



Evaluation of the Post- Secondary Recruitment Program

Internal Audit and Evaluation Directorate

Public Service Commission of Canada



Table of Contents

Definitions.....	4
Icons	4
Terminology	4
Summary	5
Program purpose	5
Evaluation context	5
Evaluation objectives and scope.....	5
Findings.....	5
Recommendations and supporting rationale.....	6
Evaluation core issues and questions	9
Evaluation methodology.....	10
Introduction to the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program	11
The Post-Secondary Recruitment Program.....	11
Post-Secondary Recruitment Program hiring process.....	13
Evaluation findings.....	14
Relevance	14
Effectiveness.....	17
Efficiency.....	40
Management Response Action Plan.....	53
Appendix A: Program Logic Model	67
Appendix B: Methodology and limitations	71
Administrative and performance data review	71
Document review	71
Surveys	71
National and international benchmarking exercise	72
Interviews	72
Focus groups.....	72
Gender-based Analysis Plus	73

Appendix C: Benchmarking summary73

Definitions

Icons

The report uses the following icons to highlight important information:



The Gender-based Analysis Plus icon represents information related to the experience of program participants from diverse groups.



This icon represents information gathered in a public opinion research conducted by the Public Service Commission of Canada in 2022 on all its recruitment programs.



This icon represents best practices and lessons learned from a national and international benchmarking analysis.

Terminology

The following defines descriptive terminology used in the report:

Terminology	Percentage of respondents
A few	Less than 25% but more than 2 individuals
Some	25% to 50%
A majority	50% to 75%
Most, Many	75% to 99%

Summary

Program purpose

The Public Service Commission of Canada (PSC) introduced the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program in 1973 to help federal departments and agencies hire post-secondary graduates from across Canada to entry- and mid-level positions.

Evaluation context

The PSC's Internal Audit and Evaluation Directorate completed an evaluation of the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program in March 2022. The evaluation was carried out with support from the PSC's National Recruitment Directorate in accordance with the PSC's 2021–23 evaluation plan and the Treasury Board of Canada's Policy on Results.

Evaluation objectives and scope

The objective was to support informed decision-making by providing a neutral, evidence-based analysis of the relevance and performance of the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program. The scope focused on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the program's development, administration and achievement of outcomes since 2010–11.

Centralized post-secondary graduate recruitment remains relevant to stakeholders; however, the PSC needs to adopt an all-inclusive and integrated view for delivering and supporting the needs of departments and candidates, and it needs to be more responsive to labour market competitiveness while building a public service that reflects Canada's diversity.

Findings

The program is relevant, but its delivery is not meeting hiring needs: The program's objectives are aligned with key Government of Canada hiring priorities, including building a representative public service. Nevertheless, hiring managers and functional communities feel the program does not meet their needs as it does not identify candidates with position-specific skills.

The program is underused by federal departments and agencies: A majority of hiring managers rely on appointing graduates who were formerly employed in a student program. They make no distinction between student and graduate recruitment programs, despite structural differences, and they use student programs as a post-secondary graduate recruitment and development program.

5 – Evaluation of the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program



While awareness of the program is low, hiring managers recognize the PSC's ability and potential to reach candidates: Hiring managers know of the program's existence but not how it can help them and how to use it. Similarly, universities and colleges are far more familiar with student programs. Traditional marketing activities are viewed as ineffective at reaching future graduates. University representatives see greater potential in marketing through influencers and leveraging the PSC's student ambassador network.

Candidates do not have a positive experience: Candidates value having a central location to apply for all federal public service jobs; however, they see the process of applying to the program as lengthy and inflexible since they cannot update their profiles as they develop new skills and experience. Communication with candidates should be improved, since candidates are often unaware of their status in the process once they are placed in an inventory.

Program administrators do not have the tools to deliver the program effectively: The absence of a candidate-tracking and matching system is viewed as the main hindrance to program effectiveness, making it impossible to effectively match and refer candidates, automate assessments and provide hiring managers with greater access.

Reporting on the program's status and measuring success is difficult and time consuming: Program data has inaccuracies and originates from multiple systems, which makes reporting on effectiveness difficult and time consuming. Also, there are no key performance indicators to help determine program success and effectiveness.

Recommendations and supporting rationale

Recommendation 1

The National Recruitment Directorate should clarify the program's objectives and how it positions itself to support the broader post-secondary graduate recruitment effort on behalf of the Government of Canada, potentially by:

- developing a recruitment strategy that minimizes overlap, redundancy and inter-program competition with student recruitment programs
- aligning the program with the needs of key stakeholders (applicants, hiring managers and HR advisors)

Rationale for recommendation 1

The National Recruitment Directorate's Post-Secondary Recruitment Program focuses on creating inventories through annual campaigns, and its objectives are unclear for those who deliver the program and end users. The term "post-secondary graduates" is

not clearly defined, leaving ambiguity as to who can apply and who is in the inventories. Several student and graduate programs coexist, with similar characteristics, tools and objectives. The Post-Secondary Recruitment Program competes with some of these programs, mainly the Federal Student Work Experience Program, which has much better brand awareness. Hiring managers frequently offer students appointments upon graduation, using student employment programs as an informal recruitment and developmental program.

Recommendation 2

The National Recruitment Directorate should improve post-secondary graduate recruitment branding and marketing with a view to adopting the role as central recruiter on behalf of the federal public service, potentially by:

- coordinating outreach activities to have a single voice and to reduce any confusion or duplication between PSC programs and department-run recruitment, which often targets the same candidates
- leveraging and expanding student program ambassador networks

Rationale for recommendation 2

The majority of hiring managers and HR advisors believe the PSC has a role to play in terms of public service Government of Canada post-secondary graduate recruitment. Hiring managers' awareness of the program is low, and few HR advisors are communicating it as a useful staffing option. The evaluation showed that student employment programs make good use of their student ambassador networks, which are an already established and known entity, whereas Post-Secondary Recruitment does not have such a network.

Recommendation 3

The Services and Business Development Sector should modernize the infrastructure and assessment process to effectively carry out user-friendly post-secondary graduate recruitment, potentially by:

- improving candidate experience (by simplifying the application process, providing access to all graduate opportunities, increasing communication with candidates and adding the ability to update profiles) and providing interactive access for hiring managers

- supporting each step of the assessment process from application to appointment, including improved candidate-matching functionalities and access to timely and accurate data
- reviewing and implementing best practices in modernized and flexible assessment, such as engaging with candidates, leveraging emerging technology, reducing assessment timelines, using trained assessors, and involving managers, especially from functional communities

Rationale for recommendation 3

Candidates felt that the application process was lengthy and cumbersome, and that they tended to fall into a “black hole,” with no communication and no way to update their profile while their skills and experience evolved. Hiring managers were unaware of skills and experience in the inventory and wished they could obtain more information independently or through their HR advisor. They also disliked the format for candidate information and the amount of time it took to go through it. The program indicated that one of the greatest weaknesses in carrying out campaigns was the lack of a candidate-matching and tracking system.

The assessment process was also identified as an issue. It is lengthy, and candidates felt the Public Service Entrance Exam was a barrier to inclusion and diversity. Finally, the PSC is competing with not only the private sector but other federal departments and agencies that have proven agile in embracing technology and adapting to remote assessments.

Recommendation 4

The National Recruitment Directorate should introduce rigorous performance measurement to track the success of the program and demographic profiles of applicants and candidates to better meet their needs.

Rationale for recommendation 4

Nearly all program administrators indicated that processes for storing and maintaining program data are ineffective. Program administrators repeatedly reported being largely unaware of how their efforts contribute to candidates finding employment. In the absence of performance measures, the program has been unable to measure the impact of changes made to the program over time.

Recommendation 5

The National Recruitment Directorate should explore partnerships with other central agencies, functional communities and departments and agencies for creating developmental programs (for example, Recruitment of Policy Leaders) that cater to post-secondary graduates.

Rationale for recommendation 5

The benchmarking highlighted that most jurisdictions use developmental programs to attract and retain post-secondary graduates. These include leadership, specialist and functional streams, with some including job rotations, mentoring and coaching. Developmental programs were also seen as an opportunity to integrate diversity and inclusion in assessment design. As departments and agencies have complementary mandates, collaboration is necessary to explore partnerships to facilitate developmental programs.

Evaluation core issues and questions

1. Relevance

- 1.1 To what extent is there a need for the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program in its current form?
- 1.2 To what extent are the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program objectives aligned with current federal government priorities?
- 1.3 Are there existing initiatives within the federal public service that have similar goals?

2. Effectiveness

- 2.1 To what extent have Post-Secondary Recruitment Program promotional activities, communication products and engagement efforts been effective at reaching intended stakeholders?
- 2.2 To what extent have federal departments and agencies used, and to what extent are they satisfied with, Post-Secondary Recruitment Program inventories/pools?
- 2.3 To what extent has the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program provided post-secondary graduates with access to employment opportunities in the federal public service?

2.4 To what extent are the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program recruitment campaign's approach and recruitment process aligned with federal public service diversity, inclusiveness and accessibility objectives and priorities?

2.5 To what extent has the PSC been able to provide reliable and timely data on the entire Post-Secondary Recruitment Program?

3. Efficiency

3.1 To what extent does the current approach to applicant assessment result in effective and appropriate screening for referrals?

3.2 To what extent does the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program infrastructure support efficient program delivery?

3.3 Are there alternative ways (for example, design changes and cost) or lessons learned for achieving the same objectives?

Evaluation methodology

Document review of program documents, tools, guides, and related studies

Internal interviews with program administrators and stakeholders who support the program ($n = 27$) and **external interviews** with hiring managers and HR advisors ($n = 17$)

Review of administrative data related to the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program

Survey of 116 assessed candidates in the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program inventories

Focus groups to gather the views of hiring managers, HR advisors, university and college representatives and functional communities

National and international **benchmarking** exercise to identify best practices and lessons learned related to post-secondary recruitment programs external to the Government of Canada

Appendix B features a more detailed presentation of the methodology and limitations.

Introduction to the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program

The Post-Secondary Recruitment Program

Under the *Public Service Employment Act*, the Public Service Commission of Canada (PSC) is responsible for overseeing staffing in the federal public service, which includes appointments to the public service.

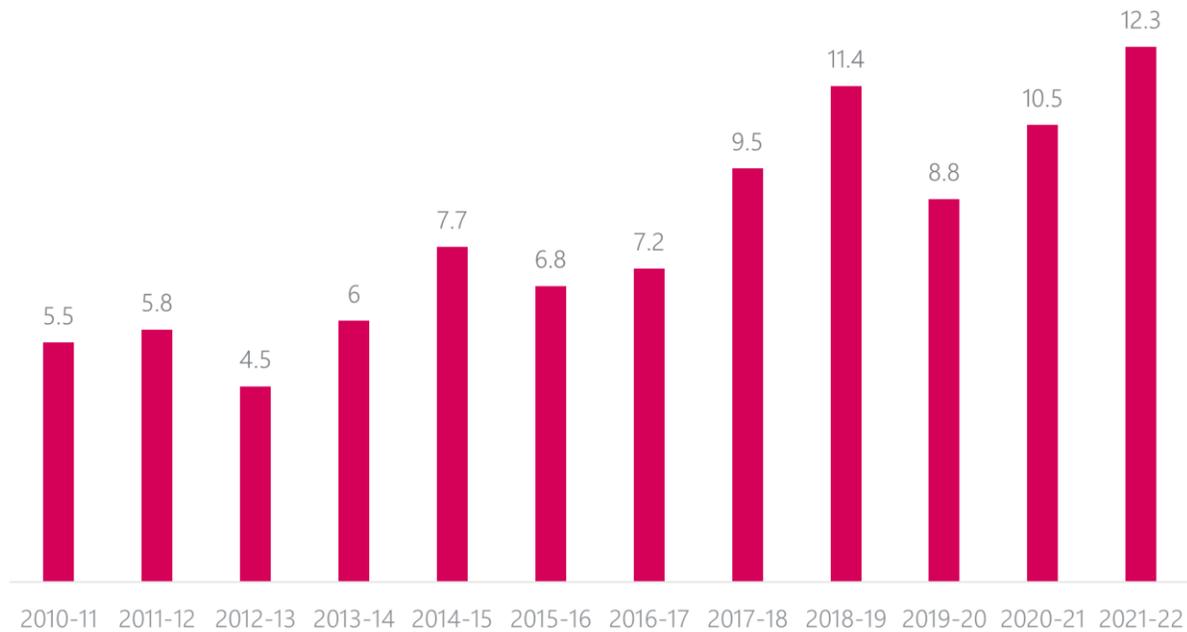
The Post-Secondary Recruitment Program was introduced in 1973 by the PSC to help federal departments and agencies staff entry- and mid-level positions. It is one of 5 recruitment programs available to hiring managers for staffing positions in the federal public service. These programs are designed to provide opportunities for Canadian students and post-secondary graduates to enrich their academic backgrounds, help fund their education, develop skills and encourage future public service employment opportunities.

The objectives of the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program are:

- to attract new and recent graduates interested in pursuing a federal public service career
- to enable federal departments and agencies to meet recruitment challenges by accessing and hiring qualified post-secondary graduates
- to provide an approach to recruitment that expedites collective staffing at a national level for departments, agencies, and functional communities
- to develop a public service that is representative and responsive to all the people it serves
- to ensure balanced regional representation

The number of full-time equivalents in the program has risen since 2010–11, reaching 12.3 in 2021–22.

Number of full-time equivalents in the program by fiscal year (from April 1, 2010, to March 31, 2022)



Text version

Fiscal year	Full-time equivalents
2010-11	5.5
2011-12	5.8
2012-13	4.5
2013-14	6
2014-15	7.7
2015-16	6.8

Fiscal year	Full-time equivalents
2016-17	7.2
2017-18	9.5
2018-19	11.4
2019-20	8.8
2020-21	10.5
2021-22	12.3

Data Source: Post-Secondary Recruitment Program

Post-Secondary Recruitment Program hiring process

Select available inventories

Managers have access to partially or fully assessed candidates based on various general and targeted career paths and occupational groups.

Request referrals based on job requirements

Managers submit a referral form for each pool/inventory they wish to receive candidates from. Managers provide job criteria for their vacant position.

Assess candidates

Within 3 days, managers receive a list of candidates matched to their job criteria. Managers conduct additional assessments.

Hire candidates

Managers complete assessment of candidates and hire candidate for position.

Communicate results

Managers are encouraged to communicate the results of their assessment with program administrators.

Evaluation findings

Relevance

Relevance questions

1.1 To what extent is there a need for the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program in its current form?

1.2 To what extent are the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program objectives aligned with current federal government priorities?

1.3 Are there existing initiatives within the federal public service that have similar goals?

Relevance key findings

- A majority of hiring managers see a role for the PSC in post-secondary graduate recruitment; however, the program as currently defined does not meet their needs
- The program objectives align with key federal government priorities related to renewal and diversity and inclusion
- Student programs were most often cited as an initiative within the federal public service with similar goals to the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program

While hiring managers see a role for the PSC in post-secondary graduate recruitment, the program does not meet their needs

Key finding: Hiring managers, HR advisors and functional communities agree that the PSC has a role to play in supporting Government of Canada post-secondary graduate recruitment, but the program does not fully meet their hiring needs.

Nearly all hiring managers and HR advisors highlighted the importance of having a “front door” for Canadians to access multiple federal public service jobs from a single application.

We frequently heard that while recruitment is rapidly evolving and the labour market is highly competitive, the program has not kept up with current trends and best practices. Many program administrators felt that the program is not responsive to recruitment needs, resulting in departments innovating and recruiting more on their own.

Hiring managers and functional communities spoke of challenges using the program when looking to staff a skill-specific position. As a result, they often indicated that it would be most beneficial to use the program when looking to staff a generic, entry-level position.

Several functional communities engaged in their own graduate recruitment to focus on their needs and address their concerns about campaign timelines. They often maintained a relationship with the PSC to help manage candidate volumes, use virtual simulations and in one case to pilot an approach to increase the number and continuous flow of candidates. Although some challenges remained in obtaining timely and accurate data on the status of their candidates, this approach allowed communities to focus on their hiring needs.

Hiring managers and HR advisors want to see improvements in post-secondary graduate recruitment

Despite not having success with the program, most hiring managers and HR advisors saw value in the PSC continuing post-secondary graduate recruitment given the benefits of national inventories.

They see a role for the PSC in post-secondary graduate recruitment reducing the time it takes to recruit by providing a centralized location for inventories and standardizing requirements for identical/similar positions across departments. They also saw a need for streamlined procedures and increased coordination throughout the process.

Hiring managers, HR advisors and some program administrators believe the role should be refocused on helping hiring organizations attract potential candidates given the PSC's reach throughout Canada.

Program objectives align with key government priorities on renewal and diversity and inclusion

The program's objectives should align with Government of Canada priorities. This alignment allows departments and agencies to deliver on their individual mandates while collectively being on the same course in building tomorrow's public service today.

As the program has not documented its objectives and changes made during the evaluation period, it was difficult to assess the alignment. In addition, program administrators expressed differing views with respect to what the program aims to achieve.

Although many indicated the program was underused and questioned whether it was meeting current needs, an equal number agreed that the program supports public service renewal. In particular, program objectives are aligned with the federal government's renewal and diversity and inclusion priorities. They also align with

[Beyond2020](#) desired outcomes for a more agile, inclusive and better-equipped public service.

In the [28th Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada](#), the Clerk of the Privy Council highlights 2 priorities for the public service:

1. Response to the pandemic
2. Tackling racism within our institutions

The program has supported recruitment throughout the pandemic, adapting assessment by moving to an exclusively online testing approach. It has also tailored outreach and promotion to increase applications from members of employment equity groups, particularly Indigenous candidates and candidates with disabilities. Finally, not only does the program align with public service renewal priorities in its annual campaigns, but it also collaborates with departments in several targeted initiatives to support a diverse and representative public service.

The program is competing with student programs

Among renewal initiatives, student hiring made up 25% of total hiring during the evaluation period, while the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program accounted for 1%.

Program administrators most frequently cited student programs as a federal public service initiative with similar goals to the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program. The majority of hiring managers and HR advisors said they relied mainly on student programs to attract and recruit future graduates.

Percentage of all student hires, by student program, between April 1, 2010, and March 31, 2022:

- 60% from the Federal Student Work Experience Program
- 38% from the Post-Secondary CO-OP/Internship Program
- 2% from the Research Affiliate Program

Administrative data highlights that among student hiring programs, the Federal Student Work Experience Program leads the pack for student hires, followed by the Post-Secondary CO-OP/Internship Program and the Research Affiliate Program.

Post-secondary graduate recruitment

Post-Secondary Recruitment Program

- Post-secondary graduates looking for entry- and mid-level jobs in the federal public service
- General and targeted pools/inventories available year-round
- Partially and fully assessed candidates

Recruitment of Policy Leaders

- Advanced academic degree for mid-to-senior level policy positions
- Specialized pool for candidates with specialized skills, experience, and expertise
- Qualified candidates are paired with a program alumnus as mentors

Student recruitment

Federal Student Work Experience Program

- Full-time secondary and post-secondary students seeking full- or part-time work to gain work experience and explore careers in the public service
- Eligible for student bridging to term/indeterminate positions

Co-operative Education and Internship Program

- Full-time post-secondary students from thousands of CO-OP and internship programs across the country
- Can be rehired as Federal Student Work Experience Program student part-time during the year
- Eligible for student bridging to term/indeterminate positions

Research Affiliate Program

- Full-time post-secondary students who bring new perspectives to research projects for the duration of their studies (up to 2 years and longer)
- Eligible for student bridging to term/indeterminate positions

Effectiveness

Questions

2.1 To what extent have Post-Secondary Recruitment promotional activities, communication products and engagement efforts been effective at reaching intended stakeholders?

2.2 To what extent have federal departments and agencies used, and are they satisfied with, the Post-Secondary Recruitment inventories/pools?

2.3 To what extent has the program provided post-secondary graduates with access to employment opportunities in the federal public service?

2.4 To what extent are the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program campaign's approach and recruitment process aligned with federal public service diversity, inclusiveness and accessibility objectives and priorities?

2.5 To what extent has the PSC been able to provide reliable and timely data on the entire Post-Secondary Recruitment Program?

Effectiveness key findings

- The Post-Secondary Recruitment Program continues to be an underutilized resource
- A large majority of Post-Secondary Recruitment program applicants and hires identify as members of employment equity groups
- Based on the evidence, there were 2 main reasons to explain low uptake of the program:
 - A majority of hiring managers feel that candidates do not meet their needs
 - Gap in promotional, awareness and marketing activities
- Reporting on Post-Secondary Recruitment Program status and measuring success is difficult and time-consuming

The program continues to be an underused resource

Key finding: In the previous decade, 5 departments were responsible for half (50%) of total Post-Secondary Recruitment Program hires.

From 2011–12 to 2020-21, 50% of all program hires were made by 5 federal government departments. In terms of profile, these 5 departments are large in terms of number of employees (over 6 000) and have multiple offices across Canada.

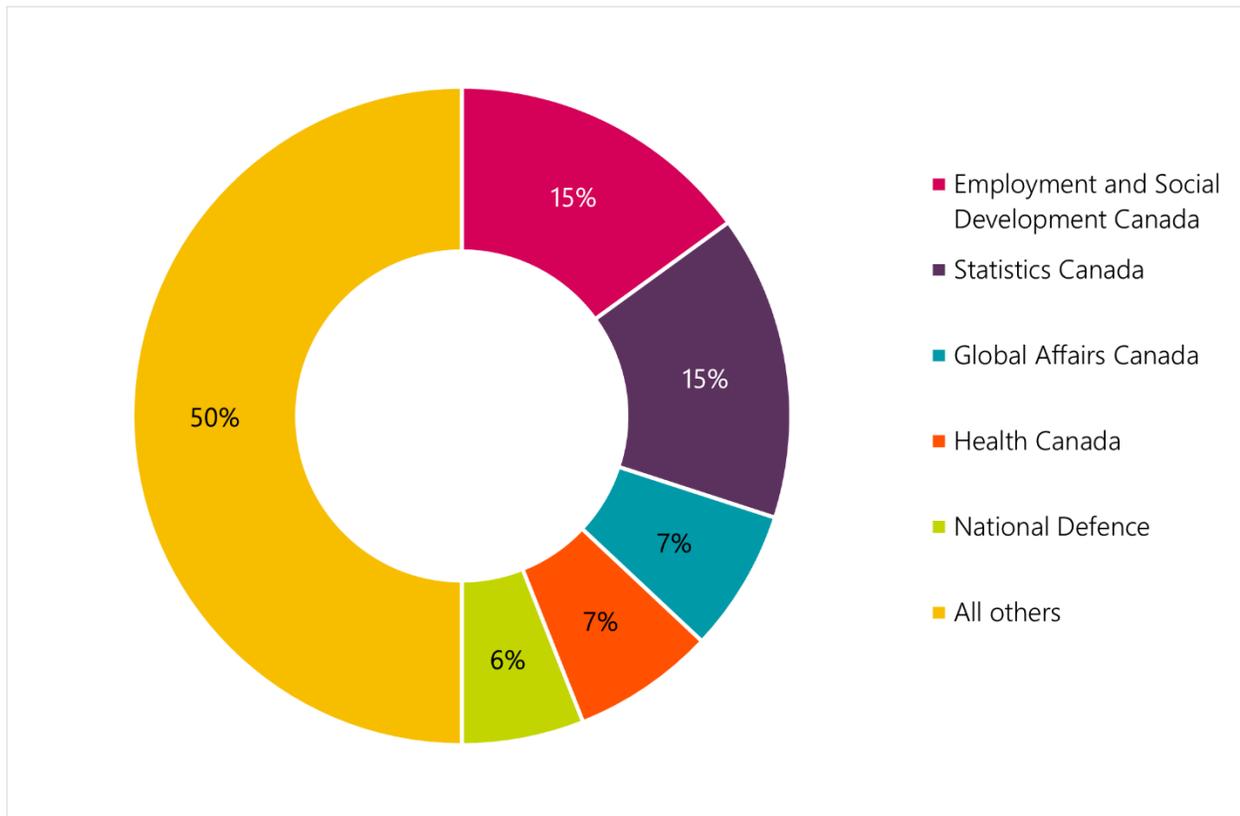
These 5 departments have their own national graduate recruitment campaigns (for example, Statistics Canada) or have partnered with the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program during the evaluation period (for example, Global Affairs Canada, Health Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada).

Most hiring managers, HR advisors and program administrators agree that smaller departments seem to be less aware of the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program. When asked to elaborate, hiring managers and HR advisors felt that they were less able to

keep up with various recruitment programs; however, interviewees felt that smaller organizations may benefit from the program due to having fewer resources to launch their own recruitment campaigns.

Small departments in rural regions described relying more heavily on personal networks and word of mouth as mechanisms to fill vacant positions.

Top 5 departments using the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program compared to all other departments



Text version

Departments	Percentage
Employment and Social Development Canada	15%
Statistics Canada	15%
Global Affairs Canada	7%

Departments	Percentage
Health Canada	7%
National Defence	6%
All other departments	50%

Data Source: Data Services and Analysis Directorate 2020–21 Annual Report Tables

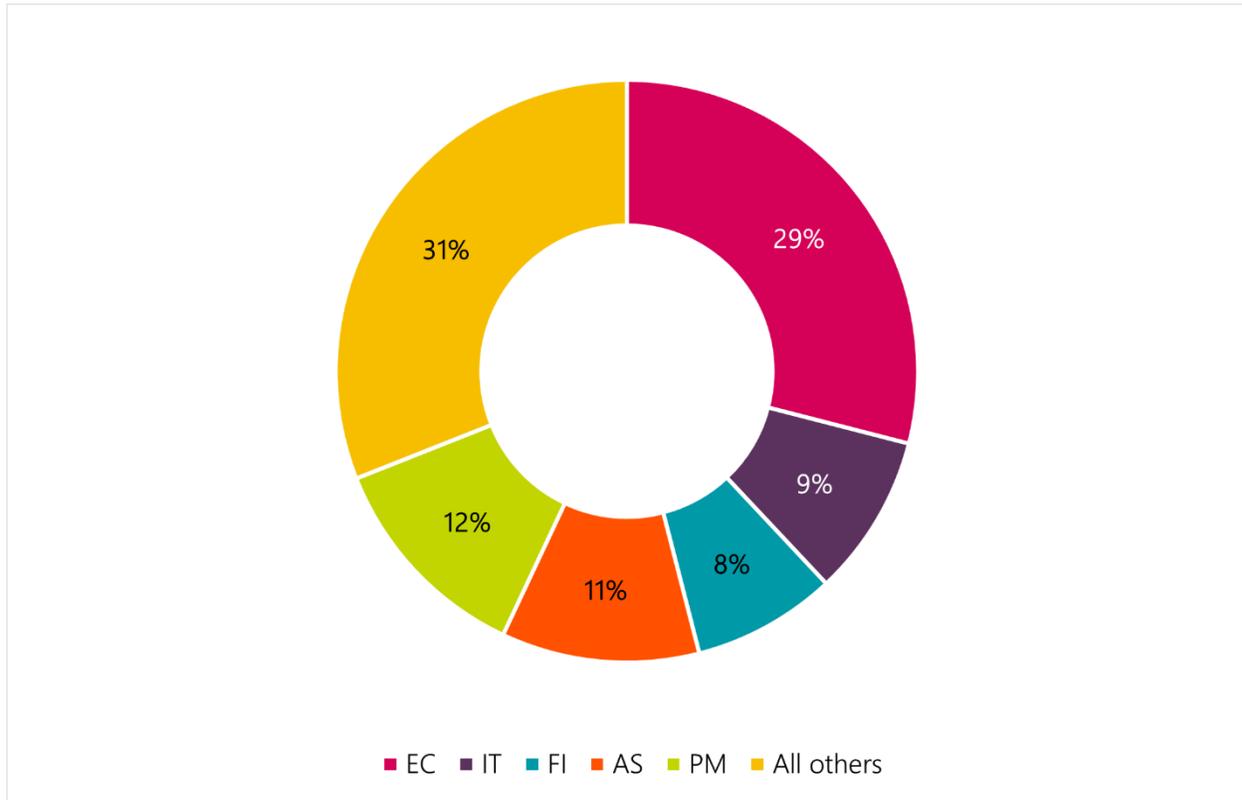
Five occupational groups make up nearly 70% of program hires

Key finding: The policy (EC) occupational group made up nearly 30% of total Post-Secondary Recruitment Program hires throughout the evaluation period.

A majority of Post-Secondary Recruitment hires are made to 1 of 5 occupational groups

Administrative data highlights that overall, from 2011–12 to 2020–21, program hires were most likely to be in the policy (EC) (29%), program administration (PM) (12%), administrative services (AS) (11%), information technology (IT) (9%) or finance (FI) (8%) groups.

Post-Secondary Recruitment Program appointments are predominantly in 5 occupational groups



Text version

Occupational Group	Percentage
Economics and Social Science Services (EC)	29%
Information Technology (IT)	9%
Financial Management (FI)	8%
Administrative Services (AS)	11%
Programme Administration (PM)	12%

Occupational Group	Percentage
All other occupational groups	31%

Data Source: Data Services and Analysis Directorate 2020–21 annual report tables

Some of the top occupational groups do not require a university degree

Of these top 5 occupational groups, 2 (EC and IT) require candidates to have a university degree. Hiring managers felt that post-secondary graduates are less likely to remain in positions that do not require a degree and instead use the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program as a “way to get in,” quickly leaving the position for something more catered to their field of study.

Hiring managers, HR advisors and program administrators all described the competitive nature of today’s labour market. They reported that, without a developmental component, Post-Secondary Recruitment Program recruits will move on to higher-paying jobs once they are in an organization. This results in a risk of higher turnover in positions that do not require a university degree since they are used as a steppingstone to other opportunities.

To mitigate this perceived risk of high turnover, some hiring managers and HR advisors felt that the program should aim to connect post-secondary graduates with positions requiring a post-secondary degree.

A majority of candidates and hires are from the National Capital Region, contrary to the objective of a national program

Key finding: Throughout the evaluation period, 27% of applicants in the National Capital Region made up 73% of hires.

Branded as a national campaign, the program aims to actively engage with potential candidates across the country. However, a regional breakdown highlights that applicants from the National Capital Region (27%) make up nearly 3-quarters (73%) of total hires.

Many representatives from universities and external interviewees feel that there is less awareness of the program and its intended goals outside of the National Capital Region and among colleges.

Some university representatives highlighted a “significant gap”: the failure to include colleges in the Deputy Minister University Champion Initiative, which draws on student ambassadors to promote federal government hiring opportunities.

Considerations for the high level of hires in the National Capital Region

- Majority of referral requests are from the National Capital Region (supports finding of low awareness in the regions)
- Prevalence of bilingual applicants in the National Capital Region
- Nature of jobs in the regions (operational) vs. National Capital Region (knowledge-based)

Distribution of jobs across Canada

The PSC's 2019–20 annual report highlights that over the past 10 years, there have been more federal public service jobs across Canada than in the National Capital Region. Lower uptake of the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program by regional managers may be due to the fact that they are less aware of the program, not due to a lack of job opportunities in the regions.

Better program awareness among managers and HR advisors in the National Capital Region may mean they are more likely to use the program compared to those in the regions, where awareness has been consistently described as low or lacking.

70% of hires identify as an employment equity member

Key finding: A large majority of applicants and hires identify as members of employment equity groups.

From 2014–15 to 2019–20, a majority of program applicants identified as a member of at least one employment equity group. Annually, an average of 12 373 applicants belonged to at least one employment equity group, in comparison to a 5 744 average for applicants not belonging to an employment equity group.

During this same period, a large majority of program hires (on average, 461 a year) identified as a member of an employment equity group.

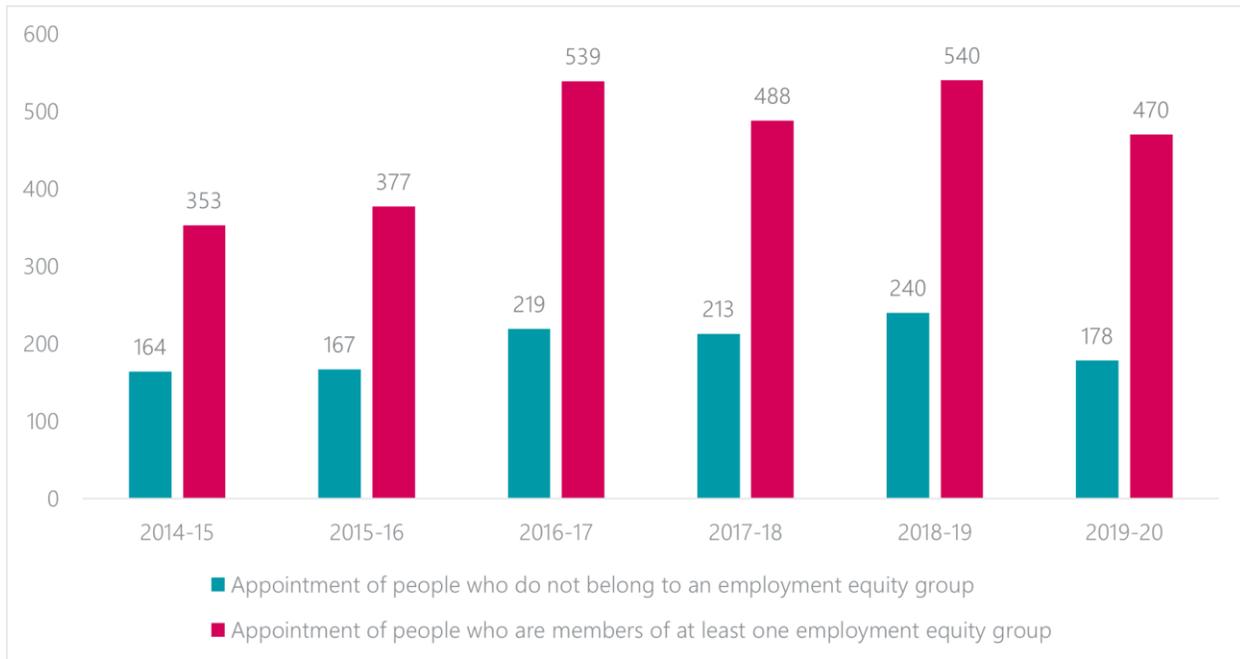
This finding is supported by several hiring managers acknowledging using the program to hire employment equity members.

On average 67.5% of applicants identified as a member of at least one employment equity group

On average 70.4% of hires identified as a member of at least one employment equity group

Employment equity hires greatly outnumber those of people not belonging to an employment equity group:

Number of program hires for employment equity group members compared to others, by fiscal year (from April 1, 2014, to March 31, 2020)



Text version

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
-						
Appointment of a person not belonging to an employment equity group	164	167	219	213	240	178
Appointment of a person belonging to at least one employment equity group	353	377	539	488	540	470

Data Source: Data Services and Analysis Directorate 2020–21 Annual Report Tables

The program can do more for equity group members

“Tokenism”

While many hiring managers highlighted the usefulness of the program in finding employment equity hires and acknowledged they often request referrals to be filtered by employment equity group, university students are skeptical of “tokenism.” Many

university representatives highlighted that they often hear from students that they do not want to be hired as a way to meet a quota.



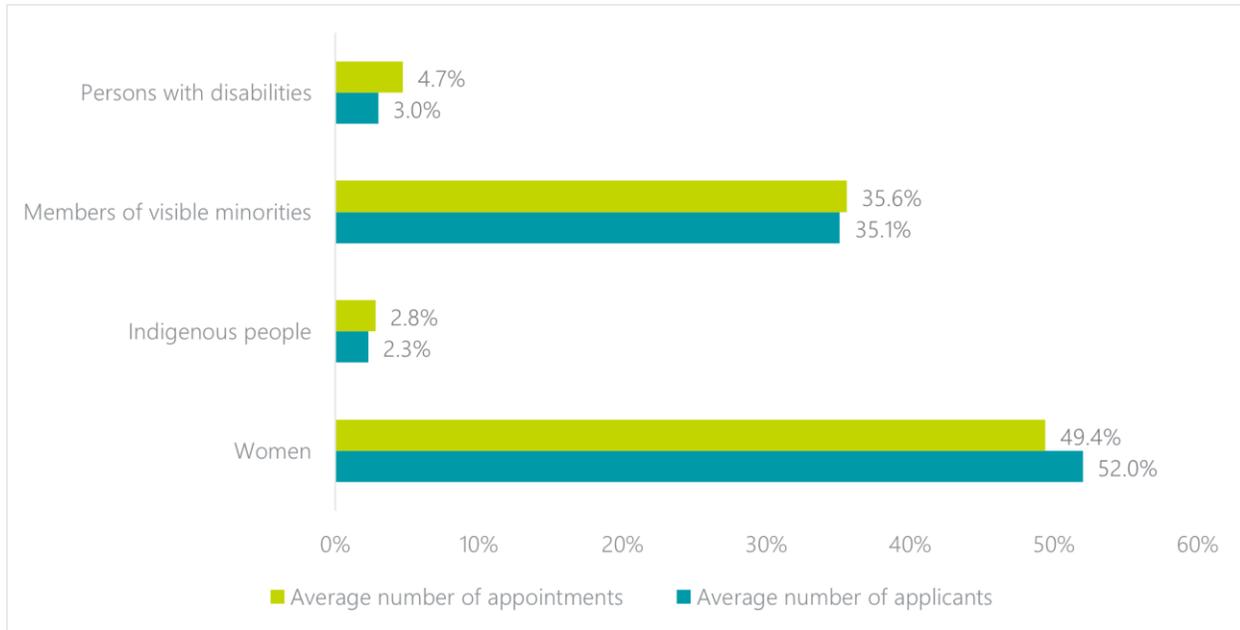
Gender-based Analysis Plus: “Members of employment equity groups want to see themselves represented in organizations; rather than being a ‘means to an end.’” - University representative

Despite high numbers of members of employment equity groups applying to the program, several university representatives stated that it would be beneficial to implement a liaison with strong diversity and inclusion skills to help members of employment equity groups throughout the application and assessment process.

Many internal and external interviewees reported that the timing of the program’s campaign coincides with important cultural traditions among some employment equity groups (for example, with Indigenous hunting season) that may hinder their ability to fully participate in annual campaigns.

Based on data for the 4 designated employment equity groups between 2014–15 and 2019–20, only persons with a disability were appointed at a higher rate than they applied, meaning they were more represented within hires (averaging 4.7% of all hires) than within applicants (where they represent on average 3% of all applicants). Both Indigenous people and members of visible minorities had an almost equal average number of applications and appointments. Women had a slight gap between the average number of applications and appointments.

Average number of appointments to the program relative to the average number of applicants for employment equity group members, from April 1, 2015, to March 31, 2020



Text version

Employment Equity Group	Average Number of Applicants	Average Number of Appointments
Persons with a disability	4.7%	3.0%
Members of visible minority	35.6%	35.1%
Indigenous persons	2.8%	2.3%
Women	49.4%	52.0%

Data Source: Data Services and Analysis Directorate 2020–21 annual report tables

Program hiring is low compared to number of annual applicants

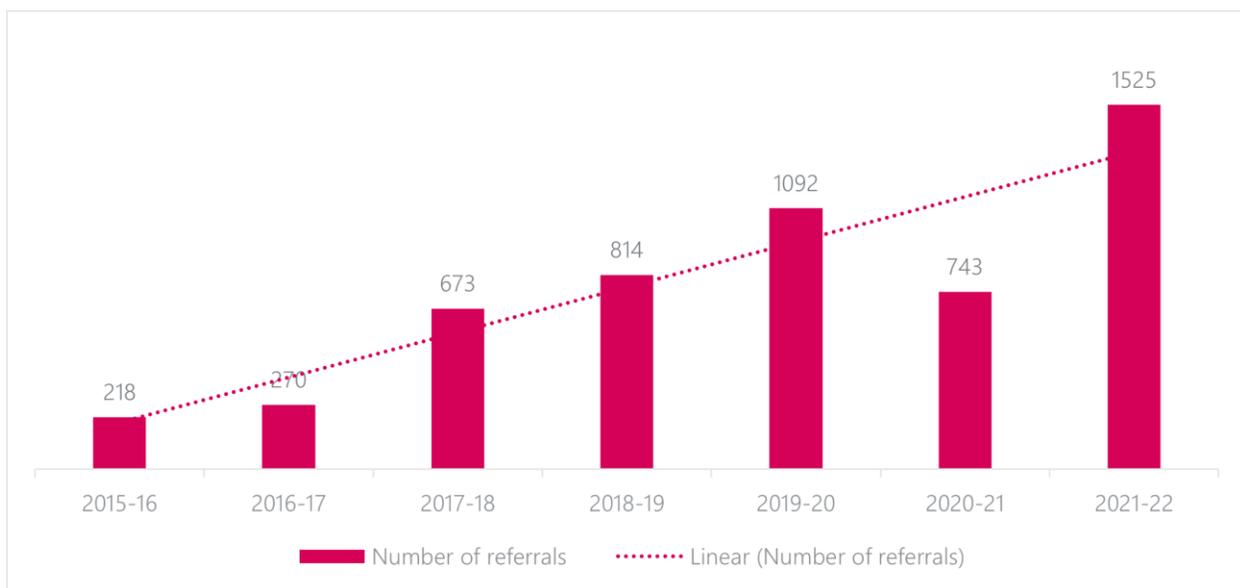
Key finding: Despite a large number of applications, few result in hires.

Administrative data highlights that throughout the evaluation period (2011–12 to 2020–21), there were 163 562 applicants to Post-Secondary Recruitment Program campaigns, resulting in 5 725 hires (indeterminate and term).

4% of applicants were appointed during the evaluation period

Candidates are eligible for either indeterminate or term appointments and there is an (almost) even split between both hire types. There were 57% of appointments done for an indeterminate period and 43% for a term period.

Number of program requests for referrals from hiring managers, by fiscal year (from April 1, 2015, to March 31, 2022) are increasing



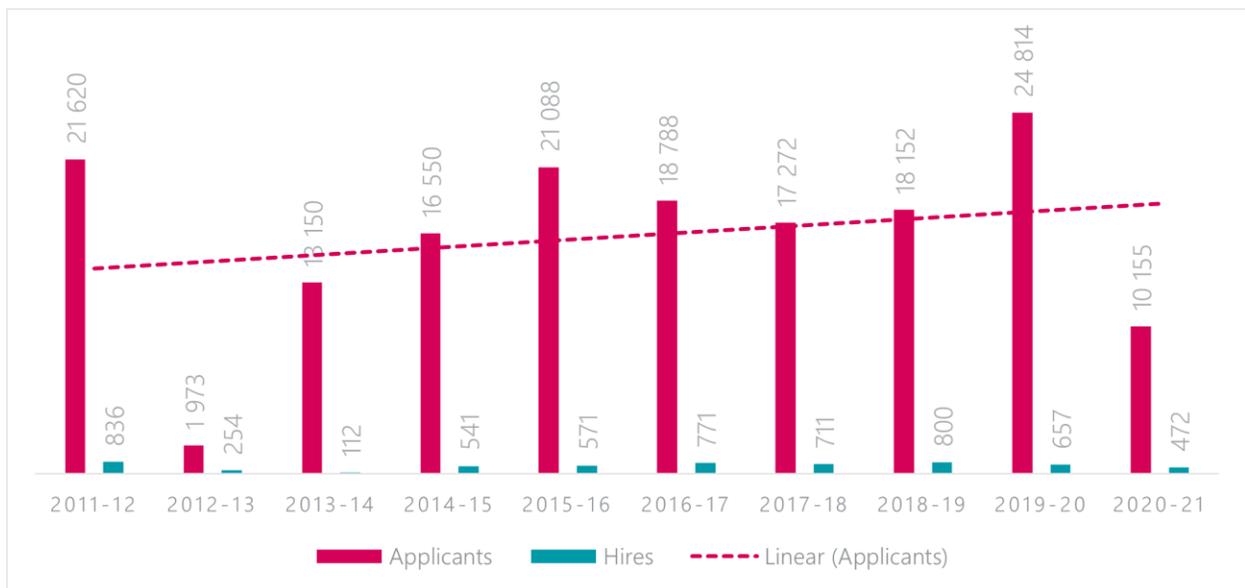
Text version

Fiscal Year	Number of Referrals
2015-16	218
2016-17	270
2017-18	673
2018-19	814

Fiscal Year	Number of Referrals
2019-20	1092
2020-21	743
2021-22	1525

Data Source: Post-Secondary Recruitment Program

Number of program applicants and hires to the program, by fiscal year (from April 1, 2011, to March 31, 2021) showing low number of hires



Text version

Fiscal Year	Applicants	Hires
2011-12	21620	836
2012-13	1973	254

Fiscal Year	Applicants	Hires
2013-14	13150	112
2014-15	16550	541
2015-16	21088	571
2016-17	18788	771
2017-18	17272	711
2018-19	18152	800
2019-20	24814	657
2020-21	10155	472

Data Source: Data Services and Analysis Directorate 2020–21 annual report tables

A majority of hiring managers feel that candidates do not meet their needs

Key finding: Often times, candidate skills and experience do not meet the needs of hiring managers.

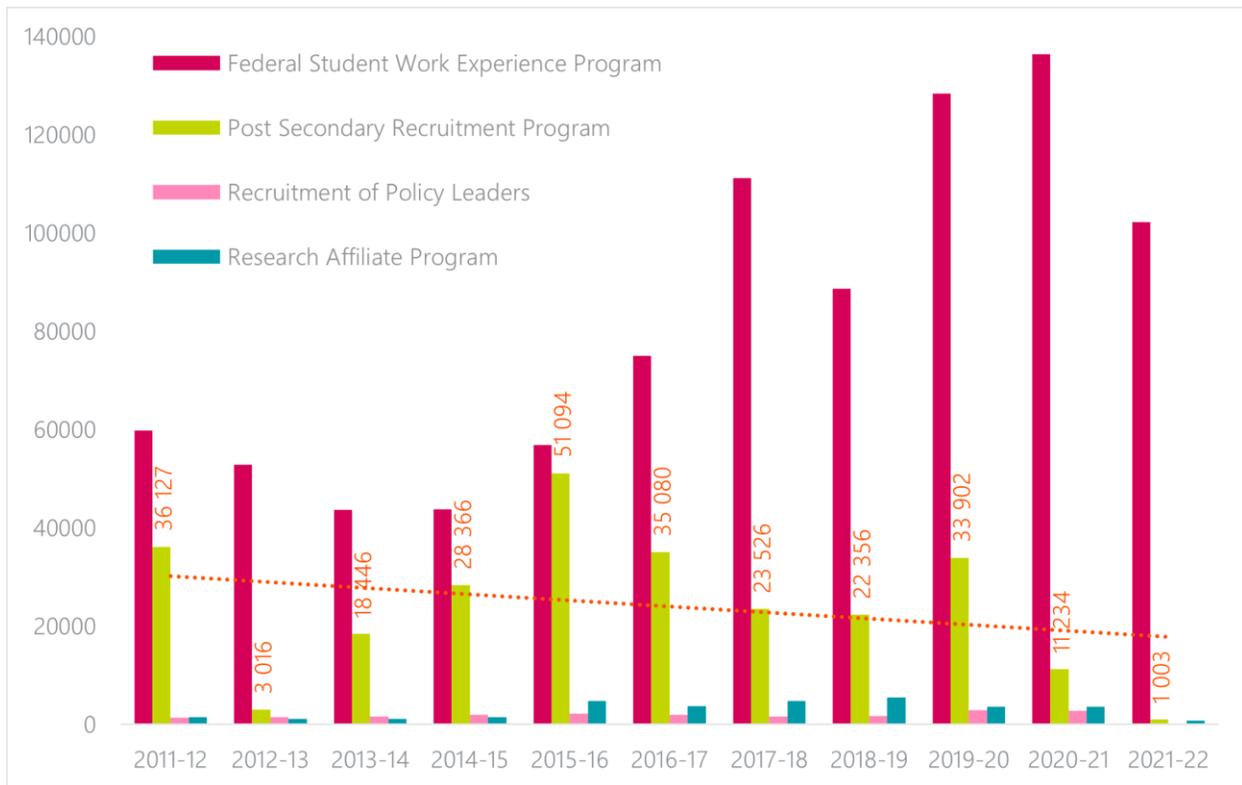
A majority of hiring managers and HR advisors indicated that they had either never used the program or that when they tried to use it, they were unable to identify suitable candidates for their vacant positions. This finding echoes the [2010 Post-Secondary Recruitment Program evaluation](#), which found the program was unable to meet the needs of hiring managers due to applicants' skills and experience not aligning with job requirements.

Views of hiring managers and HR advisors are mixed in terms of quality of candidates

Most hiring managers who participated in interviews could not find suitable candidates and were not satisfied with the program. As a result, they indicated they would not likely use it in the future to staff positions.

However, some hiring managers and HR advisors who participated in focus groups reported being satisfied with inventories, while others stated they were often met with empty lists that discouraged them from using the program in the future.

Applications to the program have been trending down: Applications to all public service student recruitment programs, by fiscal year (from April 1, 2011, to March 31, 2022)



Text version

Fiscal Year	Federal Student Work Experience Program	Post-Secondary Recruitment	Recruitment of Policy Leaders	Research Affiliate Program
2011-12	59821	36127	1400	1483
2012-13	52823	3016	1501	1116
2013-14	43702	18446	1581	1082
2014-15	43824	28366	1905	1431
2015-16	56856	51094	2205	4836
2016-17	75040	35080	1987	3780
2017-18	111236	23526	1632	4749
2018-19	88652	22356	1779	5480
2019-20	128386	33902	2917	3577



Fiscal Year	Federal Student Work Experience Program	Post-Secondary Recruitment	Recruitment of Policy Leaders	Research Affiliate Program
2020-21	136425	11234	2843	3567
2021-22	102192	1003	0	786

Data Source: Data Services and Analysis Directorate 2020–21 annual report tables



Public opinion research: Public opinion research conducted in 2022 with hiring managers and HR advisors on all PSC programs indicated that 46% experienced some satisfaction while 31% reported dissatisfaction with the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program. The most common reason for satisfaction was the quality of candidates referred. Dissatisfaction was primarily due to not a lack of interested or available candidates, the feeling that the process for accessing candidates is cumbersome and inefficient, and difficulty in finding candidates in specific geographic locations.

Hiring managers and HR advisors want greater and easier access to candidates

Key finding: Hiring managers, functional communities, and HR advisors found the current approach to accessing candidates ineffective due to candidates not meeting the complex needs (especially technical needs) of functional communities.

The majority of hiring managers want to access program inventories and filter based on their requirements

Most hiring managers and HR advisors want a dashboard to filter results by:

- employment equity status
- region
- area of study
- skills/experience

Many candidates are no longer interested or available for hire when contacted

Several hiring managers and HR advisors described lists of assessed candidates as “stale”: at the time of contact, candidates were no longer interested or had found jobs elsewhere. This leads hiring managers to rely on other processes, such as direct referrals from post-secondary institutions or informal groups on Facebook or GCcollab.

Most candidates remain in Post-Secondary Recruitment Program inventories anywhere from a few months to 2 years, with little transparency related to this delay or candidates’ continued eligibility for hire. There is also a lack of transparency on how experience is judged.

Time required to review information on referrals is considered excessive, resulting in less use of the program

Most hiring managers and HR advisors expressed concerns regarding the excessive amount of time it took to review candidate information from the program, stating that it made the process inefficient. One hiring manager deciding to “go a different route” after seeing the lengthy document containing the referral list and information.

When probed further, hiring managers felt that candidates are often assessed on generic criteria (judgment and reasoning) and that they were required to assess job-specific criteria (second language proficiency and statement of merit criteria). Although time was a concern, there was no clear preference for partially or fully assessed inventories.

Often, hiring managers felt that due to the time it took to review candidate information, it made more sense to address department renewal needs by using student programs, and if the candidate worked out, by offering to bridge them into a full-time position.

Hiring managers understand little about the program, and HR advisors are not recommending it

Key finding: HR advisors are not communicating the program as a viable staffing option to hiring managers.

While mostly aware of its existence, hiring managers and HR advisors lack an understanding of the program objectives and how it operates

When probed further about awareness, many hiring managers and HR advisors noted they were unaware of:

- who is included in campaign inventories
- how to access candidates
- the difference between the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program and student recruitment programs
- what the program aims to achieve

Program administrators expressed concern about program changes being undocumented

Since 2010, the program's objectives have changed; however, program administrators highlighted that changes have not been documented, which has resulted in differing views of what it is supposed to be. For example, when asked what about the goal of the program, some indicated "it depends on who you ask."

HR advisors do not recommend the program

HR advisors are viewed as the primary resource for hiring managers seeking to fill a vacant position. Hiring managers rely on HR advisors to inform them of available options related to staffing.

HR advisors are not promoting the program to hiring managers as a staffing option, as found in the 2010 evaluation. Most indicated that they do not recommend it, as it fails to offer the quick and easy solution to staffing hiring managers are looking for.



Public opinion research: Public opinion research conducted in 2022 with hiring managers and HR advisors indicated that the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program scored the lowest among all PSC-run recruitment programs in terms of awareness. Many participants admitted to knowing "very little about this inventory" and "who is included in the pool." Among the few participants who were aware of the program, the feedback provided tended to skew negative. These participants reported limited success when recruiting candidates and had little interest in using the inventory again.

Hiring managers and HR advisors want a "one-stop shop" where information on all PSC inventories (skills and experience) is made available for them to filter based on their hiring needs, a finding that aligns with this evaluation.

Marketing activities are not connecting with intended applicants

Key finding: 3% of assessed candidates reported learning about the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program at a career fair.

Many university representatives reported high levels of interest in federal government jobs at in-person career fairs. However, they indicated that time constraints during these events sometimes leave students with more questions than answers. This leaves many potential program applicants seeking answers through email and other online resources.

Many university representatives also commented that despite the PSC's strong presence at university career fairs, they do not believe the program is promoted to the same degree as better-known programs such as the Federal Student Work Experience Program and the Post-Secondary CO-OP/Internship Program.

Only 3% overall, including 8% of female and 0% of male assessed candidates indicated they learned about the program at a career fair.

There were 3 regions where assessed candidates were more likely to indicate they learned about the campaign at a career fair: Alberta (11%), the National Capital Region (9%) and Ontario (3%). These regions also had the highest survey response rates (with the exception of British Columbia who had the same number of respondents as Ontario).

Post-secondary representatives described promotional activities as ineffective and insufficient

Most university and college representatives found communication about and awareness of the program to be poor. Most raised the issue of not having enough time to circulate and promote the program before the campaign launch. They reported that this hinders the ability to target promotional activities to intended audiences. The campaign launch coincides with the busiest time of year for post-secondary administration (October and November), which adds to the challenge of sharing program information with student bodies. Students are already inundated with information and deadlines. Potential improvements include coordinating promotion for students using simple and targeted strategies and materials.

Hiring managers prefer to use student programs for public service renewal

Key finding: The majority of hiring managers rely on student programs and student bridging as a primary source of recruitment.

Federal Student Work Experience Program candidates are typically offered employment during their post-secondary studies on a full-time or part-time basis. Managers are able to provide students with work experience and developmental opportunities over several years, and they can offer term or indeterminate employment upon graduation, commonly known as student bridging. As in the 2010 evaluation of the program, hiring managers favour this process over hiring through the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program as it provides an opportunity to try out and develop candidates before offering employment. This developmental aspect of the Federal Student Work Experience Program and other student employment programs is a component not available in the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program. While the target candidates and objectives for Post-Secondary Recruitment and student programs are different (for example, recent graduates vs. current students), hiring managers use the student programs as a type of graduate recruitment and developmental program.



Benchmarking: Capitalizing on this in-demand source of talent, Employment and Social Development Canada created their own [Inventory for Students and Newly Graduated Students](#). It is intended for anyone who has previously worked in a federal public service department or agency through a student employment program and who is looking for student employment or employment after graduation. The inventory was built relatively quickly, and uses commonly available tools. It allows hiring managers to search either on their own or with their HR advisor, and it connects them with students and recent graduates looking to find work in their field of study.



Public opinion research: Public opinion research conducted in 2022 with hiring managers and HR advisors on all recruitment programs managed by the PSC revealed that a core value proposition of the Federal Student Work Experience Program is the opportunity to develop relationships with students who can be bridged into longer-term positions.

Most assessed candidates learn about the program through the internet

Key finding: 92% of assessed candidates highlighted that they were made aware of the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program through online resources.

When asked how they learned about the program, **92% of assessed candidates** selected one of 3 online resources/platforms:

- 53% using a Government of Canada, department, or agency website
- 20% using official Post-Secondary Recruitment Program website
- 19% using other internet promotional activity

The majority of assessed candidates across all genders, employment equity groups and regions became aware of the program through these 3 internet-based platforms.

This was especially true in the National Capital Region, where nearly 3-quarters of respondents were made aware of the program in this manner. This was also the case in Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia.

What was noted as ineffective about online resources and platforms?

General feedback on what is ineffective about the various online resources/platforms includes the website being “complicated and confusing,” the program’s general lack of promotion and engagement with students.

Less commonly noted causes of ineffective engagement included assessed candidates receiving emails for work consideration that were never followed up by hiring managers, and a concern that the system is not disability friendly.

Student ambassadors and social media influencers were seen as great marketing tools for graduate recruitment

Word of mouth is important at universities

Many university representatives highlighted the importance of word of mouth around universities when it comes to searching for jobs. As a result, student ambassador programs were noted as a great way to share information related to graduate recruitment. HR advisors also believed more can be done on various social media platforms.

Suggested improvements

A majority of program administrators felt that increasing face-to-face interactions and having hiring managers present during outreach events at post-secondary institutions would improve communications. Many also felt that clear and continuous communication with hiring managers about Post-Secondary Recruitment Program campaigns, objectives and assessment methods would be beneficial.

The use of social media influencers with plenty of followers was noted as a best practice for sharing employment information throughout universities.



Benchmarking: A 2020 special report on the European Personnel Selection Office’s recruitment practices described how most of their communication budget is allocated to the “EU Careers” brand, created in 2020, which “relies on a network of ambassadors from the institutions ... and from universities” and “is focused on the EU as an employer, not on specific competitions.”

A best practice related to outreach by the UK Civil Service was catering outreach work to online platforms and social media at universities (in this case, over 300 events at 45 universities) as well as off-campus events. Social media influencers were also described as an important outreach resource.

Reporting on program status and measuring success is difficult and time consuming

Key finding: Program data has inaccuracies and originates from multiple systems, which makes reporting on its effectiveness difficult and time consuming.

Key performance indicators are needed to determine program success and effectiveness

Several program administrators repeatedly brought up the notion that they are largely unaware of how their efforts contribute to candidates finding employment. The absence of performance indicators and consistent collection of accurate data means program administrators are unaware how well the program is meeting the needs of federal departments and agencies.



Benchmarking: An evaluation of the **US Pathways Program** identified a notable practice for tracking tools that can help agencies collect, maintain and analyze data related to their Pathways Program participants. Recommendations from the evaluation included continual monitoring of the program’s usage patterns and gauging program effectiveness through oversight activities. Other recommendations made in relation to oversight and accountability included establishing a quality review mechanism to ensure

reported data are accurate and complete, and developing tracking tools to help monitor the program's milestones, such as completion of training and development activities and conversions to the competitive service.

Through an evaluation of the program, the **Local Government Association** identified measures to increase diversity and equity in the program.

These included:

- tracking data against protected characteristics
- social mobility measures
- relying on independent analysis from a research team
- collecting equity, diversity and inclusion data again in later surveys to enable better journey-tracking of alumni

Hiring trends over the last 10 years have been inconsistent

It is important to consider the changes that have occurred over the last decade when looking at Post-Secondary Recruitment Program hires. For example, the Deficit Reduction Action Plan in 2012 and subsequent hiring freezes are likely to have impacted the number of graduates hired.

That being said, the review of administrative data highlights **fiscal year 2012–13 as an outlier**, as the number of applicants was approximately 88% (on average) lower than all other years. This resulted in 254 appointments or approximately 1-of-8 applicants being hired, the lowest applicant-to-hire ratio over the evaluation period.

Appointment numbers do not include all program hires

Along with graduates, current federal public service employees are eligible to apply to the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program. However, if they are selected for referral and hired, they are not counted as a program hire due to their current employment status and system functionalities.

Several program administrators indicated that this limits the ability to accurately determine the number of hires produced by the program.

Limitations of formula used to calculate hire percentages

On average, there were 16 353 applicants annually throughout the evaluation period. Among these, a certain percentage are "screened in" to the various Post-Secondary Recruitment Program inventories, when they become known as "candidates." It would

be most accurate to compare the number of candidates to hires than applicants to hires; however, due to infrastructure and program data limitations, accurate numbers of candidates for each year of the evaluation period were unavailable.

For these reasons, this evaluation compared applicants to hires (data used in the PSC's annual reporting), reflecting a lower percentage of appointments.

To ensure more accurate and representative analysis of the program's success, work should be done to collect and maintain data on the number of applicants who are screened into the various inventories.

Efficiency

Questions

3.1 To what extent is the current approach to applicant assessment resulting in effective and appropriate screening for referrals?

3.2 To what extent is the Post-Secondary Recruitment program infrastructure supporting the efficient program delivery?

3.3 Are there alternative ways (for example, design changes, cost, etc.) or lessons learned for achieving the same objectives?

Efficiency key findings

- Recruitment system is not providing a positive candidate experience
- Absence of a candidate referrals and tracking system
- Limited use of remote assessment options or alternative assessment strategies for large-scale recruitment and assessment processes

Referrals to hiring managers need to be more timely, appropriate and useful

There are mixed views on the timeliness of referrals

While most program administrators believed referrals were often sent in a timely manner, HR advisors, hiring managers and functional communities had divided views on the time it took to receive lists of candidates. Many HR advisors and hiring managers expressed concern about finding candidates with expected levels of experience and who were available for hire. These groups of stakeholders were also concerned about the need to "continue assessments" once referrals were received.

The most significant issues related to referrals, by type of respondent

Program administrators: The absence of a dedicated system or referral tool to effectively screen and match candidates based on hiring organization requirements.

HR advisors and hiring managers: The time it took to go through referred candidates given the volume of information received.

Functional communities: Slow program responses, provision of candidate lists and requests for both basic and specific candidate/inventory data.

Respondents noted that these “significant issues” could be avoided if program users were able to independently retrieve data from the system.

Most program administrators believe candidate matching is mostly ineffective; however, 53% of assessed candidates reported that the position they were referred to matched their skills to a “large/very large extent.”



Gender-based Analysis Plus: Only 40% of assessed candidates with a disability responded they felt that their skills matched the position to a large or very large extent when they were referred for a federal government position.



Benchmarking: The European Personnel Selection Office, an interinstitutional office responsible for selecting staff in most European Union institutions, also expressed challenges related to candidate referrals. This office plays a central role in identifying successful candidates who may not be contacted due to disparities between their profiles and hiring needs, which results in institutions sometimes relying on temporary hires. The organization is considering developing an algorithm to allow recruiters to access talent based on skills rather than a candidate’s selected stream, as this might be more effective for candidate matching.

Recruitment system is not providing a positive candidate experience

The “black hole” analogy was frequently cited

The majority of program administrators, HR advisors and hiring managers believed that having one place for candidates to apply provides value and efficiency. Beyond this

advantage, most program administrators stated that candidates often do not hear back from anyone and often sit in the pool for many months, negatively affecting their view and experience of the program.

Candidates unaware of their status

Some assessed candidates spoke about the lack of clarity and transparency. Most candidates remain in inventories from a few months up to 2 years, with nearly no transparency on these delays or their continued eligibility. They stated that greater transparency in the recruitment process would set realistic expectations for applicants.

Typical candidate experience:

1. Candidate applies to process
2. Candidate is screened in
3. Candidate is assessed
4. This is the point where the black hole analogy was cited as a candidate will sit in an inventory or a pool and sometimes never hears back from anyone.
5. Candidate may be referred to hiring manager
6. Hiring manager may further assess candidate
7. Candidate may be hired



Public opinion research: Similar findings were identified in public opinion research conducted in 2022 with hiring managers and HR advisors for all recruitment programs managed by the PSC. The research found that the “application process is archaic and outdated, not aligned with how today’s candidates (especially students) are used to [applying], nor want to apply. 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.” Respondents recommended improvements in these areas to streamline processes by simplifying the process “for applicants so they only submit a single application, and modernizing tools allowing applicants to submit their applications easily, faster and keep them up to date through an interactive platform.

Applying takes too long

Satisfaction with application length varies among candidate groups



Over half (52%) of assessed candidates who responded did not believe the length of the application process was appropriate. The rate was highest (65%) among persons with disabilities.

Additionally, dissatisfaction with application length was higher among women (61%) than men (43%). These findings are similar throughout the country, with dissatisfaction being slightly higher among assessed candidates from the National Capital Region.

This was also a source of dissatisfaction in the 2010 evaluation, where interview respondents considered the application process to be complex and lengthy.



Benchmarking: During a major review of graduate recruitment in 2013–14, the Public Appointments Service, an Irish central recruitment agency for the civil service and a range of public bodies, recognized they were competing with other large private-sector employers. Changes made to their graduate recruitment included a more streamlined and faster process for candidates, the creation of a simple graduate-focused portal and streamlined assessment. Although there has been progress in simplifying the language used in the assessment process, the agency is looking to adopt a candidate acquisition system with communication functions to allow direct communication with candidates.

Applying to one process for government-wide inventories and pools is seen as efficient

Program administrators, hiring managers, HR advisors and assessed candidates all described the efficiency of having one place for applicants to apply

- Most managers, HR advisors and university representatives predominantly viewed that the PSC had a role as the centralized recruiter across departments and could coordinate promotion for all federal public service career opportunities
- Respondents felt the program should be reformed, along with other similar programs, as a “one-stop-shop” or single point of entry to the federal public service, and simplified to allow candidates to state their preferences and be connected to hiring departments



Benchmarking: The UK Fast Stream, the Public Appointments Service in Ireland and the European Personnel Selection Office all confirmed the continued relevance of centralized public-sector recruitment in providing economies of scale and consistency, with the latter 2 pointing to some challenges in meeting recruitment demand.

How do candidates apply for government jobs?

- A similar number of assessed candidates either only applied through the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program (35%) or directly through departments or agencies (31%)



Gender-based Analysis Plus: Visible minority participants were less likely to report applying to the federal government through any other program (49%), with only 26% indicating that they applied directly to a federal department or agency.



Public opinion research: Public opinion research conducted in 2022 for all recruitment programs managed by the PSC identified confusion and “application fatigue” for candidates who may be applying to multiple departments in addition to their own

process as a key challenge for hiring managers and HR. Respondents suggested the PSC simplify the process for applicants so they only submit a single application and have their information funnelled into whichever PSC or departmental pools or inventories are most relevant and aligned with their profile and interests.

Missing key infrastructure to deliver modern recruitment

Key finding: Candidate referrals lack automation.

The most significant issue raised by the majority of program administrators was that the program has no dedicated IT system or referral tool. As a result, manual screening of inventories using Microsoft Excel is required. Functional communities raised issues with delays in receiving program responses, candidate lists and requests for both basic and specific candidate and inventory data. These could be avoided if partners could independently retrieve data from the system.

Key finding: System does not track steps in the assessment process.

Nearly all program administrators expressed concerns about the absence of a system to track the status of candidates from application to appointment. Once referrals are provided to hiring managers, there is no way for them to provide feedback in the system, such as whether a candidate was interested in their position, remains available or was appointed.



Benchmarking: The European Personnel Selection Office identified the use of an applicant-tracking system as being of critical importance for delivering efficient post-secondary programs and identified the lack of this program as an important gap. Other important considerations were flexibility between process steps, speed of the process, engagement of candidates, predictability and lowered risk of disruption.

Program is not equipped with tools to respond to user needs

Key finding: Overall, the infrastructure was described as a major barrier to hiring candidates and making use of post-secondary inventories.

Infrastructure is struggling to deliver assessment automation

- Most program administrators feel there is a lack of automation in assessments
- They stated that the testing platform needs improvements, including the ability to test larger numbers of applicants per week, greater flexibility and supervision of testing

- The recent Computer Adaptive Technology platform was seen as an improvement in reducing delays for candidates who require accommodation measures
- The infrastructure does not capture complete campaign data and does not have a good project management system in place to efficiently carry it out
- Making changes to the infrastructure is difficult, as the Information Technology Services Directorate has been required to manage data in the system since its inception, which has made it convoluted and difficult to improve

Infrastructure dissatisfaction among the majority of HR advisors, managers and functional communities is mainly due to the system's non-user-friendly candidate list format.

- Users receive a lot of information on candidates that is time-consuming to go through and cannot be filtered or sorted; some users have resorted to hiring students or contractors to sort through candidate lists
- Hiring managers often do not know how to navigate job categories within the system, thereby landing on generic requirements and missing out on candidates
- There is a disconnect between each stage of the process and a lack of instructions for hiring departments on what has already been assessed and what remains to be done
- Hiring managers found that candidate information is not updated and does not match candidate résumés (for example, experience and degree)
- Many program administrators had similar views, as they felt that hiring managers did not have direct access to inventories and candidate information (résumé and screening questions), candidate information is not current, candidates do not have the ability to market themselves, and candidates cannot reuse previous assessment results

Some program administrators were also concerned that candidate information was not up to date since it cannot be updated in the system



Half (51%) of surveyed assessed candidates reported being in the inventory for more than 13 months.



Gender-based Analysis Plus: Assessed candidates across all employment equity groups, particularly **visible minority participants (66%)**, were more likely to be in the inventory for more than 13 months.

Nearly half of assessed candidates noted that they acquired new skills and experience while waiting in inventories or throughout the assessment process and were unable to update their applications.



Around half responded that their skill sets (47%) and experience (47%) changed during their time in the inventory.

This means that information captured in initial applications no longer fully reflected their skills and experience by the time they were hired.



Gender-based Analysis Plus: This number was also highest among **women (76% for skillsets and 52% for career experience)** and **visible minority** respondents (56% for skillsets and 54% experience).



Public opinion research: In public opinion research conducted in 2022 on all recruitment programs managed by the PSC, hiring managers and HR advisors suggested the modernization of tools as a future improvement.

They recommended a centralized, user-friendly, interactive tool or application where:

- managers can easily review and access candidates without having to request lengthy spreadsheets
- candidate profiles are current and provide a more holistic picture of the person (over and above a résumé)
- applicants can easily and quickly submit and update their applications
- applicants are kept up to date through an interactive platform

Limited use of remote assessment options or alternative assessment strategies for large-scale recruitment



Gender-based Analysis Plus: Several assessed candidates saw the Public Service Entrance Exam as a barrier to inclusion and diversity, suggesting it be reconsidered, and pass rates for employment equity groups be evaluated. They also felt that the questions and public sector-specific language were too difficult.

Several program administrators talked about [VidCruiter](#), an online platform with assessment products such as video interviewing, used by other departments but not by the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program.



Benchmarking: In Ireland, the Public Appointments Service described how a major review of their graduate recruitment following a 2013–14 moratorium allowed for a significantly more streamlined, efficient and successful program. There was a clear emphasis on competing with large private-sector employers; this spurred the creation of internships, a more streamlined and faster process for candidates, a simple graduate-focused portal, and a streamlined assessment. They also demonstrated that an “all-at-once” yearly fall campaign was ineffective, largely because it was “too late.”

The assessment process for the Public Appointments Service begins with a verbal, numerical and situational judgment test over the phone to “make it easy” for candidates. Video interviews tailored to each stream then take place and consist of an open-book exercise that is reflective of candidates’ independence and in tune with the specific position. Candidates can choose from a bank of situational questions ahead of time and have 7 days to research and prepare a presentation for this interview. Finally,

candidates go through a written assessment, which includes a competency interview and extensively streamlined written exercises. The campaign is advertised in October, candidates are assessed in November and they receive their results in December.

Trained assessors highlighted as a best practice in 4 foreign graduate recruitment programs

In **England**, the National Graduate Development Programme's equity-focused assessment process best practice included the use of independent and professionally trained assessors for all stages of assessment, rather than staff from councils or the program itself (where there is potential for bias).

Assessors with the **European Personnel Selection Office** originate from each hiring institution and are provided with training and assistance to conduct test correction, screening and interviews.

In **New South Wales, Australia**, reforms identified best practices and recommendations relating to the program's recruitment process. Top candidates are shortlisted for the assessment centre stage and complete a personality assessment including a 2-minute video interview question. They are then assessed at the assessment centre using 3 capability-based methods delivered by trained assessors: an interactive group activity, an individual written task and a structured interview.

A program evaluation in **the United States** Personnel Management Office identified best practices for recruitment transparency and program delivery including training agency supervisors, managers and employees to be effective recruiters.



Benchmarking: The UK Fast Stream identified best practices for diversity and equity-focused program assessment and testing for increasing equity. To be more inclusive in its approach to identifying potential and defining talent, the program:

- removed verbal and numerical online assessments
- updated digital testing for behavioural and situational judgment attributes
- introduced an online strengths-based video interview assessment, shifting the focus from candidate experience to their motivation for applying and future potential
- cut the assessment centre to half a day from a full day
- established a regional assessment centre away from London to reach out to a more diverse population

- refocused assessment on fresh talent areas, such as leadership and learning agility

Comparing costs of similar programs is like comparing apples to oranges

The evaluation found limited information related to costs of comparable graduate programs. The following comparison with the European Personnel Selection Office is provided for information purposes only. The differences in program structure and cost-tracking methodology do not allow for direct comparison or conclusions on cost efficiency. In both programs, yearly costs vary depending on applicant volume and number of appointments.

Post-Secondary Recruitment Program cost per hire and applicant

- The average cost per hire is \$1,320
- The cost per applicant is between \$24 and \$359
- Includes costs for all selection processes from 2010–11 to 2020–21
- Number of employees: 10.5 full-time equivalents in 2020–21
- Costs are divided into 2 categories: salary expenditures and non-salary expenditures
- Excludes costs related to Information Technology Services Directorate (support of recruitment system) and the Personnel Psychology Centre activities (planning, research, and accommodation measures) in addition to the cost of tests
- There were 163 562 applicants and 5 725 hires over the period

European Personnel Selection Office graduate recruitment cost per hire and applicant

- The average cost per hire is €24,000.
- The cost per applicant is between €188 to €6,900.
- Includes costs for 15 selection processes from 2012 to 2018
- Number of employees: approximately 125
- Costs are divided into 3 categories: overhead (building and utilities), indirect costs (activities supporting selection processes) and direct costs (related specifically to individual competitions such as assessments)
- There were 411 000 applicants and 7 000 hires over the period

Graduate recruitment best practices and lessons learned

Ideas and best practices for consideration based on consultations

Program administrators suggested the program needs to start focusing on user experience and align with platforms such as [LinkedIn](#), which uses a proactive approach and suggests candidates for consideration

- The combination of a job and development, as found in the UK Fast Stream program, was frequently seen as a best practice

Functional communities suggested the program shift to a community-driven recruitment tool, like the PSC's [Recruitment of Policy Leaders](#)

- University representatives suggested a speed-hiring event with recruiters as an alternative, where candidates would be able to meet recruiters in person for concrete employer-employee interactions
 - A format offered by York University was cited as an example that offered interviews and hiring on the spot

The jurisdictional review demonstrated that most graduate programs have a developmental component that includes rotations in different functions and organizations.

The majority of graduate programs focus on specialized recruitment

Graduate programs	Developmental component	Specialized	Generic	Duration
UK Fast Stream	15 different leadership and specialist development schemes	Yes	-	18 months
UK Local Government Association's National Graduate Developmental Program	Developmental: rotations in strategic or corporate functions	-	-	24 months
Ireland's Public Appointments Service	Limited developmental (early stages of development programs)	Yes	Yes	-



Graduate programs	Developmental component	Specialized	Generic	Duration
US Pathways Programs	Internship	-	-	24 months
US Digital Corps	Fellowship	Yes	-	24 months
New South Wales, Australia	-	Yes	-	18 months
Australia Government Graduate Program	-	Yes	Yes	-
Royal Bank of Canada, Career Launch Program	Internship	-	-	12 months
European Personnel Selection Office	Traineeship program option	Yes	Yes	-
KPMG Australia	-	Yes	-	12 months

Appendix C provides program details.



Management Response Action Plan

Recommendation	Risk level associated with not addressing recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
<p>The National Recruitment Directorate (NRD) should clarify the program's objectives and how it positions itself to support the broader post-secondary graduate recruitment effort on behalf of the Government of Canada, potentially by:</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Management agrees with the need to clarify the objectives of the Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR) program and to determine how best to position NRD with respect to PSR as a whole.</p> <p>Planned Actions:</p> <p>Short-term</p> <p>1. The fall 2022 PSR campaign was designed, in close collaboration with a community of practice, to address key needs of stakeholders and that it did not overlap with existing</p>	<p>Planned action 1: Q2 2022-2023</p> <p>Planned action 2: Q2 2023-2024</p>	<p>Office of primary interest (OPI): NRD/Services and Business Development Sector (SBDS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Project Management Office (PMO) was implemented within NRD • Clarified vision, objectives, and way forward



Recommendation	Risk level associated with not addressing recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •developing a recruitment strategy that minimizes overlap, redundancy and inter-program competition with student recruitment programs •aligning the program with the needs of key stakeholders (applicants, hiring managers and HR advisors) 		<p>student recruitment programs.</p> <p>Medium to long-term</p> <p>2. In the spring 2022, NRD embarked on a two-year Recruitment Program Modernization (RPM) initiative aimed at modernizing its recruitment programs, including student programs (Federal Student Work Experience Program, CO-OP, and Research Affiliate Program) and post-secondary graduate recruitment programs. This was identified by the Executive Management Committee (EMC) as a PSC Strategic Priority in 2022. As part of this exercise, NRD will</p>			



Recommendation	Risk level associated with not addressing recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
		<p>examine its objectives and clarify the vision for a way forward for PSR aligned with the needs of government and key stakeholders.</p> <p>Recommendations will be proposed through formal governance which includes the PSC EMC. In the meantime, NRD will consider putting a pause on the Fall 2023-2024 PSR campaign while completing its RPM exercise.</p>			
The National Recruitment Directorate should improve post-secondary graduate	High	While management agrees with the need to improve post-secondary graduate recruitment branding, marketing and outreach, it is important to recognize	<p>Planned action 1: Q4 2022–23</p> <p>Planned action 2: Q3 2023– 24</p>	<p>Office of PI: NRD/SBDS</p> <p>Office of collateral interest (OCI): Communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Clarified role



Recommendation	Risk level associated with not addressing recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
<p>recruitment branding and marketing with a view to adopting the role as central recruiter on behalf of the federal public service, potentially by:</p>		<p>that the PSC is not the central recruiter for post-secondary graduate recruitment on behalf of the Government of Canada. Departments and agencies are actively involved in their own post-secondary recruitment efforts given our sub-delegated staffing framework. Taking on this role for the Government of Canada would require discussions with PSC senior management as well as the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO). There would also be significant resource implications and potential changes required to our policy framework.</p>		<p>and Parliamentary Affairs Directorate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding defined and marketing strategy developed



Recommendation	Risk level associated with not addressing recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •coordinating outreach activities to have a single voice and to reduce any confusion or duplication between PSC programs and department-run recruitment, which often targets the same candidates 		<p>Planned actions:</p> <p>Medium to long-term</p> <p>1. As part of our Program Modernization Initiative, NRD will engage internal and external stakeholders and partners, including OCHRO, to gage support and explore implications of any future role as central recruiter on behalf of the Government of Canada.</p> <p>Medium to long-term</p> <p>2. Once a way forward for post-secondary graduate recruitment has been determined, NRD will work with PSC Communications to review and develop an improved branding and marketing strategy. The</p>			



Recommendation	Risk level associated with not addressing recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> leveraging and expanding student program ambassador networks 		<p>proposed strategy will be presented through formal governance, which includes EMC.</p>			
<p>The Services and Business Development Sector should modernize the infrastructure and assessment process to effectively carry out user-friendly post-secondary graduate recruitment, potentially by:</p>	High	<p>Management agrees with the need to modernize the infrastructure and assessment approach for post-secondary graduate recruitment. This work is intricately tied to the future public service recruitment solution. Led by the PSC's SBDS, the GC Jobs Transformation project vision is to replace the current Public Service Resourcing System with an adaptable, modern,</p>	<p>Planned action 1: Q4 2022–23</p> <p>Planned actions 2 to 3</p> <p>Dependent on GC Jobs Transformation timeframes – possibility to participate in a pilot project in Spring 2023</p>	<p>OPI: SBDS</p> <p>OCI: Information Technology Services Directorate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressive improvements and refinement of the existing system Integration into a future enterprise-system



Recommendation	Risk level associated with not addressing recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improving candidate experience (by simplifying the application process, providing access to all graduate opportunities, increasing communication with candidates, and adding the ability to update profiles) and providing interactive access for hiring managers 		<p>inclusive, user-centric and digital recruiting solution that attracts talent and meets the needs of all users (job seekers, hiring managers and human resources professionals). Efforts to improve current systems on a smaller scale until such time as the GC Jobs transformation project is implemented are highly dependent on PSC prioritization of limited IT resources and competing priorities. Previous proposals for modern candidate management tools have been submitted for consideration as part of the Information Management/Information Technology (IM/IT)</p>			



Recommendation	Risk level associated with not addressing recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting each step of the assessment process from application to appointment, including improved candidate-matching functionalities and access to timely and accurate data 		<p>planning process and were not approved, limiting opportunities for improvements to the administration and management of recruitment programs in the short term.</p> <p>Planned actions:</p> <p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustments for 2022–23 PSR campaign will include increased communication with candidates throughout the recruitment and assessment process and enhanced hiring manager experience through: 			



Recommendation	Risk level associated with not addressing recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •reviewing and implementing best practices in modernized and flexible assessment, such as engaging with candidates, leveraging emerging technology, reducing assessment timelines, using trained assessors, and involving managers, especially from functional communities 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •development of inclusive-by-design assessment in partnership with a large functional community and specific departments; •use of the Personnel Psychology Centre’s guidance material on minimizing biases and barriers in assessment methods, including training for assessors •matching events <p>Medium to long-term</p> <p>2. Continue to explore and propose interim IT solutions and adopt them based on IT capacity to support such proposals.</p>			



Recommendation	Risk level associated with not addressing recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
		3. Actively participate in the GC Jobs Transformation project as a key stakeholder to ensure modernization business needs are captured and to support testing and piloting of potential solutions to achieve desired outcomes.			
The National Recruitment Directorate should introduce rigorous performance measurement to track the success of the program and demographic profiles of applicants and	High	<p>Management agrees with the need to implement rigorous performance measurement to track the success of the program and profiles of applicants and candidates to better meet their needs.</p> <p>Planned actions:</p> <p>Short-term</p>	<p>Planned action 1: Q1 2023–24</p> <p>Planned action 2: Q4 2023–24</p>	<p>OPI: NRD-SBDS</p> <p>OCI: RDD</p>	<p>Data framework and associated business processes and procedure</p> <p>Performance management framework established</p>



Recommendation	Risk level associated with not addressing recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
candidates to better meet their needs.		<p>1. In close collaboration with the Data and Analysis Directorate (DSAD), NRD is currently undertaking a review of how programs operational data is captured and how to standardize and improve data collection and reporting. Once recommendations for improvements are implemented, NRD will have a robust and rigorous data framework and associated business processes and procedures that will enable timely, accurate and consistent program performance reporting and continuous improvement.</p>			



Recommendation	Risk level associated with not addressing recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
		<p>Medium to long-term</p> <p>2. After completion of previous recommendations aimed at clarifying PSR program objectives, NRD will establish performance key indicators, data sources and methodologies in collaboration with the Results and Delivery Division (RDD). Implementation may be limited by the capabilities of the current recruitment system (ability to capture demographic profiles and track hires), with full implementation dependent on implementation of the GC Jobs transformation project.</p>			



Recommendation	Risk level associated with not addressing recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
<p>The National Recruitment Directorate should explore partnerships with other central agencies, functional communities and departments, and agencies for creating developmental programs (for example, Recruitment of Policy Leaders) that cater to post-secondary graduates.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>The creation of developmental programs is currently beyond the mandate of the PSC. While this recommendation is aspirational, it goes beyond the scope of PSR and is about potentially creating new, different program(s), requiring further exploration and discussion, including examining if the PSC is the right organization to administer such programs.</p> <p>Planned action:</p>	<p>Q3 2024–25</p>	<p>OPI: NRD/SBDS</p>	<p>A recommendation is made for development programs</p>



Recommendation	Risk level associated with not addressing recommendation	Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the 2-year Recruitment Programs Modernization project, management commits to exploring this with other central agencies, functional communities and departments to determine if development programs should be an area that the PSC should consider, and we will raise this with senior management through PSC governance. Resource implications will also be explored. 			



Appendix A: Program Logic Model



Text version

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Immediate Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Ultimate Outcomes
Legislation and policies	Manage the Post-Secondary Recruitment program	Communications & engagement strategies for hiring managers, departments/agencies, and partners	Enhanced promotion and advertisement of recruitment programs	Improved diversity and representation within the federal public service	The program supports timely recruitment of talented, competent, non-partisan and representative federal public service
Program and funds	Conduct data analysis on past results & consult with departments and agencies to identify needs	Marketing activities & products for hiring managers, departments/agencies & applicants	Increased accessibility to federal government employment opportunities	Gained efficiencies of Government of Canada wide recruitment process that improves time to staff	
	Conduct outreach to	Partially assessed pools/inventories of	Partially assessed candidates are	Increased satisfaction of	



Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Immediate Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Ultimate Outcomes
GC Jobs platform	candidates, hiring managers and departments	candidates available for referral	referred to federal organizations	hiring managers of recruits	
	Create and launch campaign	Referrals		Increased utilization of Post-Secondary Recruitment inventories/pools	
-	Determine assessment approach &		-	Recruitment process promotes	The program promotes and supports the



Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Immediate Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Ultimate Outcomes
	administer testing			government priority of public service renewal	appointment of candidates based on the values of fairness, representativeness and transparency
Program personnel	Conduct referrals, reporting & evaluation activities for ongoing inventories	Expert advice, environment scan, business plan & reports	Partially and/or fully assessed candidates are hired according to the needs of departments		
	Track and report on Post-Secondary Recruitment candidate data				



Appendix B: Methodology and limitations

To ensure accurate and neutral answers to the evaluation questions, several qualitative and quantitative methods were used and triangulated.

Administrative and performance data review

The review team obtained, reviewed and analyzed administrative and performance data related to the program for a better understanding of the program and to extract information relating to the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the program.

Limitations

- The analysis was limited by the amount and/or quality of the data available.

Document review

The document review included an examination of strategic departmental and policy documents about the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program. This provided the evaluation team with a better understanding of the program's relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The documents were reviewed, coded and analyzed to extract the information.

Limitations

- The review was limited by the amount and/or quality of documents available

Surveys

A survey was developed and administered online to assessed candidates. The survey allowed the evaluation team to gather a larger dataset from people who could not otherwise have been reached by other lines of evidence. The survey was designed to be neutral, easily understandable and accessible by all. Socio-demographic information was gathered to allow for a GBA+ analysis of the data. The data gathered via the survey was analyzed to assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the program.

Limitations

- Particular stakeholder groups were harder to reach (for example, candidates currently in post-Secondary Recruitment Program inventories) and thus, have limited representation in survey findings.

National and international benchmarking exercise

Data related to post-secondary recruitment programs external to the federal government (provincial government and international recruitment programs) was analyzed for comparison to the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program.

Limitations

- The international benchmarking was limited to countries where French or English is spoken.

Interviews

43 stakeholders were interviewed (26 internal and 17 external). The focus of the interviews was to obtain their insights on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the program. The interviews were designed to extract the expertise of the interviewees through a conversation based on pre-established questions. The interviews were not recorded, but notes were taken and later analyzed.

Limitations

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, interviews were conducted virtually (via Microsoft Teams). As interviews are an inherently social and collaborative exercise, it is possible that this impacted the level of comfort of the interviewees. To mitigate this, the interviews were conducted by video conference, allowing for a more human connection. Interviewers also focused on establishing a virtual environment of trust by ensuring anonymity to all participants.

Focus groups

Focus groups were conducted to gather the views of hiring managers, HR, university and college representatives and functional communities. These different groups met separately, to focus on their respective areas of concern relating to the program. Focus groups, by encouraging discussion through the use of pre-set open-ended questions, allowed the different groups to share, confront and discuss their views of the program. The focus groups were not recorded, but notes were taken and later analyzed.

Limitations

- The program was unable to provide enough names for focus groups of hired candidates. Other lines of evidence, such as the survey, were used to gather their views.

- To accommodate speakers of the 2 official languages, focus groups were conducted entirely in French with French speakers and entirely in English with English speakers.
- The focus groups were held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar to the interviews, a special effort was made to create welcoming and trusting online environments.

Gender-based Analysis Plus

Gender-based Analysis Plus was included in the planning of this evaluation and during the conduct and analysis of all applicable lines of evidence, to consider the intersecting realities of program applicants.

Limitations

- GBA+ analysis was sometimes limited by the availability and the quality of the data.
- Employment equity hire data was only available from 2015 until 2020.

Appendix C: Benchmarking summary

Location	Description of program
UK Civil Service	Local Government Association’s National Graduate Development Program (NGDP): for recent graduates of undergraduate programs – 2 year work terms with 3-4 placements
	UK Civil Service Fast Stream: for final year undergraduates, current graduates, or degree apprentices. Comprises 15 leadership and specialist development “schemes”. Includes structured learning, coaching, mentoring, and a career path.
US Government	Pathways Program: for students (high school to graduate). Paid opportunities in various federal agencies
	Recent Graduates Program: for individuals who obtained a degree in last two years. Provides entry-level experience to federal agencies with an individual development plan. After program is completed, may be converted to a permanent position or 1-4 year term.



Location	Description of program
	US Digital Corps: for recent graduates in technology related degree programs. A 2 year fellowship that can be converted into a full-time position after completing the program.
Australian Government	New South Wales Government Graduate Program: 18 month program for 10 functional areas (i.e., policy, finance, etc.) and three degree-specific streams (i.e., legal, digital, and social work). All of which offer on-the-job experience with a focus on learning and development.
	Australian Government Graduate Program: one generalist and 6 specialized streams as well as a dedicated Indigenous Graduate Pathway.
Irish Civil and Public Service	Six dedicated streams for recent graduates.
European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO)	Has both program and selection process for entry-level graduates. Generalist process is held annually while specialist processes are done based on the needs of institutions – also has an increased focus on skills.
Royal Bank of Canada	Career Launch Program: A one-year paid internship for graduates (of universities and colleges) 24 and under. Three rotations – 6 months in personal and commercial banking, 3 months with a charity, and 3 months in a corporate environment. Candidates receive coaching, learning, mentor, development and networking opportunities.

