to mid-to-senior positions (Post-Secondary Recruitment, Recruitment of Policy Leaders, etc.)? (Select all that apply)

Base: All respondents (n=1,262). Chart does not include responses under 4%.

2.2 Use of and familiarity with PSC recruitment programs and inventories

While familiarity with PSC's various recruitment programs and inventories can be expected to vary, there is significant difference in the degree of familiarity hiring managers and HR specialists have with student and graduate programs and inventories compared with focused recruitment programs and inventories. Familiarity with student recruitment programs and inventories was reasonably high; most (77%) hiring managers and HR specialists were at least somewhat familiar with the PSC's recruitment programs and inventories for hiring students (full-time high school, CEGEP, college or university students). However, significantly fewer were familiar with PSC's recruitment programs and inventories for hiring non-students. Six in 10 (62%) reported familiarity with PSC's recruitment programs and inventories for hiring graduates (college and university graduates). Only 2 in 10 were very familiar with them.

Familiarity was even lower for more focused recruitment programs and inventories. Just over half of hiring managers and HR specialists said they are familiar with PSC recruitment programs and inventories for hiring students from specific employment equity groups (53%) or pools or inventories aimed at one employment equity group (52%). Just 1 in 3 (34%) indicated familiarity with PSC recruitment programs and inventories for filling mid-to-senior level positions in policy.

There is a correlation between tenure within the federal public service and familiarity with PSC recruitment programs and inventories. Those who have been in a federal public service hiring role for longer were more familiar than those with less time in a hiring role.

Columns reflect % familiarity and rows reflect the inventory or program type	% familiar with 2 years or less experience in federal service	% familiar with 3 to 4 years or less experience in federal service	% familiar with 5 to 10 years or less experience in federal service	% familiar with more than 10 years of experience in federal service
Students (full-time high school, CEGEP, college or university students)	57%	71%	77%	85%
Students from a specific employment equity group	34%	45%	50%	63%
Graduates (college and university graduates)	42%	49%	63%	72%
Mid to senior level positions in policy	16%	24%	37%	41%
Pools or inventories aimed at one employment equity group	40%	44%	50%	59%

Figure 3. The survey results showing the percentage of respondents very or somewhat familiar with each of the 5 main types of PSC recruitment programs and inventories measured in the survey cross-tabulated by years in a hiring role within the federal public service.

HR specialists were more familiar with PSC's programs and inventories than hiring managers.

Columns reflect % familiarity and rows reflect the inventory or program type	% of hiring managers familiar with the program or inventory	% of HR specialists familiar with the program or inventory
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Students (full-time high school, CEGEP, college or university students)	76%	85%*
Students from a specific employment equity group	52%	65%
Graduates (college and university graduates)	61%	74%
Mid to senior level positions in policy	33%	48%
Pools or inventories aimed at one employment equity group	51%	60%**

Figure 4. The survey results showing the percentage of respondents very or somewhat familiar with each of the 5 main types of PSC recruitment programs and inventories measured in the survey cross-tabulated by role, either hiring manager or HR specialist.

* The percent familiarity is not statistically higher among HR specialists than hiring managers. However, HR specialists are significantly more likely to be “very” familiar (44% versus 34%).

** The percent familiarity is not statistically higher among HR specialists than hiring managers.

Familiarity with PSC’s recruitment programs and inventories contributes to usage and thus is an important part understanding how to increase usage. The more familiar hiring managers and HR specialists are with the PSC’s recruitment programs and inventories, the more likely they are to use them. Conversely, lack of familiarity is a barrier to access and thus contributes to lower usage of the programs and inventories.

Columns reflect % who have tried and rows reflect the inventory or program type	% who have tried to access who are very familiar	% who have tried to access who are somewhat familiar	% who have tried to access who are not very familiar	% who have tried to access who are not familiar at all
Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP)	93%	82%	53%	24%
Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity (ISEO)	35%	19%	13%	4%
Employment Opportunities for Student with Disabilities (EOSD)	29%	13%	7%	2%

Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR)	57%	37%	26%	9%
Recruitment of Policy Leaders (RPL)	19%	10%	9%	1%
Inventories aimed at one employment equity group	37%	24%	19%	4%

Figure 5. The survey results showing the percentage of respondents who have tried to access each of the 6 main PSC recruitment programs and inventories measured in the survey cross-tabulated by level of familiarity with the recruitment program or inventory.

Consistent with what can be described as moderate to high levels of familiarity with PSC’s student recruitment programs and inventories, many hiring managers and HR specialists have tried to access candidates through these programs and inventories. However, it varies greatly by the type of program or inventory.

Student recruitment programs and inventories

Most (77%) hiring managers and HR specialists said they have tried to access candidates through the Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP), the majority (79%) of which have attempted to do this within the past 2 years (54% in the past year).

However, only 2 in 5 (40%) have tried accessing candidates through the Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR) program, and only 68% of them did so within the past 2 years. Only 1 in 5 (22%) have tried accessing the Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity (ISEO) program; however, most (84%) of those have done so in the past 2 years (58% in the past year).

Similarly, only 17% have tried accessing the Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities (EOSD) program. However, most of these hiring managers and HR specialists (83%) have done so within the past 2 years (57% in the past year).

PSC graduate and targeted recruitment programs and inventories

Familiarity with PSC’s graduate or focused recruitment programs and inventories tends to be lower, which is a barrier to access. One in 4 have tried accessing inventories targeting one employment equity group (26%), of which 85% have tried to access in the past 2 years and two-thirds (63%) within the past year. Twelve percent (12%) have tried accessing the Recruitment of Policy Leaders (RPL) program, of which a little less than 2 in 5 (37%) have tried doing so within the past year.

Success in achieving hires through PSC’s recruitment programs and inventories

Overall, a majority (62%) of public service hiring managers and HR specialists who have made at least 5 new hires in the past 2 years reported that none of their 5 most recent hires were discovered through PSC recruitment programs or inventories.

Interestingly, despite being less familiar with PSC's recruitment programs and inventories, hiring managers have had better success hiring from the programs and inventories than HR specialists in the past 2 years. One in 4 (39%) hiring managers hired at least one of their 5 most recent hires through PSC's recruitment programs and inventories, compared with only 16% of HR specialists.

Respondents residing in the National Capital Region (NCR) have had greater success in hiring through PSC's recruitment programs and inventories than those outside of the NCR. Of the last 5 hires, 42% of those residing in the NCR reported that at least 1 was found through the PSC. This compared with only 33% of those residing outside of NCR.

Hiring managers and HR specialists who have hired for more than 20 positions in the past 2 years were less likely to have used PSC programs and inventories for their 5 most recent hires. Only 31% of this group hired at least 1 of their last 5 hires through PSC programs and inventories compared with 41% of those who have hired for 5 to 20 positions over the past 2 years.

2.3 Profile of users and non-users

Federal Student Work Experience Program

Hiring managers and HR specialists who have been in their current position for at least 3 years (80% versus 61% 2 years or less) and those who have made a lot (21 or more) of hires over the past 2 years (85% versus 75% 20 or fewer hires) were more likely to have tried accessing the Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP) at some point in the past. Hiring managers (55% versus 40% of HR specialists) and those who have made at least one hire (56% versus 23% no hires) over the past 2 years were also more likely to have tried to access candidates through FSWEP within the past year. Notably, Francophones were more likely to have tried accessing candidates through FSWEP within the past 3 months (35% versus 27% of Anglophones), though were no more or less likely than Anglophones to have attempted to do this over the past year.

Post-Secondary Recruitment

HR specialists (56% versus 39% of hiring managers), those who have been in their current position for at least 5 years (46% versus 25% less than 5 years) and those who have made 21 or more hires over the past 2 years (57% versus 35% 20 or less) were more likely to have tried accessing the Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR) program.

The top 6 department and agencies from the sample of survey respondents using PSR were the same top users of FSWEP from the sample of survey respondents. This includes:

- Public Services and Procurement Canada
- Canada Border Services Agency
- Health Canada
- Shared Services Canada
- Correctional Service Canada
- Supreme Court of Canada

Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities

Francophones (20% versus 15% of Anglophones), those who have been in their current position for more than 10 years (21% versus 13% 10 years or less) and those who have made 21 or more hires over the past 2 years (29% versus 13% 20 or less) were more likely to have tried accessing candidates through the Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities (EOSD) program.

The top 6 departments and agencies using PSR from the sample of survey respondents were the same top users of FSWEP from the sample of survey respondents. This includes:

- Public Services and Procurement Canada
- Canada Border Services Agency
- Health Canada
- Shared Services Canada
- Correctional Service Canada
- Supreme Court of Canada

Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity

Those who have made at least 21 hires over the past 2 years (31% versus 20% 20 or less) were among the most likely to have tried accessing candidates through the Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity (ISEO) program.

The top 7 departments and agencies using ISEO from the sample of survey respondents were found to be:

- Canada Border Services Agency
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Indigenous Services Canada
- Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Public Services and Procurement Canada
- Supreme Court of Canada

Recruitment of Policy Leaders

Anglophones (13% versus 9% of Francophones), those who have been in their current position for at least 5 years (15% versus 5% less than 5 years) and HR specialists (22% versus 11% of hiring managers) were among the most likely to have tried accessing candidates through the Recruitment of Policy Leaders (RPL) program.

The top 7 departments and agencies using RPL from the sample of survey respondents were found to be:

- Public Services and Procurement Canada
- Canada Border Services Agency
- Health Canada
- Impact Assessment Agency of Canada
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Infrastructure Canada
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

Inventories targeting one employment equity group

Employment equity group inventories were accessed more frequently among hiring managers and HR specialists who have been in the role for more than 10 years (30%) and less often by those newer to their roles – 19% among those with 2 years or less experience in the role.

2.4 Overall experiences using PSC recruitment programs and inventories

Overall satisfaction

Among those who have accessed PSC recruitment programs and inventories within the past 4 years, more indicate satisfaction than dissatisfaction with most programs and inventories.⁶ However, there is room to increase satisfaction levels and address issues causing dissatisfaction. Fewer than 7 in 10 users of any individual program reported being satisfied (very/somewhat satisfied). Indeed, many users offered a neutral opinion stating they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. This can be as high as one-quarter of users. Dissatisfaction was around 3 in 10 – reaching as high as 37% for Recruitment of Policy Leaders (RPL) inventories.

On average across PSC's 6 main programs and inventories, 60% provided a rating equivalent to satisfaction (greater than 3 out of 5). In this cohort, 62% have tried to access at least one of the 6 programs or inventories in the past year.

Stated reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction

Across all PSC recruitment programs and inventories, ease of finding quality or qualified candidates was the most common reason for being “very” satisfied, and several also mentioned that the process was easy or easy to understand. The most common reason for dissatisfaction was difficulty finding available or interested candidates. However, difficulty finding qualified candidates and issues with using the programs and inventories were also mentioned to varying degrees.

Satisfaction with various aspects of programs and inventories

Those who have accessed at least one of the PSC's recruitment programs or inventories were asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of their experience. Users were most satisfied (very or somewhat satisfied) with the quality of student (63%) and graduate (56%) candidates and least satisfied with PSC advice and guidance on finding suitable candidates (28%). Just under half were satisfied with their familiarity with how to access candidates through PSC programs and inventories (46%) and how quickly they can access candidates (48%). Slightly fewer were satisfied with their familiarity with what is available through PSC programs and inventories (43%), how easy it is to access candidates (43%) and the diversity of candidates (43%). Just under 2 in 5 were satisfied with the interest of candidates (38%), whereas closer to 1 in 3 were satisfied with the information provided by the PSC about their programs and inventories (36%), the availability of candidates (34%) and the quality of candidates for mid-to-senior level positions (31%).

Overall, more were satisfied (very or somewhat satisfied) than dissatisfied (very or somewhat dissatisfied) with all aspects of their experience as it relates to PSC recruitment programs and inventories, except for PSC advice and guidance on finding suitable candidates (28% satisfied versus 34% dissatisfied), the quality of candidates for mid-to-senior level positions (31% versus 33%) and the overall availability of candidates (34% versus 41%). The fact that the highest proportion overall indicate dissatisfaction with the availability of candidates lends support to the idea that

⁶ Unless otherwise noted, the data presented in this section is based on those who have tried to access the relevant program or inventory in the last 4 years and have offered an opinion on their level of satisfaction. The data excludes those who answered “don't know” or “not applicable” to the satisfaction question.

federal public service hiring managers and HR specialists are facing significant challenges finding candidates to fill open positions.

Correlation analysis was run to identify the aspects that are most influential to satisfaction with the various programs and inventories. The analysis showed that there is no one single driver of satisfaction. The strongest correlations with satisfaction were found to be the availability of candidates, the quality of student candidates and the interest of candidates. The extent to which hiring managers and HR specialists can find available candidates who are interested in the open positions at the time the positions need to be filled drives satisfaction with PSC’s programs and inventories more than other aspects. For those looking to fill student positions, the quality of the students contributes almost as much to satisfaction; similarly, for those looking to fill graduate positions, the quality of graduate candidate contributes almost as much to satisfaction.

Notably, how easy it is to use programs and inventories to access candidates is also correlated with satisfaction and, to a slightly higher degree, the speed with which candidates can be accessed.

Factors	Correlation with satisfaction
Availability of candidates	0.483
Quality of student candidates	0.478
Interest of candidates	0.448
Quality of graduate candidates	0.439
How easy it is to access candidates through PSC programs and inventories	0.425
Quality of candidates for mid-to-senior level positions	0.416
How quickly you can access candidates through PSC programs and inventories	0.371
Diversity of candidates (employment equity groups)	0.366
PSC advice and guidance on finding suitable candidates	0.358
Information provided by the PSC about their programs and inventories	0.253
Your familiarity with how to access candidates through PSC programs and inventories	0.228
Your familiarity with what is available through PSC programs and inventories	0.186

Figure 6. The table shows the degree of correlation between each aspect of the user experience measured in the survey and satisfaction. This is measured by a correlation coefficient, which ranges from 0 to 1. The closer to 1, the stronger the correlation. Satisfaction data has been averaged across PSC’s 6 main recruitment programs and inventories since satisfaction was asked separately for each program and inventory in the survey. The data has been filtered to include only survey respondents who have used at least one of the PSC’s 6 main programs and inventories in the past year.

Sub-group analysis of user experience

HR specialists were more likely (at 61%) than hiring managers (47%) to express satisfaction with how quickly they can access candidates through PSC programs and inventories.

Newer hiring managers and HR specialists (2 years or less) (53% versus 42% more than 2 years), HR specialists (58% versus 42% of hiring managers) and those based outside of Atlantic Canada (45% versus 27% Atlantic Canada) were among the most likely to express satisfaction with how easy it is to access candidates through PSC programs and inventories.

Francophones were more likely (at 39%) than Anglophones (28%) to indicate satisfaction with the quality of candidates for mid-to-senior level positions. HR specialists were more likely (at 58%) compared to hiring managers (42%) to report satisfaction with the diversity of candidates. Anglophones were more likely to say they are satisfied with the interest of candidates (40% versus 32% of Francophones). HR specialists were more likely (at 54%) than hiring managers (35%) to express satisfaction with how information was provided by the PSC about their programs and inventories.

Those with less tenure (2 years or less) (43% versus 26% more than 2 years) and HR specialists (51% versus 27% of hiring managers) were among the most likely to report satisfaction with PSC advice and guidance on finding suitable candidates.

Anglophones were more likely to report familiarity (very or somewhat familiar) with PSC recruitment programs and inventories for hiring students from a specific employment equity group (55% versus 47% of Francophones), mid-to-senior level positions in policy (36% versus 28%) and pools or inventories aimed at one employment equity group (54% versus 47%).

HR specialists were more likely to say they are familiar with PSC recruitment programs and inventories for hiring students from a specific employment equity group (65% versus 52% of hiring managers), graduates (college and university graduates) (74% versus 61%), and mid-to-senior level positions in policy (48% versus 33%). Those who have made a large number of hires (21 or more) over the past 2 years were among the most likely to indicate familiarity with PSC recruitment programs and inventories for hiring students (full-time high school, CEGEP, college or university student) (85% versus 75% 20 or less) and pools or inventories targeting one employment equity group (63% versus 49%). Those who have been in their role for over 10 years were more likely to claim to be familiar with PSC recruitment programs and inventories for hiring students (full-time high school, CEGEP, college or university student) (85% versus 70% 10 years or less), students from a specific employment equity group (63% versus 44%), graduates (college and university graduates) (72% versus 53%) and pools or inventories targeting one employment equity group (59% versus 46%).

Francophones (52% versus 40% of Anglophones), HR specialists (64% versus 41% of hiring managers) and longer tenured hiring managers and HR specialists (more than 10 years) (48% versus 38% 10 years or less) were among the most likely to indicate satisfaction with their familiarity with what is available through PSC programs.

HR specialists (59% versus 45% of hiring managers) and longer tenured hiring managers and HR specialists (more than 10 years) (51% versus 40% under 10 years) were among the most likely to indicate satisfaction with their familiarity with how to access candidates through PSC programs and inventories.

2.5 Satisfaction by program and inventory type

The experience of those trying to access candidates was generally consistent regardless of how frequently departments and agencies have tried to access PSC recruitment programs and inventories.

However, satisfaction does vary substantially across programs, as discussed below.

Federal Student Work Experience Program

Eight in 10 were satisfied with or have a neutral opinion of Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP). Users were 3 times more likely to express satisfaction than dissatisfaction with the experience. Nearly two-thirds (63%) were satisfied, while only 2 in 10 (20%) were dissatisfied. HR specialists were more likely than hiring managers to report satisfaction (very or somewhat satisfied) with FSWEP (71% versus 62%).

The most common reasons to offer a rating of very satisfied centred primarily around the ease of the program and the quality of the candidates coming through FSWEP. Dissatisfaction related primarily to there being too few interested and available candidates, the quality or qualifications of candidates and opinions that accessing the program is cumbersome and inefficient.

Correlation analysis suggests that in addition to the quality of student candidates (.527), candidates that reflect one or more employment equity groups (.488) is also a driver of satisfaction with FSWEP.

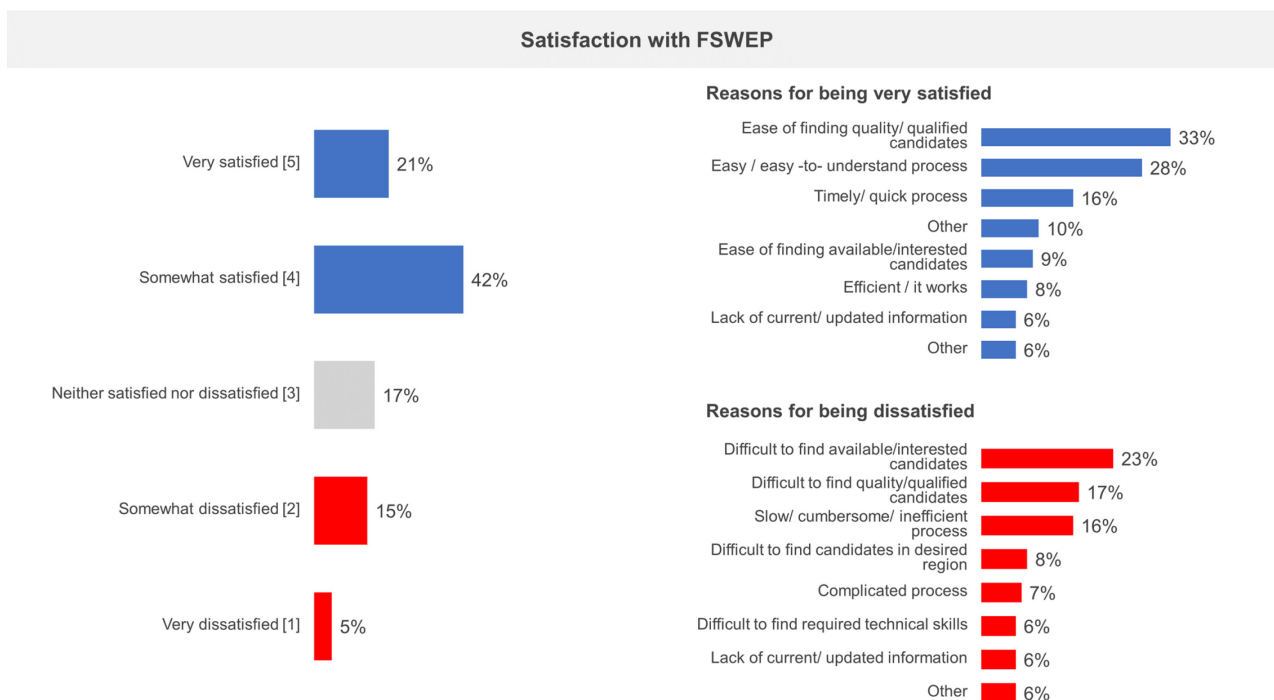


Figure 7. Answer to question 12: Overall, how satisfied are you with the Federal Student Work Experience Program in meeting your hiring needs or those of your clients?

Base: Tried to access the Federal Student Work Experience Program in the past 4 years excluding I don't know / not applicable (n=867). Question 13: What are the primary reasons you were dissatisfied? Question 14: What are the primary reasons you were very satisfied? Question 13 and 14 charts do not include responses under 6%.

Post-Secondary Recruitment

Forty-six percent (46%) reported satisfaction with the Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR) program, while 3 in 10 (31%) were dissatisfied. The most common reasons to offer a rating of very satisfied centred primarily around the quality of the candidates coming through PSR. Dissatisfaction related primarily to there being too few interested and available candidates, opinions that accessing the program is cumbersome and inefficient, and the ease of finding candidates in specific geographic locations.

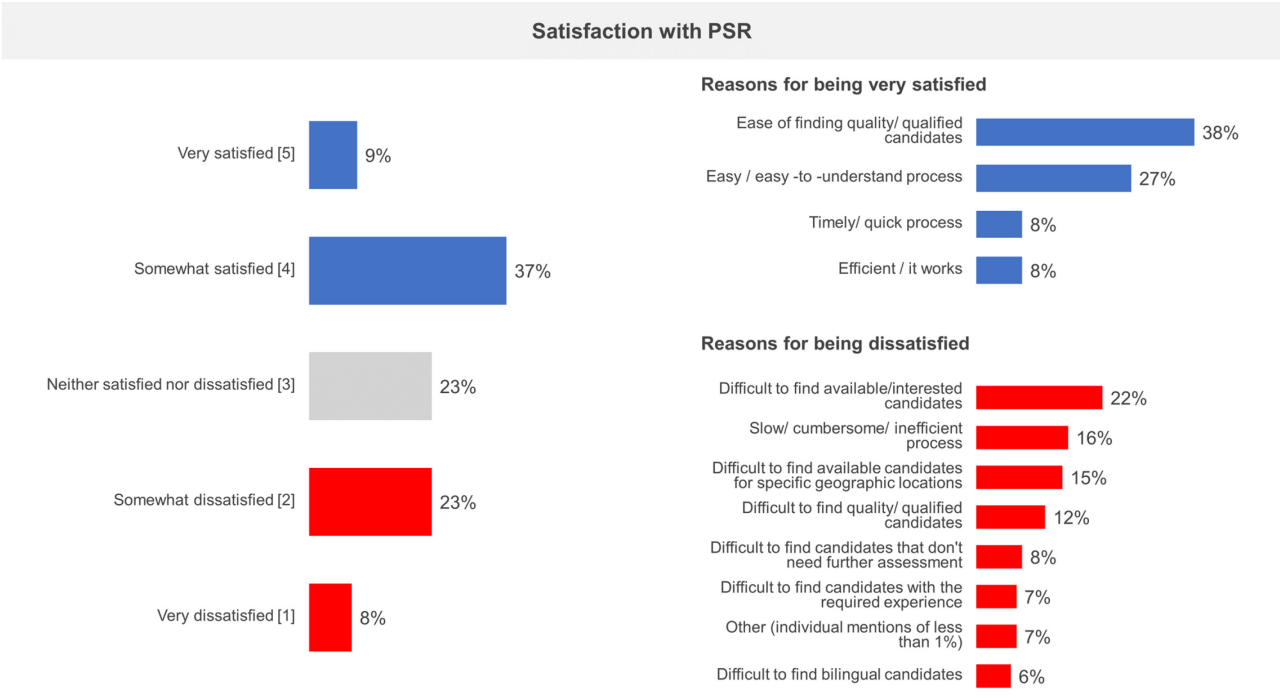


Figure 8. Answer to question 12: Overall, how satisfied are you with the Post-Secondary Recruitment in meeting your hiring needs or those of your clients?

Base: Tried to access Post-Secondary Recruitment in the past 4 years excluding I don't know / not applicable (n=391).

Question 13: What are the primary reasons you were dissatisfied? Question 14: What are the primary reasons you were very satisfied? Question 13 and 14 charts do not include responses under 6%.

Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities

About half (47%) say they were satisfied with the Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities (EOSD) program. By comparison, almost 3 in 10 (28%) were dissatisfied with this program. The most common reason to offer a rating of very satisfied centred primarily around the ease of the program and the quality of the candidates coming through EOSD. Dissatisfaction related primarily to there being too few interested and available candidates, the difficulty finding quality or qualified candidates and the lack of response or feedback from candidates.

Satisfaction with EOSD

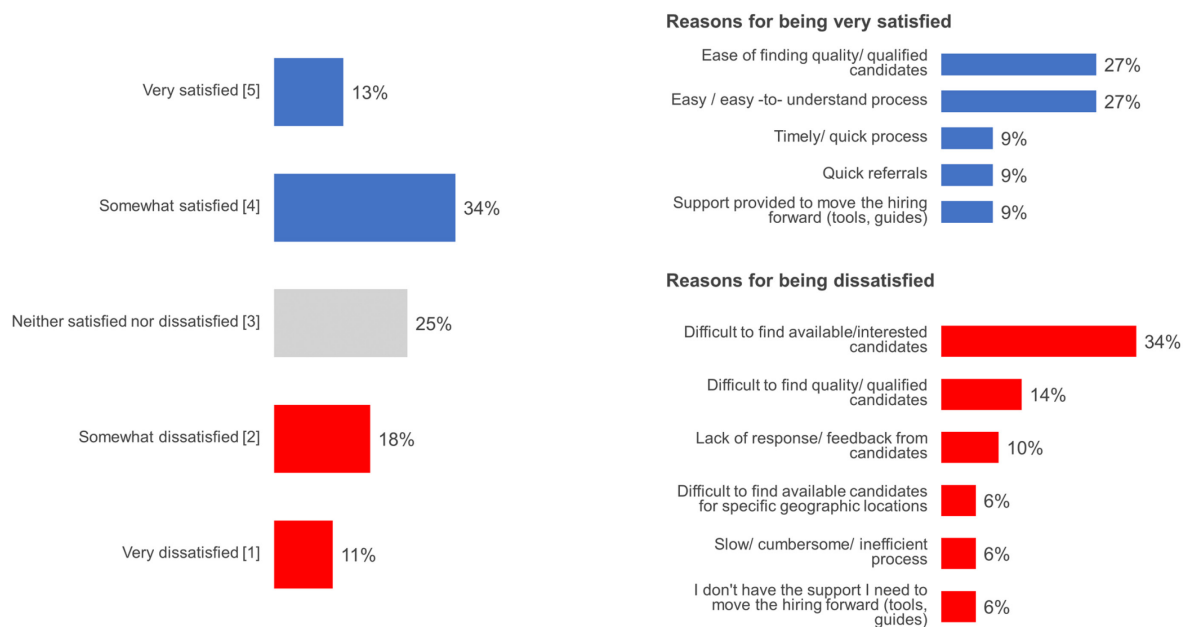


Figure 9. Answer to question 12: Overall, how satisfied are you with the Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities in meeting your hiring needs or those of your clients?

Base: Tried to access the Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities in the past 4 years excluding I don't know / not applicable (n=176). Question 13: What are the primary reasons you were dissatisfied? Question 14: What are the primary reasons you were very satisfied? Question 13 and 14 charts do not include responses under 6%.

Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity

A little more than 4 in 10 (43%) were satisfied with the Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity (ISEO) program. By comparison, 3 in 10 (30%) were dissatisfied with this program. The most common reason to offer a rating of very satisfied centred primarily around the ease of finding quality or qualified candidates coming through ISEO. Dissatisfaction related primarily to difficulty finding interested and available candidates and candidates in specific geographic areas.

Satisfaction with ISEO

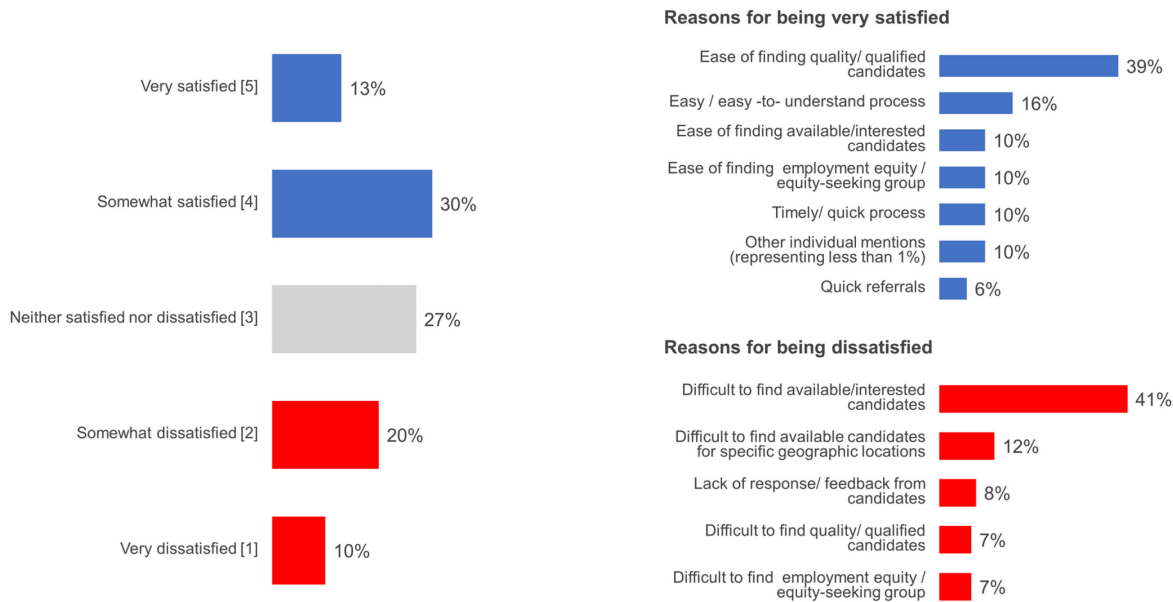


Figure 10. Answer to question 12: Overall, how satisfied are you with the Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity in meeting your hiring needs or those of your clients?

Base: Tried to access the Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity in the past 4 years excluding I don't know / not applicable (n=244). Question 13: What are the primary reasons you were dissatisfied? Question 14: What are the primary reasons you were very satisfied? Question 13 and 14 charts do not include responses under 6%.

Recruitment of Policy Leaders

Just under 2 in 5 (38%) were satisfied with the Recruitment of Policy Leaders (RPL) program, and about as many (37%) were dissatisfied with this program. The most common reason to offer a rating of very satisfied centred primarily around the ease of finding quality or qualified candidates coming through RPL. Dissatisfaction related primarily to difficulty finding interested and available candidates, the quality or qualified candidates, and difficulty finding candidates with the required experience.

There are moderate to strong correlations between satisfaction with the quality of graduate candidates and the RPL program (0.632), and satisfaction with mid-to-senior level candidates and the program (0.679). Additionally, there is a correlation between satisfaction with the diversity of candidates and inventories targeting one employment equity group (0.522).

Satisfaction with RPL

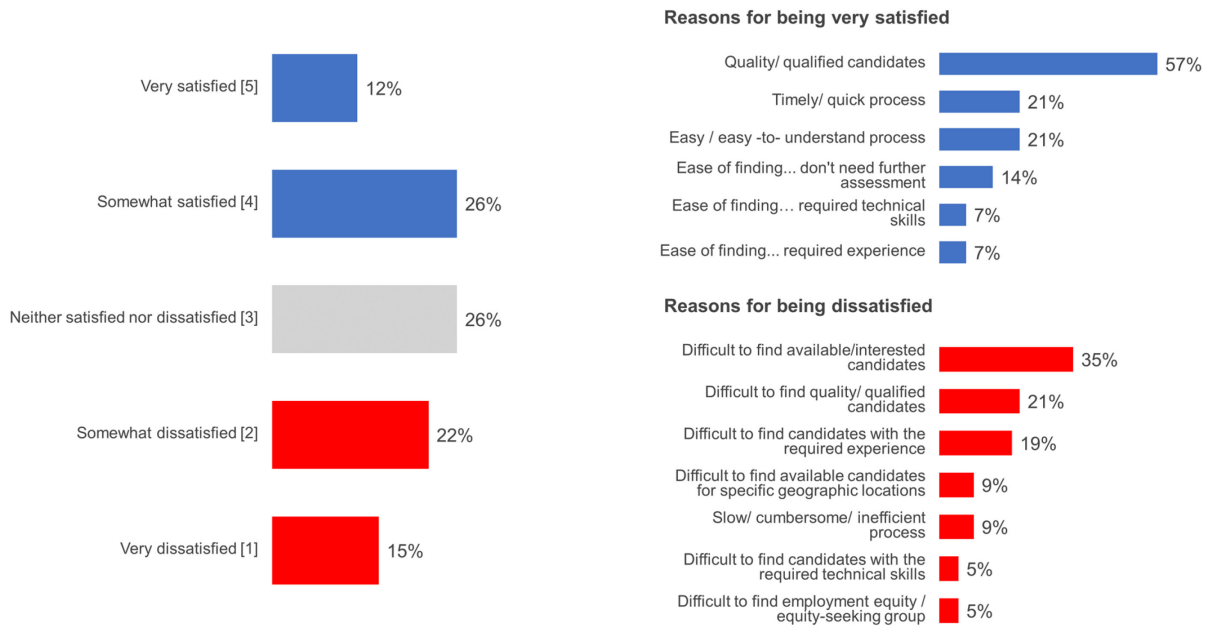


Figure 11. Answer to question 12: Overall, how satisfied are you with the Recruitment of Policy Leaders program in meeting your hiring needs or those of your clients?

Base: Tried to access the Recruitment of Policy Leaders program in the past 4 years excluding I don't know / not applicable (n=117). Question 13: What are the primary reasons you were dissatisfied? Question 14: What are the primary reasons you were very satisfied? Question 13 and 14 charts do not include responses under 6%.

Inventories aimed at one employment equity group

More than 2 in 5 (43%) indicated satisfaction with inventories aimed at one employment equity group. Three in 10 (29%) were dissatisfied with inventories targeting one employment equity group. The most common reasons to offer a rating of very satisfied centred primarily around the ease of finding quality or qualified candidates, interested and available candidates, and candidates that in fact represent employment equity groups. Dissatisfaction related primarily to difficulty finding interested and available candidates, difficulty finding quality or qualified candidates, and the lack of current or updated information.

Satisfaction with inventories targeting one employment equity group

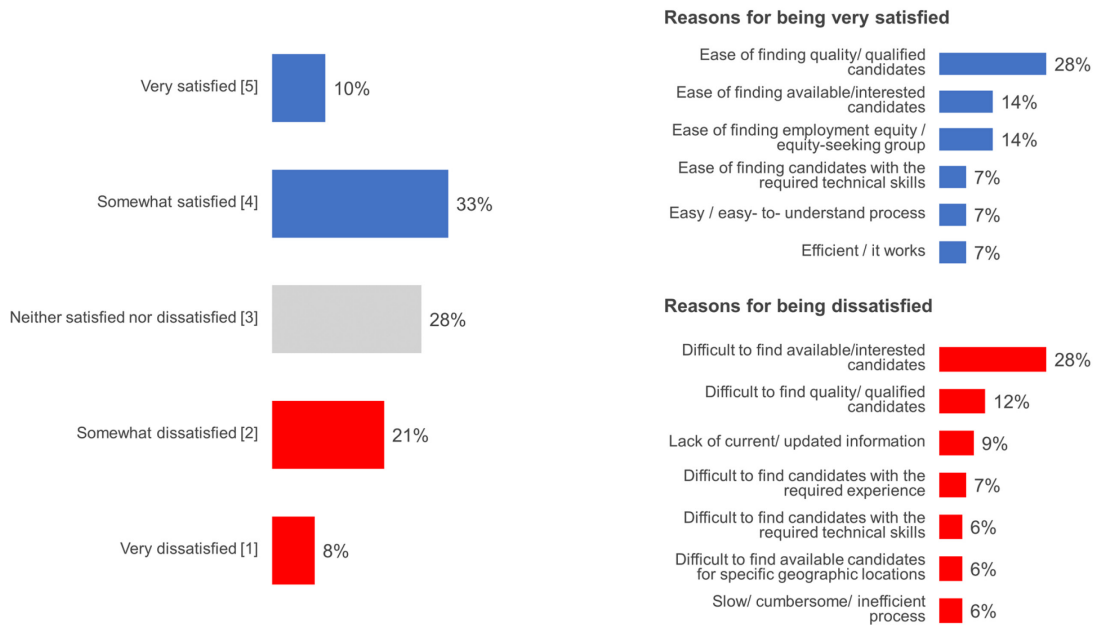


Figure 12. Answer to question 12: Overall, how satisfied are you with inventories targeting one employment equity group in meeting your hiring needs or those of your clients?

Base: Tried to access inventories targeting one employment equity group in the past 4 years excluding I don't know / not applicable (n=281). Question 13: What are the primary reasons you were dissatisfied? Question 14: What are the primary reasons you were very satisfied? Question 13 and 14 charts do not include responses under 6%.

2.6 Future improvements

While the level of satisfaction between recruitment programs and inventories varies substantially, the reasons contributing to satisfaction largely do not. The strongest correlates to satisfaction relate to the availability, quality and interest of candidates. With these results, Ipsos recommends taking the view that two of 3 can be remedied with more frequent contact with candidates to update their availability for work and interests in working for the federal public service and in which roles and capacities. The issue of quality and qualifications can also, at least partly, be improved by having more frequently updated information from candidates about their latest qualifications and experience.

Given the importance of having access to quality candidates, the data suggests, and Ipsos recommends, that the PSC consider the value of undertaking a review of the specific qualifications and qualities most desired by hiring managers and HR specialists to have up to date information on those skills and experiences. That may allow the PSC to consider new or supplementary communications, marketing and/or outreach strategies for attracting the most sought-after qualifications. This likely requires greater marketing and promotion among the public to attract interest in working for the federal public service broadly and in specific positions and roles available. Therefore, the importance and/or urgency of these recommendations should be weighed by PSC in the context of competing priorities within available budgets and resources.

The survey feedback from hiring managers and HR specialists is consistent with these recommendations.

When asked, in an open-ended format, to offer advice or feedback to help the PSC improve student recruitment programs, a variety of responses were provided by the hiring managers and HR specialists who participated in this survey. Increasing hiring managers' and HR advisors' awareness (9%), updating candidate pools (8%) and providing more

up-to-date information (8%) were most commonly cited as actions that can be taken by the PSC to improve student recruitment programs.

Though still a majority, considerably fewer respondents offered feedback and advice as it relates to the PSC graduate and targeted recruitment programs when they were asked to do so, in an open-ended format. Once again, a variety of responses were provided. At 1 in 10 (10%), increasing public awareness emerged as the top mention, followed by providing more up-to-date information (7%) and improving the application process (7%).

In terms of program- and inventory-specific improvements, the research suggests that satisfaction is at least partly driven by the ease of using the program and understanding of the program. In this regard, the PSC should consider ways in which access can be streamlined for hiring managers and HR specialists so that the program is easier to use. Ease of use was found to be as, if not more, important than how quickly positions can be filled using the PSC programs and inventories.

For FSWEF specifically, there is a need to look at student recruitment from employment equity groups. Hiring managers and HR specialists expect student inventories to provide them with access to candidates reflecting these groups. The degree to which this can be achieved influences their level of satisfaction and future use of the programs and inventories.

3. Qualitative findings

3.1 Key challenges faced by hiring managers and HR specialists

There was consensus among participants that “it’s a job-seeker’s” market, while at the same time several participants reported that their departments have been growing. Candidates at all levels, including students, were high in demand, which provides them with a plethora of options. This creates a competitive hiring landscape where it is difficult to successfully fill positions. Participants were especially frustrated with the reality of preparing offers for candidates who end up accepting other offers or counter-offers from their current employer. Time and time again participants described inter-departmental competition for limited candidates, with smaller departments and agencies feeling that they are at a competitive disadvantage. The COVID-19 pandemic was seen by participants to contribute to the current market, although there was a feeling that recruitment challenges predated the pandemic.

Participants spoke of the challenges of attracting new talent into the public service and often this was attributed to hiring requirements and processes. Specially, participants felt that:

- The priority system takes away ability to bring in students who have comparatively limited experience. Some compensated for this challenge by posting the job on a 3-month term and then extending it out when it ended.
- Specialized skill or minimum educational requirements for some roles are sometimes higher than the median in the industry and can greatly limit the pool of eligible candidates at the outset.
- Bilingualism criteria are limiting and can further discourage or exclude otherwise viable candidates. This is especially a challenge when layered on top of all the other qualifications a candidate must meet.
- The application process is archaic and outdated, not aligned with what today’s candidates (especially students) are used to, nor how they want to apply to jobs. It is time consuming and cumbersome to submit an application and to go through the recruitment process, whereas applying for a private-sector job is considerably faster and simpler.
- Confusion and “application fatigue” for candidates who may be applying to multiple departments with their own processes.

- Salary caps limit the ability to negotiate during the offer phase, which sometimes leads to losing the candidate to a better offer elsewhere (private sector or another department).
- Intense security screening can result in losing otherwise exceptional candidates, makes it difficult to bring in students and delays the hiring process.

A lack of diversity in candidates was also discussed by some. Participants attributed this to “systemic issues” with the process that results in self-screening out or being screened out (for example, educational requirements). Other reasons include reluctance of candidates to self-declare to certain groups for fear of not getting the position or other personal reasons.

“The lack of diversity, so you end up with a pool of candidates who are really not representative of the Canadian public. Maybe diverse candidates are self-screening out, thinking “I am not going to be able to meet all these eligibility requirements”, so they don’t even apply in the first place. Or, they get screened out before the written exam or the interview process because of some systemic obstacle that’s just baked into the process.”

Retention-related challenges also surfaced in the discussions. Specifically, there was discussion of “the great resignation,” better opportunities offered elsewhere and a general shift in attitudes among young people who want to try different careers as opposed to staying in a department for the rest of their careers.

3.2 Familiarity with PSC recruitment programs and inventories

Participants were generally of the view that PSC recruitment programs and inventories are highly advertised, especially among HR specialists. The programs were described by participants as “basic knowledge” for any staffing advisor. However, as discussions progressed, it was evident that familiarity with some programs was low – notably, Post-Secondary Recruitment and Recruitment of Policy Leaders – with some participants feeling unsure of the extent to which programs are relevant to the positions for which their departments tend to hire.

More communication and marketing of these programs was therefore welcomed by participants. That said, some hiring managers admitted that they often rely on HR specialists to bring programs to their attention. Ensuring HR specialists have the relevant information was therefore seen as more important. Reactions to current marketing of PSR programs as free, offering year-round access and available across Canada were lukewarm at best. There was a clear sense that these were basic expectations and do not add value. Instead, messaging that directly addresses the perceived deficiencies of PSR programs and inventories may be more effective in generating interest in PSC programs (discussed more fully in sections 3.4 and 3.5).

“I would say that if you're a staffing advisor and don't know about those, there's a real problem.”

"I'm familiar with them. I didn't have to use the RAP, but we used RPL and PSR. I've never seen that page. I've always had a hard time finding all the information in one place. It's scattered around a little bit, or maybe I'm not looking in the right place." [Translated from French]

“I had to do a full recruitment strategy to target our employment equity gaps, and I had to sit down and meet with our recruitment and HR folks for them to feed me all of this wonderful information so that we can access these programs and inventories. I think that information should have been shared more widely. Even our HR advisor, who was familiar with some of the programs, did not know the full comprehensive list of what was out there.”

PSC programs and inventories were part of a mix of tools participants used to fill entry and mid-level positions. Given the recruitment challenges discussed above, participants relied on multiple methods to maximize a job posting’s reach and also maximize the number of qualified candidates responding to a post. Specifically, they made use of:

- **Departmental-specific advertised processes** – These were generally preferred as they provide managers with complete control over the design of the process according to specific needs.
- **Departmental pools** – These were often created proactively and in anticipation of future vacancies. These were perceived as efficient in terms of access to candidates who were already screened, met requirements and were organized by level, which shortens time frames for filling a vacancy. Again, there was a sense of control over departmental pools, especially in light of long delays in efforts to create cross-departmental pools.
- **Social media and word of mouth** – Some bought ads on social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) to amplify reach of postings, especially for positions or types of candidates who do not traditionally visit GC Jobs. Others posted to their personal networks (for example, LinkedIn and GConnex) or informally reached out to their contacts in hope to garner interest. Others still conducted targeted searches on LinkedIn in hopes of enticing “passive” candidates.
- **Outreach to partner organizations** – Sharing posts with local employment centres and associations was common to reach candidates from employment equity groups or with specialized skills.
- **Student fairs and events** – These allow for direct outreach and contact with prospective candidates.
- **Headhunting firms** – A small number had experiences using executive search firms for mid- to high-level positions or agencies that focus on employment equity groups.

“What I tend to do to complement that advertising on GC Jobs is reach out to local employment centres with plain language job advertisements. I either ask for direct referrals for candidates, particularly those from employment equity groups, or we invite interested candidates to contact us directly. For student recruitment, our organization has a lot of flexibility. We tend to recruit through job fairs. We will go to university campuses and interview folks. I have also posted a job on the Career Marketplace on Facebook.”

There was no clear hierarchy between these different sources and where the PSC was placed by participants. Participants used all tools at their disposal including PSC programs and inventories where relevant. There was a sense of desperation, of drawing on as many avenues as possible given the recruitment challenges described above.

3.3 Overall experiences using PSC recruitment programs and inventories

Participants shared mixed experiences using PSC recruitment programs and inventories, and a number of cross-cutting themes emerged in the discussions. Firstly, and unsurprisingly, past experience using PSC recruitment programs and inventories matters. Lack of success in hiring candidates from PSC programs and inventories coloured interest and usage in future. This was a barrier that HR specialists sometimes faced when presenting PSC programs and inventories to hiring managers; there was reluctance to use these tools if past experience did not yield a successful candidate. The argument that these pools and inventories are more efficient rang hollow. Where these negative past experiences exist, participants required proof that these inventories and pools “work” for them to use them more and be champions of them.

“I don’t know that they can just say it. I think they have to prove it. The problem is that we have all these other resources now. The fact that people use GConnex, job boards, Facebook, and LinkedIn, points to the fact that people don’t think that the Public Service Commission is doing a very good job with their inventories. We’re going to have to see results before we can start talking about it with our fellow hiring managers and saying, “This great experience that I had.””

Second, a main factor in the perceived lack of success is candidates either accepting alternative offers, or the pools and inventories contain candidates who are no longer actively looking for a position. This was frustrating for HR specialists and hiring managers alike and left participants feeling that the process was a waste of time. As discussed further in

section 3.5, the qualitative research found significant opportunities to enhance program design and accompanying communications in order to maintain and instill belief that PSC pools and inventories are “evergreen.”

“For me, it's the availability of candidates. Candidates are contacted and they are already hired in another position in another department. I don't know if its an update issue, but over the years, I've worked in three departments and it happened in all cases.”

Third, PSC pools and inventories suffered from the perception that screening is too broad or “simply checking a box” with no validation that candidates do indeed have the skills and experience required. There was a view among some participants that this perception is sometimes misguided, but it is a challenge to encourage hiring managers to make the connections between their desired criteria and the screening criteria.

“By nature, inventories tend to ask screening questions of candidates that are quite broad so they can be applicable to a number of positions. I'll use a specific example. I had a manager who wanted to have somebody who had SAP experience, which is a financial software that we use in our organization. An inventory may ask the question, “Do you have experience in accounts receivable or accounts payable?” It's literally the same thing, but it's not specifically System Applications and Products in Data Processing (SAP) as an administrative program. So, it was less valuable for managers to put in the brain power to think about how candidates might meet their experience.”

Fourth, participants noted that there are too few candidates in pools aimed at employment equity groups. The research found scope for building awareness of PSC pools and inventories through employment equity groups and organizations that work with these groups. By giving these groups confidence that the government is committed to diversity and “invested in their growth,” the hope is that this would result in PSC employment equity pools containing a healthier number of candidates.

Finally, several dimensions of what constitutes a quality candidate emerged in the discussions. For some, quality was tied to commitment candidates showed during the recruitment process – for example, showing up to interviews, being prepared and showing enthusiasm during the interview, and not dropping out of the process. Others tended to tie quality to how candidates performed on the job in terms of their general attitude, reliability, and eagerness to learn (especially in the case of students). Others still tended to hone in on the extent to which candidates' skills and past experience aligned with the job profile.

“Quality...I think it depends on the job that you're talking about. But if I can speak about a couple of FSWEP students that we've hired on my larger team, they're super enthusiastic, really sharp with things like technology, and very eager to learn. I think those are all hallmarks of great FSWEP students, because we can't expect them to come to the table with too, too much work experience or knowledge. But if they have the capability and the eagerness to learn, I think that's what really sets apart a “good” FSWEP student.”

3.4 Nuances by program and inventory type

3.4.1 Federal Student Work Experience Program

The Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP) was by the far the most well-known and well-used of all the PSC programs examined in the qualitative research. Encouragingly, many went on to report positive experiences and results from using FSWEP. These positive experiences were primarily underpinned by perceptions that FSWEP provides:

- Access to a healthy number of diverse students that results in successful placements. Participants generally felt that they were provided with a good number of referrals to pick from. The diversity of FSWEP candidates, in

terms of their backgrounds and subject of study, and the ability to access pools based on certain equity and diversity criteria were further highlighted as positive. Many had success in filling positions.

- An easy, quick and efficient process for accessing candidates. There were next to no negative comments made on the FSWEF process and a few went on to comment positively on the ease with which they can communicate with candidates directly.
- A streamlined and familiar process. Unlike CO-OP, where participants have to work around the systems and processes of individual educational institutions, participants can access students from across the country via FSWEF. High levels of past usage meant that many had grown accustomed to the FSWEF process.

It was evident that a core value proposition of FSWEF is the opportunity to develop relationships with students who can be bridged⁷ into longer-term positions. The program was seen to allow departments to get to know students, fill priority positions, and develop tangible links with prospective long-term candidates. The latter is especially important given the challenges in attracting talent in the current climate (discussed in section 3.1). At the same time, students were able to gain work experience and get to know departments. There was a “win-win” element to FSWEF.

The feedback on the quality of students was mixed. Some had experiences with high quality FSWEF candidates. These participants generally gauged quality once candidates started their placements in terms of their general attitude and drive. There was some acknowledgment that FSWEF provided access to students who had proactively applied to a program and were therefore motivated. At the same time, others felt the quality of students was lacking. Some were unresponsive when contacted for an interview, turned up at the interview unprepared or late, or were not bilingual as indicated on their resume or profile. Some lose interest and drop out either right away or near the end of the hiring process. There was also a sense of entitlement perceived among the younger generation, spilling into their attitude regarding employment. However, this tended to be perceived as a “generational” issue as opposed to being specific to FSWEF.

“The fact that we can sort and choose different criteria is great. If you want to hire a person that self-declares as a member of an employment equity group, you can easily do that.”

“We’ve had good results with FSWEF. We do look at it as an opportunity for future bridging. I’ve had a good experience with getting referrals quickly and getting someone hired fairly quickly. In almost all cases, it did work out well in terms of keeping them on.”

“I love using FSWEF to fill positions. Every FSWEF student we’ve ever hired out of there has been excellent. I think the tool is great for communicating with candidates. The platform on the back end is easy to use for notifying candidates who have been contacted, and the referral of resumes is super clear and easy to work with. I don’t see any improvements that you could make on a user side, from a staffing advisor to FSWEF, as it is right now.”

“It is a program where people have actually pre-screened these candidates. They’ve proactively applied, their information is accessible; instead of having to start from the beginning, you’ve already got a list of candidates you can choose from, from different backgrounds, who are motivated and want to do things. I found that there was a lot of really great potential candidates in those pools, and they were quick to pull from.”

“The lottery system” was a main source of dissatisfaction with FSWEF. This was especially the case when managers wished to hire students locally or offer a placement to a “great student” they met at a fair or on online networking sites.

⁷ Student bridging generally refers to the non-advertised appointment of a student who was employed in the federal public service through a student program such as the Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEF), the Post-Secondary Co-op/Internship Program (CO-OP) or the Research Affiliate Program (RAP).

Several noted that they resort to hiring students as “casual hires,” at the expense of losing the opportunity to bridge students, which is highly valued. More broadly, the random selection aspect of FSWEF gave the impression that the program remained “rules-bound” and out of step with the more nimble and flexible direction to staffing in recent times – one person highlighted the changes where advertised and non-advertised positions are deemed equal as an example of this new direction.

As already alluded to, there was some frustration with candidates who have accepted offers remaining in the pool and perception that candidates lack commitment once offered a position. Inability to select multiple employment equity groups in one pull, duplication of candidates across different pulls, and limited sort functionality were the other sources of frustration with FSWEF found in the research. This was seen to add unnecessary and time-consuming additional work for participants.

“You can’t just go into FSWEF and pick someone for the first time. It’s random, you randomly get students. Hiring managers don’t like that you can’t do a targeted referral from the FSWEF system. They don’t like that it’s random. So, they can’t be networking on Facebook or LinkedIn or a career fair, and have the student say, “Hey, I’m in FSWEF.” They can’t say, “Oh, great, I’ll pull you for an opportunity.”

“We pull for different areas in the Greater Toronto Area. So, Hamilton, Toronto, Mississauga, and we pull from three different inventories such as the one that contains Indigenous candidates and the one with employment equity group candidates. This year, I have to hire 90 admin students in our area. I ended up with 600 names, and there’s 70 repeats. It’s almost impossible to track them. That’s been one of our biggest struggles. We also find that a lot of the admin students that we try to hire are very fickle. They drop out right away, or they drop out right at the last second. So, we’ve done all the paperwork, and then all of a sudden, they say, “Okay, I’m not interested anymore.”

3.4.2 Post-Secondary Co-operative Education and Internship Program

Access to high-quality candidates with relevant specialized skillsets was the main perceived value of the Post-Secondary Co-operative Education and Internship Program (CO-OP). Several participants noted the relationships they have built with institutions over the years and appreciate the support they receive from institutions in promoting opportunities with students. Postings tended to generate good levels of interest and allowed managers to pick the “best of the best.” There was a perception that candidates are eager, reliable and “hungry to learn” because work placements are part of their degree or diploma requirements.

“With CO-OPs, you make your posting, and you’re wading through the 50 or 100 applications, you’ve got 30 or 40, and then you’re picking down to the best. You’ve got to be quick, but it really is just phenomenal ability to target the skillset that you need in the universities.”

“The CO-OP students are there to work, and they want to learn, and they need those credits, and they want a high mark.”

In terms of negatives, CO-OP processes were described as “labour intensive” when compared to FSWEF. Platforms, timelines and submission dates vary by institution, which creates more “legwork” for managers. Timing was also an issue, as these processes can be out of line with departmental budgetary timelines and in some institutions the process can be slower than FSWEF. For a few, CO-OP was a “last resort”.

A number of participants pointed out that excluding international students and permanent residents who may be excellent candidates limits the reach of co-op programs. It’s important to note that since conducting this research, there

have been [amendments to the Public Service Employment Act](#) that provide international students and permanent residents the same hiring preference as Canadian citizens.

Finally, participants in one group questioned whether CO-OP should be considered as a PSC program, as PSC involvement is limited to a list of approved CO-OP programs.

“CO-OP is excellent, but it’s just a lot more work from a staffing and manager perspective, in that you have to work directly with the educational institution to post your job and conduct your interviews. They typically have their own platform, so you need to get an account set up with them to do all that. I’d say it’s a little bit more labour intensive than FSWEF, where you select an area of study that you’re interested in, a level of education, college, university, whatever, and then you’re just referred a bunch of candidates to assess. With CO-OP, there’s a little bit more legwork. You have to write a job ad and have it in both official languages, and work with the educational institute to actually post it, and conduct the interviews.”

“I would say in a lot of cases, it’s a last resort for my managers because of the amount of work required; they’ll choose a different way to hire. But it is great, when you get them, they’re great, but it is a lot of work.”

3.4.3 Research Affiliate Program

The common perception was that the Research Affiliate Program (RAP) is only applicable to science-based positions or research-heavy departments and agencies. Therefore, many participants did not see RAP as relevant to their departments.

“It’s usually scientists who have just recently gotten out of school and started to publish, and they’re looking to get into the public sector, and then, they apply with their research.”

Among participants with some experience of RAP, there was appreciation of the stability the program provides. It allows departments to hire a research-focused candidate and integrate them for up to 2 years. Usage also came across as more passive than active – in other words, a candidate will approach them and say they are in RAP, as opposed to the HR specialist or hiring manager going to RAP to find candidates.

There was a view that RAP is inflexible by capping the number of hours per week a candidate can work, which in turn limits how many candidates are interested in RAP.

“Stability on my end. I like it because if I have temporary funding for science-based research positions, I can hire a student for a longer period of time than a semester basis, and they can meaningfully contribute on that project. Under RAP, you can hire for up to 2 years, I believe. So, you can hire for the length of someone’s academic studies for a master’s student, or the last 2 years of their undergrad, whereas FSWEFs need to be hired on a semesterly basis, and a RAP student can be integrated as part of a project fund, or for scientific research.”

“It is working, but it’s very rigid. It only allows for 25 hours. But candidates could easily do more hours, especially at the doctorate level. More hours and more flexibility would be helpful.”

3.4.4 Post-Secondary Recruitment

In the qualitative research, awareness was lowest with respect to the Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR) program. Many participants admitted to knowing very little about this program and who is included in the inventories. This was the main reason for lack of PSR use.

Among the few participants with at least some awareness of or experience with PSR, the feedback tended to skew negative. Participants shared limited success with recruiting candidates in the past and showed little interest in using the inventory again. Specifically, they noted that:

- The target stream for any given year may not be relevant to their department.
- It is unclear how “fresh” and up to date the inventory is – there was a perception the inventory contains candidates that applied several years ago, and participants did not wish to waste their time as these candidates may have since moved on or they were deemed unsuccessful in past efforts of drawing from PSR.
- There is very little pre-assessment with PSR, which does not save departments and agencies any time compared with conducting an advertised process. In other words, there is little added value.

A few were under the impression that the screening questions are too general and were put off by the lack of filtering options available (this impression is incorrect, as PSR is an inventory, not a pre-screened pool). Overall, the participants generally struggled to identify any positive features with PSR.

“A comment that I’ve heard from many hiring managers is that when I mention PSR, they just automatically say, “No, I already tried that, it didn’t work.” Because I’ve seen, or they’ve seen, that pool was in 2018, 2019, and you can still pull candidates from it, it’s still open. They want something newer. They want something fresher. They just think that it’s stale.”

3.4.5 Recruitment of Policy Leaders

The high calibre of candidates was the main draw of the Recruitment of Policy Leaders (RPL) program. These candidates were seen as strong on many fronts including academic background, relevant work experience and excellent skills. At the same time, participants felt that there is a lot of competition for candidates and there are too few candidates in the program.

“My only criticism is that there aren’t enough candidates. The candidates are so top notch that they’re snapped up very quickly, and that also makes RPL not a very good option for temporary opportunities, like for staffing term contracts, as opposed to indeterminate, which are permanent contracts. The candidates are so in demand that they have multiple offers. I tell my manager, “If you can’t offer an indeterminate or permanent position, don’t even bother with RPL.”

The process of liaising via a mentor came under criticism. Having to go through a mentor felt cumbersome and participants did not appreciate being on the mentor’s timelines, which can drag out the process and potentially result in losing out on prospective candidates. The process of working with a mentor felt too informal, which diminished confidence in the program among some.

Several participants would have benefitted from more information about RPL. They were unaware of how to access the program and wondered whether their department was eligible to access it. There was a suggestion of extending the scope of candidates beyond policy, which would increase interest in the program.

“I wasn’t aware that any department could use the RPL program. My impression is that there is an intake process for RPL and a department has to apply to be considered and the intake window is very limited. I have no understanding of how to access that pool of talent, and I’ve never done it.”

“I like the Recruitment of Policy Leaders program. It would be good if it could accommodate other candidates, not just in politics. Maybe by screening candidates in advance for their background. I use it frequently.”

3.5 Future improvements

The qualitative research revealed numerous ways in which PSC programs could be improved. Across all programs, participants saw opportunities with respect to:

1. communication and marketing of PSC pools and inventories
2. quality control of pools and inventories
3. streamlined processes
4. enhanced pre-screening and assessment of candidates
5. modernization of tools

1. Communication and marketing of PSC pools and inventories

- A one-stop shop where information for all PSC inventories and pools can be found and increasing awareness of this.
- Testimonials from past managers and HR specialists who have used PSC programs and inventories; these audiences can act as credible voices to mitigate negative “bureaucratic mysteries” that act as a barrier to use.
- More information on the specific profile of candidates in each pool and inventory and tailoring that profile to each department and agency’s needs.
- More communications on what is being done to create programs and inventories that are diverse.
- More information on how and whether PSC programs and inventories are kept fresh, especially if there is a certain time of the year when programs and inventories are refreshed – for example, a newsletter can be issued when there is a batch of new candidates. This would allow departments to better align their usage of those programs with whenever the lists are being refreshed.
- Increase awareness of the fact that hiring students is not limited to the summer months.
- Both HR specialists and hiring managers would benefit from more communication on all of the above items.

“What would make it easier for HR personnel and hiring managers who are looking to access pools and inventories is to have a centralized place where it could all be accessed. Some of the pools and inventories are marketed on GCpedia, whereas others are on the PSC website, and it can be confusing to know where to go to find them. With everybody being busy, it would be great to be able to have easier access, in a user-friendly way, and to find them all in a common place.”

“We have hiring needs any time of the year. It’s not something that follows the calendar. But it would be helpful to know when there is a continuous intake, and when some of these programs are updated every six months. That, to me, would be a little bit helpful, because I know I’ll know to keep an eye on it in May, let’s say, if there’s going to be new RPL candidates coming out...to get those new candidates, not the ones that have already found a job.”

2. Quality control of pools and inventories

- Include mechanisms and prompts that require applicants to update their profile on a regular basis.
- A feedback mechanism where HR specialists and managers who access programs and pools can report back to the PSC on which candidates should be removed because they are no longer interested in or available for a position.
- PSC validation of information submitted by candidates to avoid misrepresentation (for example, second language proficiency).

“I wish that basic screening was done to validate the experience, education or language proficiency that candidates indicate in their profile. There should be some sort of quality control done before I access those inventories.”

3. Streamlined processes

- Ensure the same candidates do not end up showing up in spreadsheet pulls multiple times.
- Opportunity for the PSC to streamline departmental pools for functional positions that are common for all departments.
- Simplify the process for applicants so they only submit a single application, and then have the PSC funnel their information into whichever PSC or departmental pool or inventory is most relevant and in alignment with profiles and interests.
- Provide tips, tricks and other guidance toolkits to help applicants through the application process.

4. Enhanced pre-screening and assessment of candidates

- Pre-screen candidates in pools or inventories for statements of merit criteria.
- Include basic pre-assessments that allow managers to filter and hone in on specific competencies.

“Some sort of assessment should be conducted. If there’s a test, or even just an inbox exercise that demonstrates some competencies such as thinking things through, it makes the process fairer since everyone did the same test.”

5. Modernization of tools

- Provide a centralized, user-friendly, interactive tool (perhaps an app) where managers can easily review and access candidates (without having to request lengthy spreadsheets) and where the candidate profiles are up to date and provide a more holistic picture of the person (over and above a CV).
- Applicants should be able to submit their applications more easily and faster, and be able to keep them up-to-date through an interactive platform.

“It’s about bringing us into the 21st century, and having a portal, having some kind of app, something that’s more self-serve. It’s great that we have the Commission, but at the same time... it’d be great if we didn’t have to request these long Excel spreadsheets. Something that is more interactive, where it’s a cross between LinkedIn and some other app that gives us a bit more control over our interactions with the candidates, and the candidates refresh their experience and their CVs.”

The table below summarizes the key improvements suggested by hiring managers and HR advisors organized by the main PSC programs discussed.

Program	Improvements
Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP)	Provide hiring managers with more control by enabling referrals and selection by name Allow students to register their top department and position preferences Build broader awareness about the program among students Expand the number of potential candidates by also including part-time students in the pool, not just full-time students

Post-Secondary Co-operative Education and Internship Program (CO-OP)	Have a centralized PSC service that streamlines processes and timelines across all institutions and deals with the various co-op offices
Post-secondary Recruitment (PSR)	Conduct considerably more communications and marketing activities with managers Make less generic candidate information available to managers so a specific level or type of experience or skill can be identified and filtered Turn this into a pre-assessed pool
Recruitment of Policy Leaders (RPL)	Have more candidates Provide better information about the program and who it is relevant for Implement a quick and simple process with clear persons to contact and timelines to avoid delays due to the mentor's schedule

Appendix A. Online survey

Hiring managers' and HR specialists' views of Public Service Commission recruitment programs and inventories

[Language]

Préférez-vous continuer en français ou en anglais?

Would you prefer to continue in English or French?

- Anglais / English
- Français / French

[Introduction screen]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this short survey. It should take you less than 10 minutes, but if you need to step away, your answers will be saved so that you can return at a more convenient time. All of your responses will remain anonymous, so please be as honest as possible in your answers.

Participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw your consent at any time. Your survey answers will be combined with the answers from all other participants and used for aggregate reporting.

Survey questions

1. In your current federal public service role, are you involved in decisions about hiring employees? (Candidates could include full-time secondary and post-secondary students, college and university graduates, and those with advanced degrees who could fill policy positions at the EC-4 level or higher.)

- Yes
- No

[IF YES SKIP TO Q3, OTHERS CONTINUE]

2. Are you an HR specialist?

- Yes
- No

[IF YES CONTINUE, IF NO THANK AND TERMINATE USING MESSAGE BELOW]

Terminate message: Thank you for your interest. This survey is for HR specialists or those involved in decisions about hiring employees for the public service.

3. How long have you worked for the public service in a capacity that involved hiring employees or as an HR specialist? This would include any time spent working in other organizations or roles within the public service.

1. 2 years or less
2. 3 to 4 years
3. 5 to 10 years
4. More than 10 years

4. How many people have you been involved in hiring over the past 2 years? Your best guess is fine.

1. None
2. 1 to 2
3. 3 to 4
4. 5 to 10
5. 11 to 20
6. 21 to 50
7. More than 50

5. What are the main challenges in using Public Service Commission (PSC) student recruitment programs and inventories (Federal Student Work Experience Program, Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity, Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities etc.)? (select all that apply)

[RANDOMIZE]

- Finding candidates with the required education
- Finding candidates with the required technical skills
- Finding candidates with the required experience
- Finding bilingual candidates
- Finding candidates from employment equity or employment equity groups
- Finding available/interested candidates
- Finding available candidates for specific geographic locations

- PSC recruitment programs take too long to get referrals
- I don't understand the process for hiring through the PSC
- I don't have the PSC support I need to move the hiring forward (tools, guides)
- PSC information on recruitment programs is hard to find
- [ALWAYS THIRD LAST] Other (specify)
- [ALWAYS SECOND LAST] [EXCLUSIVE] I have not faced challenges
- [ALWAYS LAST] [EXCLUSIVE] I have not used PSC student recruitment programs or inventories

6. What are the main challenges in using PSC graduate and targeted recruitment programs and inventories to fill entry to mid-to-senior positions (Post-Secondary Recruitment, Recruitment of Policy Leaders, etc.)? (select all that apply)

[RANDOMIZE]

- Finding candidates with the required technical skills
- Finding candidates with the required experience
- Finding bilingual candidates
- Finding available/interested candidates
- Finding available candidates for specific geographic locations
- Finding candidates from a specific employment equity/equity-seeking group
- PSC recruitment programs are not timely/take too long to create
- PSC recruitment programs take too long to get referrals
- Finding candidates that don't need further assessment
- I don't understand the process for hiring through the PSC
- I don't have the PSC support I need to move the hiring forward (tools, guides)
- PSC information on recruitment programs is hard to find
- [ALWAYS THIRD LAST] Other (specify)
- [ALWAYS SECOND LAST] [EXCLUSIVE] I have not faced challenges
- [ALWAYS LAST] [EXCLUSIVE] I have not used PSC recruitment programs or inventories

7. Thinking about the most recent position you filled, how easy or difficult was it to find qualified candidates?

1. Very easy
2. Somewhat easy
3. Somewhat difficult
4. Very difficult
5. Not applicable

The PSC supports departments and agencies in recruiting talented people across the country by providing innovative and modern services, tools and practices.

8. How familiar are you with PSC recruitment programs and inventories for hiring?

[GRID ROWS]

- Students (full-time high school, CEGEP, college or university student)
- Students from a specific employment equity group
- Graduates (college and university graduates)

- Mid-to-senior level positions in policy
- Pools or inventories targeting one employment equity group

[GRID COLUMNS]

1. Very familiar
2. Somewhat familiar
3. Not very familiar
4. Not at all familiar

[IF AT LEAST 5 HIRES IN Q4 CONTINUE, OTHERWISE SKIP TO Q10]

9. Thinking about the last 5 people you hired, how many of them were found through PSC recruitment programs or inventories?

1. None
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3
5. 4
6. 5

10. Have you ever tried to access candidates through the following PSC recruitment programs or inventories?

[GRID ROWS]

- Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP)
- Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity (ISEO)
- Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities (EOSD)
- Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR)
- Recruitment of Policy Leaders (RPL)
- Inventories targeting one employment equity group
- Another PSC recruitment program or inventory (specify)

[GRID COLUMNS]

- Yes
- No

[IF YES TO ANY ROW AT Q10 CONTINUE, OTHERWISE SKIP TO Q16]

11. How recently have you tried to access candidates from these programs or inventories?

[GRID ROWS] – PIPE IN ROWS SELECTED YES AT Q10

- Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP)
- Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity (ISEO)
- Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities (EOSD)
- Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR)

- Recruitment of Policy Leaders (RPL)
- Inventories targeting one employment equity group
- The other PSC recruitment program or inventory you specified earlier

[GRID COLUMNS]

1. Within the last 3 months
2. 3 to 6 months
3. 9 months to a year
4. More than a year
5. Within the past 2 years
6. 3 to 4 years ago
7. 5 to 10 years ago
8. More than 10 years ago
9. I don't know

12. Overall, how satisfied are you with the PSC's recruitment programs or inventories in meeting your hiring needs or those of your clients?

[GRID ROWS] – PIPE IN ROWS SELECTED IN Q11 IF RESPONDENT SELECTED 3-4 YEARS OR MORE RECENTLY

- Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP)
- Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity (ISEO)
- Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities (EOSD)
- Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR)
- Recruitment of Policy Leaders (RPL)
- Inventories targeting one employment equity group
- The other PSC recruitment program or inventory you specified earlier

[GRID COLUMNS]

1. Very satisfied
2. Somewhat satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Somewhat dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied
6. I don't know/not applicable

[IF ANSWERED SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED OR VERY DISSATISFIED TO AT LEAST ONE ROW AT Q12 CONTINUE. ALL OTHERS SKIP TO Q14]

13. You indicated you were somewhat or very dissatisfied with the following program(s). What are the main reasons you were dissatisfied?

[GRID ROWS] PIPE IN ROWS ANSWERED SOMEWHAT OR VERY DISSATISFIED IN Q12

- Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP)
- Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity (ISEO)

- Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities (EOSD)
- Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR)
- Recruitment of Policy Leaders (RPL)
- Inventories targeting one employment equity group
- The other PSC recruitment program or inventory you specified earlier

[GRID COLUMNS]

OPEN-TEX BOX

[IF ANSWERED VERY SATISFIED TO AT LEAST ONE ROW AT Q12 CONTINUE. ALL OTHERS SKIP TO Q15]

14. You indicated you were very satisfied with the following program(s). What are the main reasons you were very satisfied?

[GRID ROWS] PIPE IN ROWS ANSWERED VERY SATISFIED IN Q12

- Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP)
- Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity (ISEO)
- Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities (EOSD)
- Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR)
- Recruitment of Policy Leaders (RPL)
- Inventories targeting one employment equity group
- The other PSC recruitment program or inventory you specified earlier

[GRID COLUMNS]

OPEN-TEX BOX

15. Please rate your experience accessing PSC recruitment programs or inventories on the following. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with ...

[GRID ROWS] [randomize]

- Your familiarity with what is available through PSC programs and inventories
- Your familiarity with how to access candidates through PSC programs and inventories
- How easy it is to access candidates through PSC programs and inventories
- How quickly you can access candidates through PSC programs and inventories
- Quality of student candidates
- Quality of graduate candidates
- Quality of candidates for mid-to-senior level positions
- Diversity of candidates (employment equity and employment equity groups)
- Availability of candidates
- Interest of candidates
- Information provided by the PSC about their programs and inventories
- PSC advice and guidance on finding suitable candidates

[GRID COLUMNS]

1. Very satisfied
2. Somewhat satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Somewhat dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied
6. I don't know/not applicable

16. What advice or feedback can you offer to help PSC improve student recruitment programs?

[OPEN-END]

17. What advice or feedback can you offer to help PSC improve graduate and targeted recruitment programs?

[OPEN-END]

The final 4 questions are for statistical purposes only.

18. In which organization do you currently work? (select one)

- List to be shown - [GC InfoBase - Inventory of Federal Organizations and Interests \(tbs-sct.gc.ca\)](https://tbs-sct.gc.ca)
- Other

19. How long have you worked for the federal public service as a manager or an HR specialist?

1. 2 years or less
2. 3 to 4 years
3. 5 to 10 years
4. More than 10 years

20. In which province or territory do you work?

- National Capital Region
- Quebec (excluding the National Capital Region)
- Ontario (excluding the National Capital Region)
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Prince Edward Island
- Nova Scotia
- New Brunswick
- Manitoba
- Saskatchewan
- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Nunavut
- Northwest Territories
- Yukon
- Outside Canada
- Prefer not to answer

21. What is your age group?

1. 24 years and under
2. 25 to 29 years
3. 30 to 34 years
4. 35 to 39 years
5. 40 to 44 years
6. 45 to 49 years
7. 50 to 54 years
8. 55 to 59 years
9. 60 years and over
10. Prefer not to answer

Appendix B. Discussion guide

Hiring Managers' and Human Resources Specialists' Views of Public Service Commission Recruitment Programs and Inventories

Recruitment form and discussion guide for focus groups and interviews with hiring managers and human resources specialists

Note for reviewers

The table below shows the breakdown of focus group sessions and interviews. This line of enquiry is **qualitative** in nature, meaning that the value is in detailed understanding of perceptions and barriers to using programs and inventories. It is not the intention of qualitative research to be comprehensive in its coverage. The qualitative evidence will complement the statistically reliable findings from the quantitative surveys planned for the same audiences. In our past experience, 6 to 8 participants is the ideal number for a full discussion within time constraints. We recommend sessions lasting no longer than 90 minutes, ideally 60 to 75 minutes, to minimise the research burden and secure a good response.

Data collection method	Target audience	Language
1 online focus group (6 to 8 participants)	HR specialists with recent experience using Public Service Commission (PSC) programs and inventories. Ensure representation from a mix of different departments and type of programs accessed.	English
1 online focus group (6 to 8 participants)	HR specialists with no recent experience using PSC programs and inventories. Target those who are aware of PSC programs and inventories and ensure representation from a mix of different departments.	English
1 online focus group (6 to 8 participants)	Hiring managers with recent experience using PSC programs and inventories. Ensure representation from a mix of different departments and type of programs accessed.	English

1 online focus group (6 to 8 participants)	Hiring managers with no recent experience using PSC programs and inventories. Target those who are aware of PSC programs and inventories and ensure representation from a mix of different departments.	English
1 online focus group (6 to 8 participants)	HR specialists and hiring managers with recent experience using PSC programs and inventories. Ensure representation from a mix of different departments and type of programs accessed.	French
1 online focus group (6 to 8 participants)	HR specialists and hiring managers with no recent experience using PSC programs and inventories. Target those who are aware of PSC programs and inventories and ensure representation from a mix of different departments.	French
8 in-depth online/telephone interviews	Heads of HR of select departments identified by PSC.	English or French

Recruitment form

We appreciate you taking the time to provide us with feedback.

We hope to include a wide range of experiences and voices in our focus group discussions. To help us with this, we have a few questions for you (less than 5 minutes).

Q1. Which of the following best describes your current role in the public service of Canada?

1. I am a manager and I am involved in hiring employees.
2. I am the head of HR in my department.
3. I am an HR specialist.
4. None of the above.

[IF NONE OF THE ABOVE THANK AND TERMINATE MESSAGE]

Terminate message: Thank you for your interest. The discussion is for HR specialists or those involved in decisions about hiring employees for the public service of Canada.

Q2. In the last 5 years, which of the following types of candidates have you been involved in hiring? Please select all that apply.

1. Full-time students
2. College and university graduates
3. Those with advanced degrees to fill policy positions
4. Inventories targeting one employment equity group
5. None of the above

[IF NONE OF THE ABOVE THANK AND TERMINATE MESSAGE]

Terminate message: Thank you for your interest. The discussion is for HR specialists or those involved in decisions about hiring employees for the public service.

Q3. Still thinking about the last 5 years, have you accessed any of the following PSC recruitment programs or inventories? Please select all that apply.

1. Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP)
2. Post-Secondary Co-operative Education and Internship Program (CO-OP)
3. Research Affiliate Program (RAP)
4. Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR)
5. Recruitment of Policy Leaders (RPL)
6. Another PSC recruitment program or inventory
7. None of the above

[ASK Q4 ONLY FOR THOSE WHO SAY NONE OF THE ABOVE, OTHERS GO TO Q5]

Q4. Thinking about the times you did not access PSC recruitment programs or inventories for your hiring in the last 5 years, what was the main reason?

1. I wasn't aware of PSC programs and inventories.
2. I forgot or didn't think about accessing PSC programs and inventories.
3. I didn't need to use PSC programs and inventories.
4. I didn't think PSC programs and inventories would be relevant.
5. I thought the process to access PSC programs and inventories was too complicated.
6. I don't remember.
7. Other reason

[CAP NUMBER OF "WASN'T AWARE" TO 3 PER NO RECENT EXPERIENCE GROUP]

Q5. Which department or agency do you work for?

List of departments and agencies available here: [Departments and agencies - Canada.ca](https://www24.intelcom.gc.ca/Departments-and-Agencies)

Q6. Please indicate which of the following sessions you can attend. You can select more than one option, and we will assign you to one based on availability.

[SHOW RELEVANT TIMES BASED ON SCREENING]

Introduction

- Thank participants.
- Introduce self and Ipsos.
- Explain purpose: Understand your perceptions and experiences of using Public Service Commission recruitment programs and inventories.
- Explain format: mostly conversation but welcome comments typed into the "chat" box.
- Explain recording, and that taking part in the discussion is voluntary, that their responses will be kept confidential (will not be linked back to them), and that any personal information they provide will be protected under the Privacy Act.

- Introduction: name, department, years as a manager/HR specialist with the Government of Canada.

Warm-up: top-of-mind hiring challenges

For the purpose of today's discussion, I'd like you to focus on positions that could be filled by: full-time students; college and university graduates; those with advanced degrees to fill policy positions; and inventories targeting one employment equity group.

- What are the main challenges or emerging issues in trying to fill entry-level positions?
- What about mid-to-senior level positions? Are the challenges different from those we've just discussed?
- In what ways, if any, has the ongoing pandemic contributed to these challenges?
- How are you overcoming these challenges? What has worked and why?

Main resources for meeting hiring needs

- What are the main avenues or resource pools that you turn to when filling positions suited to students?... graduates? ...mid-to-senior positions? FOR EACH PROBE:
 - What are your main reasons for turning to these resources?
 - What do you value the most about these resources?
- Are there any downsides or negatives when using these resources?
- FOCUS DISCUSSION ON NON-PSC RESOURCES THAT ARE BROUGHT UP. PARK PSC RESOURCES FOR NEXT SECTION.

Familiarity and experiences using PSC recruitment programs and inventories

On your screens now I've displayed the Public Service Commission programs and inventories. [DISPLAY PLACEMAT: [CPRO-placemat-infographic-2018-v6 EN \(2\).pdf](#)]

FOR THOSE WITH RECENT EXPERIENCE:

- How familiar are you about these programs and inventories? How did you find out about them?
- Which programs and inventories have you used to recruit candidates? PROBE SPECIFICALLY FOR ALL TYPES OF CANDIDATES (STUDENTS AND OTHERS). REST OF PROBES SHOULD BE REPEATED FOR EACH PROGRAM.
- What's one word that best sums up your experience using these programs and inventories?
- What motivated you to use these programs and inventories as opposed to other resources? FOR HR PROFESSIONALS: What makes you recommend PSC programs and inventories to your clients? Why not?
- What expectations, if any, did you have in advance of using these programs and inventories?
- What were some of the highlights or positives in using these programs and inventories?
- Do you have any negatives to share?
- And what was the outcome of using those programs? Were you able to hire a candidate/student referred by the program? If response is "No", How come?
- Were your expectations met at the end of the day?
- How do these programs and inventories compare to other recruitment options (within your department or agency) that you also use? Are PSC programs and inventories similar to other resources or do they stand out? In what ways?
- Any thoughts on what the PSC should do or improve for you to continue to use their programs and inventories?

FOR THOSE WITH NO RECENT EXPERIENCE:

- What have you heard about these programs and inventories, if anything? What is your general impression of these PSC programs and inventories? What are they and what shapes those impressions? Are PSC programs and inventories similar to other resources or do they stand out? In what ways?
- We wanted to hear from you specifically because you haven't used these programs and inventories in the last 3 to 5 years. Help me understand why that is the case.
- What's stopping you from using these programs and inventories? FOR HR PROFESSIONALS: What's stopping you from recommending these programs and inventories to your clients?
- What do other resources and programs offer that PSC programs don't? Any thoughts on what the PSC should do or improve for you to use their programs and inventories for the first time?

Deeper dive on improvement opportunities

I'd like to go through specific aspects of using the programs and inventories to get your thoughts... AMOUNT SPENT ON EACH ITEM WILL BE TAILORED BASED ON WHAT COMES UP ORGANICALLY IN THE PREVIOUS SECTION.

Communications and marketing for Public Service Commission programs and inventories

- What works right now that the PSC should keep doing in terms of marketing recruitment programs and inventories to managers and HR professionals like yourselves?
- Do you have any suggestions on how these recruitment programs and inventories can become more top-of-mind for hiring managers and HR specialists?
- What should be emphasized in communications and marketing in order to pique the interest of hiring managers and HR specialists?
- Current marketing materials emphasize that these programs ...offer year-round access? ...are free? ...available across Canada? ...offer access to employment equity groups? ...save you time? ...offer access to candidates interested in a career in the GoC? ... allow you to further assess candidates based on your specific position requirements? FOR EACH FEATURE PROBE: Is this an enticing feature or not from your point of view? To what extent is this a unique selling point for PSC programs? What makes you say that?
- What's the key element you're looking for?
- What would you want to know about these programs and inventories that would encourage you to use them?

Referrals and candidate matching

- If you have requested candidates through Public Service Commission recruitment programs and inventories, how was your experience? PROBE IN RELATION TO: number of candidates provided, timelines, quality of advice/service received?
- Was the request process suitable to your needs? PROBE IN RELATION TO: clarity, format,
- What would an ideal process look like?

Quality of candidates

- What's your opinion or sense on the quality of candidates from these recruitment programs and inventories? What gives you that impression?
- How do you define quality? Is it based on ...quality of educational credentials? ...work experience? ...how they presented themselves during the interview? ...how well they performed in exams and interviews? Does the definition of quality differ between a student, a graduate, or a more experienced candidate?
- FOR EACH PROGRAM PROBE: What would you need to know about these candidates, or the screening process, for you to trust that you will receive high-quality candidates from this program or inventory?
- Do you have any other suggestions for how the quality of candidates can be improved or better meet the needs of your department or agency?

- What if I told you that... [PLACEHOLDER FOR ANY DETAILS ON THE SCREENING PROCESS WE CAN SHARE WITH PARTICIPANT TO GAUGE REACTIONS]

Close out // 5 mins

That's all my questions for you. Thank you so much for all the feedback you provided today. Lots of great points and suggestions. Do you have any final comments or reflections for the Public Service Commission on how they can encourage more hiring managers and HR specialists to use their programs and inventories?