**New Hires Survey
Technical Paper #2**

Early Work Experiences of New Recruits

Their recruitment experiences, job satisfaction and career plans

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February 2002

Canada

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Executive Summary

In response to an increasingly competitive labour market and demographic changes in the Canadian population, the federal Public Service (FPS) is pursing new strategies to recruit and retain employees. In an effort to improve these aims, a survey of new hires was undertaken. This report describes their early work experiences with their jobs and the FPS overall. It is based on research conducted by the Research Directorate of the Public Service Commission (PSC) of recently hired indeterminate public servants across all occupational categories in January and February 2001. The New Hires Survey examined the recruitment experiences, job satisfaction and career plans of a representative sample of the 8473 people hired into the indeterminate core of the FPS during the 12 month period between July 1, 1999 and June 30, 2000.

The results of the survey demonstrated the growing importance of the Internet in the recruitment process. In their job searches prior to working in the FPS, a majority of respondents (59%) indicated that the PSC job website (jobs.gc.ca) was a valuable source of information. However, talking to family, friends and other contacts was also reported as important by 40% of respondents. This indicates that the Internet has replaced social networks as the most important source of information about jobs.

The majority of respondents (78%) had access to the Internet, while less than a quarter (22%) did not. In total, 61% of respondents had access to the Internet and used it in their searches, but 17% did not. Of those who had access to the Internet and used it in their job searches, 81% indicated checking the PSC job website, 67% applied for jobs on-line and 36% requested a career alert.

Although large proportions of respondents reported having a job description (70%), information on a salary scale (69%), statement of qualifications (68%), only about one fifth (18%) had information on opportunities for career advancement. Basic information such as a job description should be provided to all applicants. Moreover, since we know that opportunities for career advancement are a key concern for new hires, these findings are particularly important.

Among their top three reasons for accepting their first position with the FPS were the following: to make full use of their knowledge, skills and abilities (40%), the opportunity to get into the FPS (40%), job security (35%), to work in their field of study (32%), salary (28%), and to increase opportunities for advancement (25%). Differences were found between occupational categories with regard to the reason, 'for the opportunity to work in my field of study.' Those in the scientific and professional (69%), technical (50%), and administrative and foreign service (41%) categories are much more likely to indicate this as an important reason for accepting their first job. In contrast, those in the Economics, Sociology and Statistics (49%), and Computer Systems (37%) groups were more likely to indicate that they accepted their job to obtain work in their field of study.

High levels of agreement were found among several indicators: the FPS offers sufficient flexibility to balance work and personal life (87%), excellent benefits (87%), interesting work (86%), is committed to diversity in the workplace (86%), and has a good quality work environment (76%). However, slightly less than half of respondents agreed that the FPS is open

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to change (48%), offers competitive salaries (47%), and only one quarter felt the FPS makes hiring decisions in a reasonable period of time. With regard to the three areas of lower agreement, there are differences between occupational categories regarding satisfaction with salary. The lowest agreement regarding the statement, 'the FPS offers competitive salaries compared to the private sector' was found among those in the scientific and professional (32%) and operational (39%) occupational categories.

Satisfaction with various aspects of working in the FPS is compared with responses to the 1999 Employee Survey conducted by Statistics Canada for the PSC. Several areas appear to have improved, including the following: being satisfied with their careers in the FPS; viewing the selection process in their work unit as fair; receiving recognition from their manager for doing a good job; having a say in decisions which impact on their work; their department or agency is doing a good job in supporting career development; and believing that they have a good opportunity for promotion. In contrast, three areas appear to be problematic in that their ratings have decreased over a short period of time and they are: respondents knowing what their manager expects of them; having the resources necessary to do their job; and being able to complete their workload within regular hours.

Differences on satisfaction indictors were also found between those externally and internally (from the term population) recruited. Specifically, a greater proportion of external hires (69%) than term conversions (59%) agreed that they have a good opportunity to get a promotion in their job. Those who were recruited from the term population (83%) were more likely than external hires (73%) to agree that they get adequate recognition from their manager when they do a good job. In contrast, more external hires (79%) than term recruits (72%) agreed that they had the necessary resources to do their job well.

1.0 Background

In March 2000 a preliminary report was released on survey findings of newly hired indeterminate employees in the federal Public Service (FPS).[1] The New Hires Survey (NHS) examined the recruitment experiences, job satisfaction and career plans of a representative sample of the 8473 people hired into the federal Public Service's indeterminate workforce between July 1, 1999 and June 30, 2000.[2]

Individuals are recruited into the FPS indeterminate workforce from the external labour market or internally, from those working on a term basis. During the one year period under investigation, 3,135 individuals or 37% were recruited from the external labour market and the remaining 5608 individuals or 63% were recruited from the term population.

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[1] McDougall, Brian; Nehme, Micheline; and van Gaalen, Rolina (March 2001) *Joining the Core Workforce: A Preliminary Report on the Survey of Newly Hired Indeterminate Employees in the Federal Public Service* (http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research).

[2] Although this survey focused on the FPS as defined in the *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA), those who were new hires (N=724) at the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) during that time period were also invited to participate in the study.

2.0 Methodology

Results from the New Hires Survey are based on an analysis of responses to a questionnaire by 990 public servants during a three-week period in January and February 2001. The questionnaire consisted of about 100 items covering a wide range of issues related to the recruitment and retention of people newly hired into the indeterminate workforce.

Although designed by the Research Directorate of the Public Service Commission, the survey was administered via the Internet by the polling firm Ipsos-Reid. Each potential respondent was sent by E-mail a letter of invitation to participate in the study, a unique personal identification number (PIN), and the Internet address of the survey. Several reminders were sent to participants to encourage participation.

2.1 Population and Sample

The study population consisted of 8,743 people recruited into the core workforce between July 1, 1999 and June 30, 2000, and 724 people recruited into the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) during this period. Table 1 presents the population profile.

Table 1: New Hires in the Indeterminate Workforce of the FPS, July 1999 – June 2000			
	External Recruits	Term Conversions	Total
Occupational Categories			
Executive	29	3	32
Scientific and Professional	505	770	1275
Administrative and Foreign Service	1221	1746	2967
Technical	378	347	725
Administrative Support	474	1973	2447
Operations	527	168	1295
Others	1	1	2
Regions			
Atlantic	231	422	653
Quebec (except NCR)	210	464	674
National Capital Region (NCR)	1282	2479	3761
Ontario (except NCR)	234	861	1095
Prairies	517	456	973
Alberta	252	361	613
British Columbia	340	506	846
Territories	69	57	126
Employment Equity Groups			
Women	991	2690	3681
Persons with Disabilities	50	183	233
Visible Minorities	228	391	619
Aboriginal Peoples	117	270	387
Agencies outside the PSEA			
Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA)	783	1074	1867
Totals			
Without CCRA	3135	5608	8743
With CCRA	3928	6682	10610
Source: Data supplied by the Information Management Division of the Public Service Commission			

The sampling procedure was as follows. For new hires in the FPS subject to the Public Service Employment Act (PSEA), a representative sample of 4328 people was randomly selected to

participate in the study. To facilitate our analysis of the experiences of new hires from the various Employment Equity (EE) groups, we over-sampled these populations by inviting all those who identified themselves as Aboriginal peoples, visible minorities and persons with disabilities to participate.

2.2 Survey Respondent Profile

The 990 respondents in this study obtained their indeterminate jobs in the FPS through two channels of recruitment: over half (52%) were external hires, while the remainder (48%) were recruited from the term population. English was the first language of 67% of all respondents and French for 28% of respondents. The average age of respondents was 36 years of age.

More women respondents came from the ranks of the term conversions than the external recruits. Among the new hires from the term population, two thirds (67%) were women. In contrast, only 46% of respondents recruited externally were women.

One-third (33%) of all respondents had a bachelor's degree, while 26% had a post-graduate degree (e.g. a master's, professional or doctoral degree). A further 25% had a college/technical certificate or diploma. Only 15% had either high school/apprentice or trade credentials. A larger proportion of university trained new hires entered the core workforce through external recruitment (68%) than from the term population (50%).

The strategy of oversampling for Employment Equity (EE) groups resulted in a large representation of Aboriginal peoples (8%), persons with disabilities (4%) and visible minorities (19%) among the respondents.

2.3 Distribution of Respondents by Department/Agency and Region

Survey respondents were working in numerous departments and agencies. Among those departments and agencies with especially large representations were Human Resources Development Canada (15%), the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (11%) and Public Works and Government Services Canada (7%). Additionally, respondents employed at Statistics Canada accounted for 6% of the responses, while four other departments (i.e. Environment Canada, Justice, Health Canada and Transport Canada) accounted for 5% of the total.

Almost two thirds (65%) of respondents were employed in the scientific and professional (19%), or administrative and foreign service (46%) occupational categories. Only two respondents employed as executives completed the survey. The proportions of the other three occupational categories are as follows: technical (18%), administrative support (19%) and operational (2%). The low response rate among those in the operational category is due to technical constraints such as not having access to E-mail or to the Internet in their workplaces.
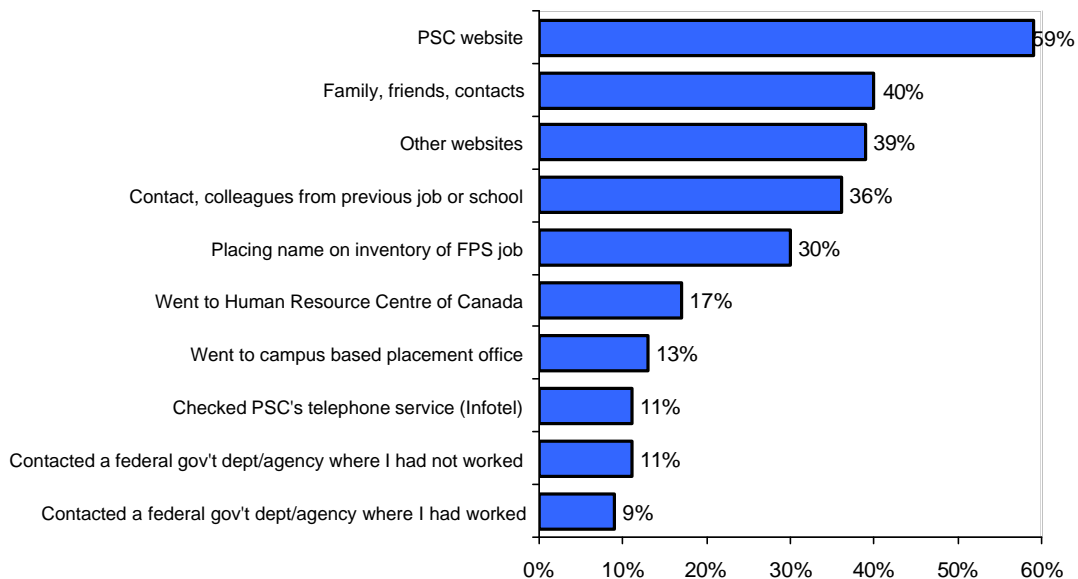
3.0 Results

3.1 The Job Search

Respondents were asked to rank in order the three sources of information that they considered to be most valuable in finding out about their first jobs. Almost six in ten (59%) respondents indicated that looking at the PSC website (jobs.gc.ca) was one of their most valuable search activities. Also important were talking to family, friends and their contacts (40%), looking at job websites other than the PSC's (39%), talking to contacts or colleagues from previous jobs or school (36%), and placing one's name on an inventory for a FPS job (30%). The high degree of importance assigned to these two different sources – information technology and personal contacts – indicate the continuing importance of both formal and informal channels of recruitment.

Fewer respondents indicated that going to a Human Resource Centre of Canada office (17%), campus-based placement office (13%), and contacting a federal government department/agency where they had previously worked (11%) were valuable in finding out about their first job.

Graph 1: Job search activities considered important to finding first job (n=735)

Activity	Percentage
PSC website	59%
Family, friends, contacts	40%
Other websites	39%
Contact, colleagues from previous job or school	36%
Placing name on inventory of FPS job	30%
Went to Human Resource Centre of Canada	17%
Went to campus based placement office	13%
Checked PSC's telephone service (Infotel)	11%
Contacted a federal gov't dept/agency where I had not worked	11%
Contacted a federal gov't dept/agency where I had worked	9%

Comparing sources of information that were considered valuable reveals statistically significant differences among occupational categories. For instance, those in the clerical and regulatory category (28%) were less likely than others to indicate looking at job websites other than jobs.gc.ca. In regards to talking to contacts or colleagues from previous jobs or school, there are differences as well. Those in administrative support (28%) and operational (20%) occupational categories are less likely than others to indicate that talking to contacts or colleagues from previous jobs or school was a useful activity in their job searches. Similarly, those in clerical and regulatory (CR) (25%) and program administration (PM) (23%) jobs were much less likely than those in other major groups, such as computer systems administrators (CS) (7%), to indicate valuing such activities.

Interestingly, those in the scientific and professional (4%) and operational (13%) occupational categories were less likely than others to have found going to a Human Resource Centre of Canada as a valuable search activity. Although small proportions of respondents in the CS (7%) and economics, sociology and statistics (ES) (4%) groups indicated that such an activity was useful, a significant proportion of PMs (25%) indicated this.

3.2   Getting to Know the Manager

Respondents were asked to indicate how they got to know the manager they worked for in their first position. They could choose one of a list of nine possible scenarios. Over one third (34%) of respondents indicated that they met their manager for the first time at the interview. An approximately equal proportion (33%) met their manager for the first time when they started the job. Almost one in seven (13%) had previously worked for that manager. A small (4%), but notable proportion of respondents got to know their managers by having approached them about work without having known them previously. These figures are a relatively positive sign when compared to earlier research (1988:27), where it was noted that 20% of new hires had worked for their managers prior to being hired into their current positions.[3]

How respondents got to know their first manager was crosstabulated by occupational categories and statistically significant results were found. Those in administrative support (41%) and operational (50%) categories were most likely to have met their managers when they first started work. One fifth (20%) of those in the scientific and professional category had previously worked for their manager.

3.3   Preference in Sector of Employment

Respondents were asked to identify which sectors of employment they preferred during the time when they were searching for work. Over one half (52%) of respondents indicated that the FPS was their first choice, while 27% wished to work in the private sector. These results indicate that most respondents wanted to work in the FPS, while a significant proportion would have preferred to be in the private sector.

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[3] *Summary of Findings: New Hires Survey (draft)* (May 1988) Public Service Commission.

3.4 Internet Usage

Almost two thirds (60%) of respondents had access to the Internet and used it in their job searches. In contrast, although 17% had access to the Internet, they did not use it for their job searches. Less than one quarter (22%) did not have access to the Internet. There were statistically significant differences among those who had access to the Internet or not and whether or not they used it for their job searches. Almost half (46%) of those 51 years of age or older, compared to 25-30 year olds (13%), did not have access to the Internet. Interestingly, larger proportions of 18-24 year olds (26%) and 41-50 year olds (20%) who did have access to the Internet did not use it compared to those in the 36-40 year old age group (12%).

Those who did have access to the Internet were asked to select which purposes they used it for in their searches. The most frequently selected item (81%) was checking the PSC website (jobs.gc.ca). Significant proportions of respondents also selected the following purposes: to check the websites of employers and corporations (70%), apply for jobs on-line (67%), e-mail contacts or potential employers (37%), do research for an interview (36%) and to request a 'career-alert' (35%). These findings indicate that large proportions of individuals, who have access to the Internet and use it, do so for a variety of purposes and especially, to look at the PSC jobs website.
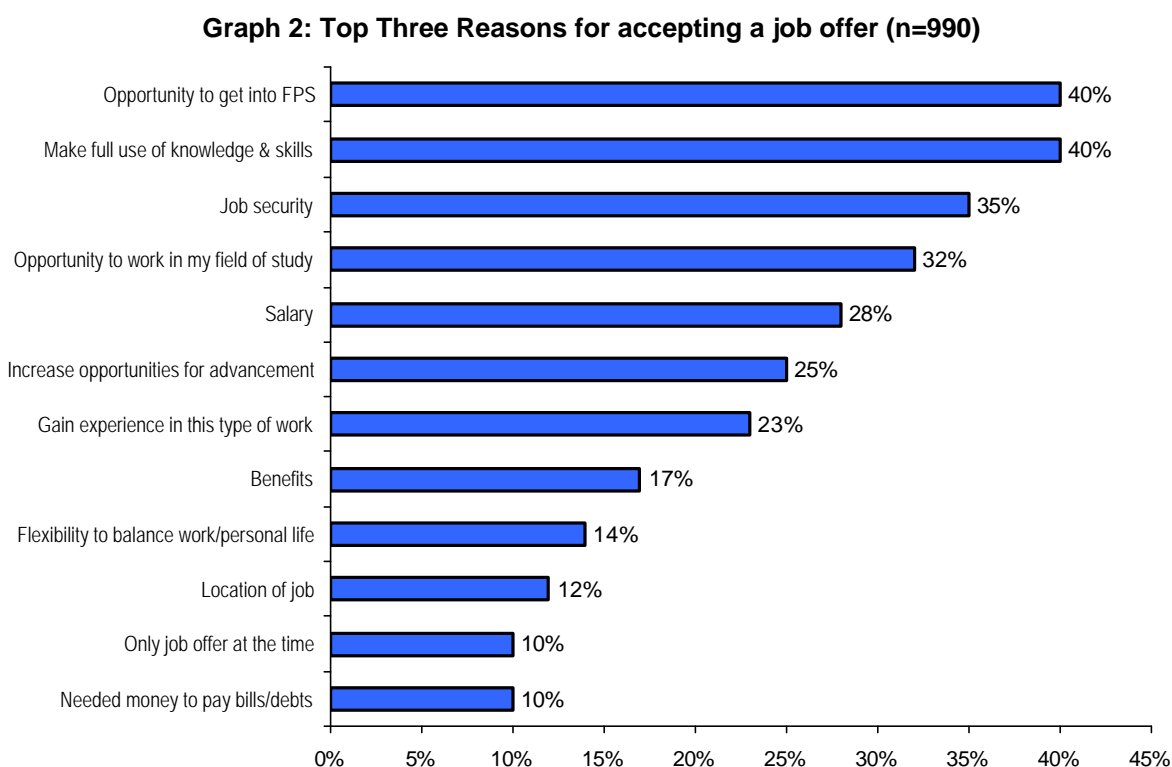
Among those with access to the Internet, there were differences on certain indicators between occupational categories. Specifically, those in the operational category (33%) were much less likely to have checked the PSC website than other groups, such as those in the administrative support category (83%). These differences suggest that recruitment strategies for those in operational occupations need to maintain their more traditional recruitment efforts in addition to using the Internet.

In reference to the period when respondents were searching for work, they were asked about the kind of information they had prior to their job offers. Many (70%) although not all, of respondents report having a job description. This is surprising considering how important this piece of information is in regards to making a decision regarding taking up a job or not, and even whether or not to apply for a job. Smaller proportions of respondents had information on a salary scale (69%), statement of qualifications (68%) and general description of the unit's activities and responsibilities (55%). Given the concern with opportunities for advancement expressed by respondents, it is disappointing that only about one fifth of them had information on opportunities for career advancement (18%) and on the hiring manager (17%).

Crosstabulating these types of information by occupational categories reveal significant differences. For example, those in the administrative and Foreign Service category were the most likely to have information on salary scales (76%). In comparison, 55% of respondents in the scientific and professional and 56% in the administrative support categories indicated that they had this information.

3.5 Reasons for Accepting First Position

Respondents were asked to indicate their top three reasons for accepting their first position with the FPS (Graph 2). Equal proportions wished to make full use of their knowledge, skills and abilities (40%) and to take up the opportunity to get into the FPS (40%). Significant proportions of respondents indicated job security (35%), the opportunity to work in their field of study (32%), salary (28%) and to increase opportunities for advancement (25%) as among their most important reasons. Only 10% accepted their job offers on account of needing money to pay bills or debts.

Graph 2: Top Three Reasons for accepting a job offer (n=990)

Reason	%
Opportunity to get into FPS	40%
Make full use of knowledge & skills	40%
Job security	35%
Opportunity to work in my field of study	32%
Salary	28%
Increase opportunities for advancement	25%
Gain experience in this type of work	23%
Benefits	17%
Flexibility to balance work/personal life	14%
Location of job	12%
Only job offer at the time	10%
Needed money to pay bills/debts	10%

As in the analyses above, these responses were cross-tabulated with the five major occupational categories. A significant proportion (46%) of those in the scientific and professional, and administrative and foreign service (42%) categories indicated that the reason they accepted their job offer was in order to make full use of their knowledge, skills and abilities. In contrast, only 27% of those in the administrative support category indicated this as one of their top three reasons.

The opportunity to get into the FPS was indicated by a greater percentage of those in the operational (75%), administrative support (63%) and technical (47%) occupational categories. This may be due to the fact that jobs in these categories in the private sector vary widely in their content and conditions depending on, for example, whether one is working in a 'core' or 'periphery' firm.

A different pattern is observed with regard to the reason 'for the opportunity to work in my field of study.' Specifically, those in the scientific and professional (69%), technical (50%), and administrative and foreign service (41%) categories are much more likely to indicate this as an important reason for accepting their first job. It could be that these groups invested more in their education and therefore, they place a higher value on working in their field of study.

Examining these reasons in more detail reveals that there are differences between the four largest occupational groups and all others (49%, n=484). The four largest groups are Clerical and Regulatory (18%, n=182), Computer Systems Administrators (10%, n=101), Economics, Sociology and Statistics (7%, n=70), and Program Administration (16%, n=153). Specifically, those in the Economics, Sociology and Statistics (49%), and Computer Systems (37%) groups were more likely than those in the two other groups and all others (32%) to indicate that they accepted their job on account of wanting the opportunity to work in their fields of study. In contrast those in the Program Administration (20%) and especially the Clerical and Regulatory group (8%) were much less likely to cite this reason.

The opposite pattern was exhibited in regards to accepting their job offers on account of concerns with job security. Compared to all other occupational groups (23%), those in the Clerical and Regulatory (25%) and Computer Systems Administration (32%) groups were more likely to indicate accepting their job because of job security considerations. In contrast, fewer of those in the Program Administration (20%), and Economics, Sociology and Statistics (9%) groups indicated this reason.

3.6 Job Satisfaction

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of satisfaction statements regarding working in the FPS and their particular job. High levels of agreement were found among the following indicators: the FPS offers sufficient flexibility to balance work and personal life (87%), excellent benefits (87%), interesting work (86%), is committed to diversity in the workplace (86%), and has a good quality work environment (76%). Two thirds or less of respondents agreed with the following statements: the FPS values employees (64%), offers a wide variety of jobs (64%), encourages independent thinking (51%), has good employee morale (50%), is open to change (48%), and offers competitive salaries (47%). The smallest proportion of respondents (26%) agreed that the FPS makes hiring decisions in a reasonable period of time. This is clearly an area where improvements need to be made.

Among the three areas of lower agreement, there are differences between occupational categories regarding satisfaction with salary. Interestingly, the lowest agreement with the statement 'the FPS offers competitive salaries compared to the private sector' was found among those in the scientific and professional (32%) and operational (39%) occupational categories. If we cross-tabulate this indicator by specific occupational groups, there are distinct differences between the four largest ones and all others (Graph 3).

Graph 3: Agreement with statement, the FPS offers competitive salaries compared to the private sector, by selected occupational groups (n=979)
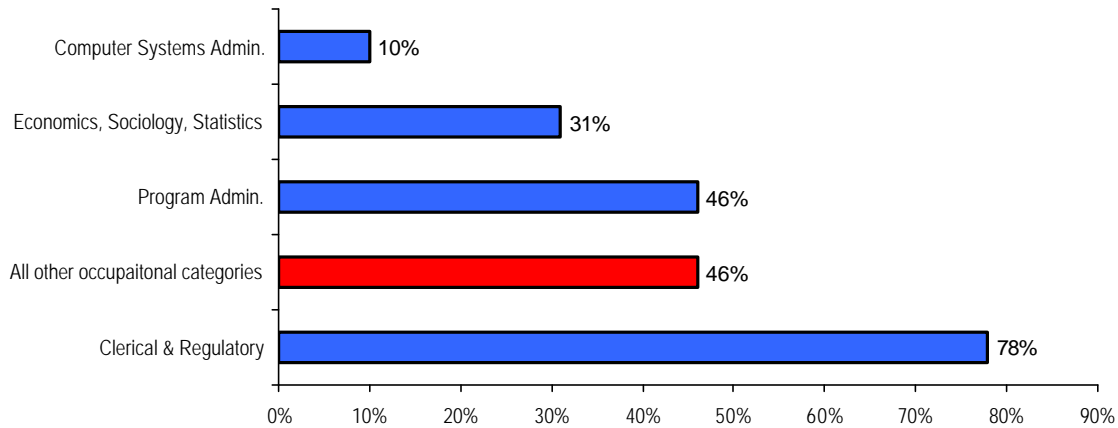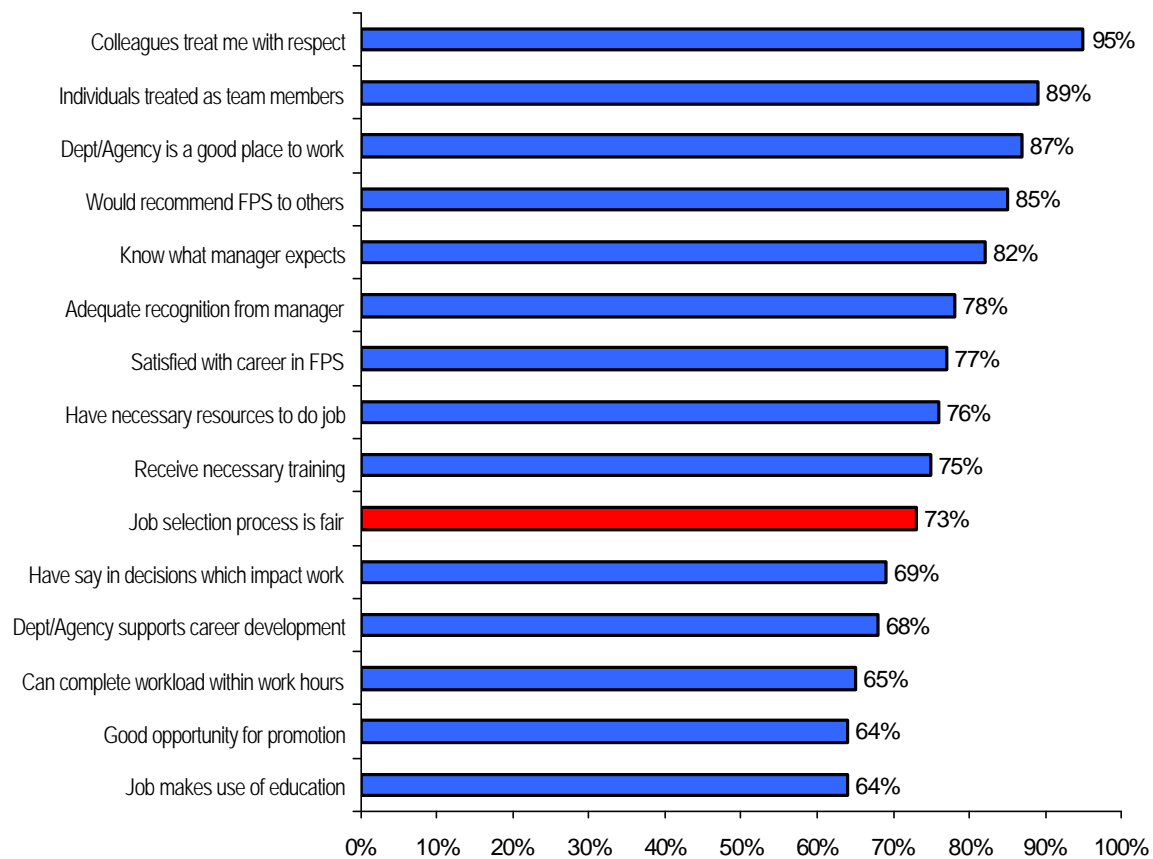

Results in Graph 3 indicate that perceptions of the competitiveness of salaries in the FPS as compared to the private sector vary by occupational group. Those in the Computer Systems group (10%) are much less likely to agree with this statement. Given the fact that this is a high-risk group in terms of retention, these results are particularly compelling.

There were no differences between occupational categories or groups on the statement 'the FPS makes hiring decisions within a reasonable period of time'. However, there were differences regarding the perception of the openness to change in the FPS based on occupational category and group. For example, those in the scientific and professional (40%) and administrative and foreign service (44%) categories were less likely to agree that there is an openness to change. Given this finding it is not surprising that the Computer System administrators (45%), Program administrators (43%) and Economics, Sociology and Statistics (40%) new hires had lower agreement than those in the Clerical and Regulatory (60%) groups and all others (48%).

Upon closer investigation of satisfaction with one's actual job, results revealed that new hires agreed with a number of statements, including: in their work unit colleagues are treated with respect (95%), individuals are accepted as part of the team regardless of their race, colour, gender or disability (89%), my department is a good place to work (87%), I would recommend the FPS to my family members or friends as a good place to work (85%), and I know what my manager expects of me in my job (82%). Although 73% of new hires agreed that the process of selecting a person for a position is done fairly, over one quarter (27%) disagreed with this statement. Given the federal Public Service's commitment to hiring on the basis of merit, this finding is noteworthy. The lowest agreement levels were exhibited regarding the following statements: I can complete my workload within work hours (65%), I have a good opportunity to get a promotion (64%) and my job makes full use of my education (64%). These three areas require further attention.

Graph 4: Satisfaction with aspects of job (n=990)

Aspect	Percentage
Colleagues treat me with respect	95%
Individuals treated as team members	89%
Dept/Agency is a good place to work	87%
Would recommend FPS to others	85%
Know what manager expects	82%
Adequate recognition from manager	78%
Satisfied with career in FPS	77%
Have necessary resources to do job	76%
Receive necessary training	75%
Job selection process is fair	73%
Have say in decisions which impact work	69%
Dept/Agency supports career development	68%
Can complete workload within work hours	65%
Good opportunity for promotion	64%
Job makes use of education	64%

Among the three most problematic areas –skill usage, promotional opportunities and workload – there were differences between occupational categories and groups. In regard to satisfaction with utilization of education in one's job, those in the administrative and foreign service (60%) and technical (66%) categories were less likely to indicate agreement on this factor. In contrast, those in the scientific and professional (76%) and operational (74%) categories were more likely to agree with this. Examining differences by occupational groups reveals that those in clerical and regulatory (56%) and program administration (57%) jobs are less likely to agree that their job makes full use of their education.

Perceptions regarding opportunities for promotion within respondents' current jobs vary both by occupational categories and groups. For example, those in the administrative support category (50%) have a much lower agreement rate than those in the operational (70%) or administrative and foreign service (67%) categories. More specifically, those in the clerical and regulatory group (50%) are much less likely to agree that they have a good opportunity to get a promotion. In contrast, 70% of those in the Economics, Sociology and Statistics group agreed with this statement. These results possibly reflect the dearth of promotional opportunities for those in the clerical and regulatory groups.

The third issue was workload. In this case, those in the scientific and professional (35%) and administrative and foreign service (59%) categories had a much lower agreement rate than for example, those in the administrative support (75%) category. Looking at the more detailed classifications, these results are mirrored among those in the Economics, Sociology and Statistics (67%) and program administrator (60%) groups.

3.7 Comparisons of Job Satisfaction at Two Time Points

In 1999 members of the federal Public Service were surveyed by Statistics Canada regarding their perceptions and satisfaction on a number of aspects of working in the FPS. Participants in that survey were categorized into four groups depending on years of service. Respondents who indicated that their service was less than three years can be considered newly hired and as such, represent a suitable comparison group to the respondents in the New Hires Survey (2001). In this way, we can compare satisfaction with a number of statements between 1999 and 2001. Overall, there was greater agreement on several indicators, but in a few areas there was less agreement in 2001 compared to 1999. Graph 5 illustrates these differences.

Graph 5: Job Satisfaction among Recent Hires in 1999 and 2001
(2001: n=990 - 1999: n~=103,000)
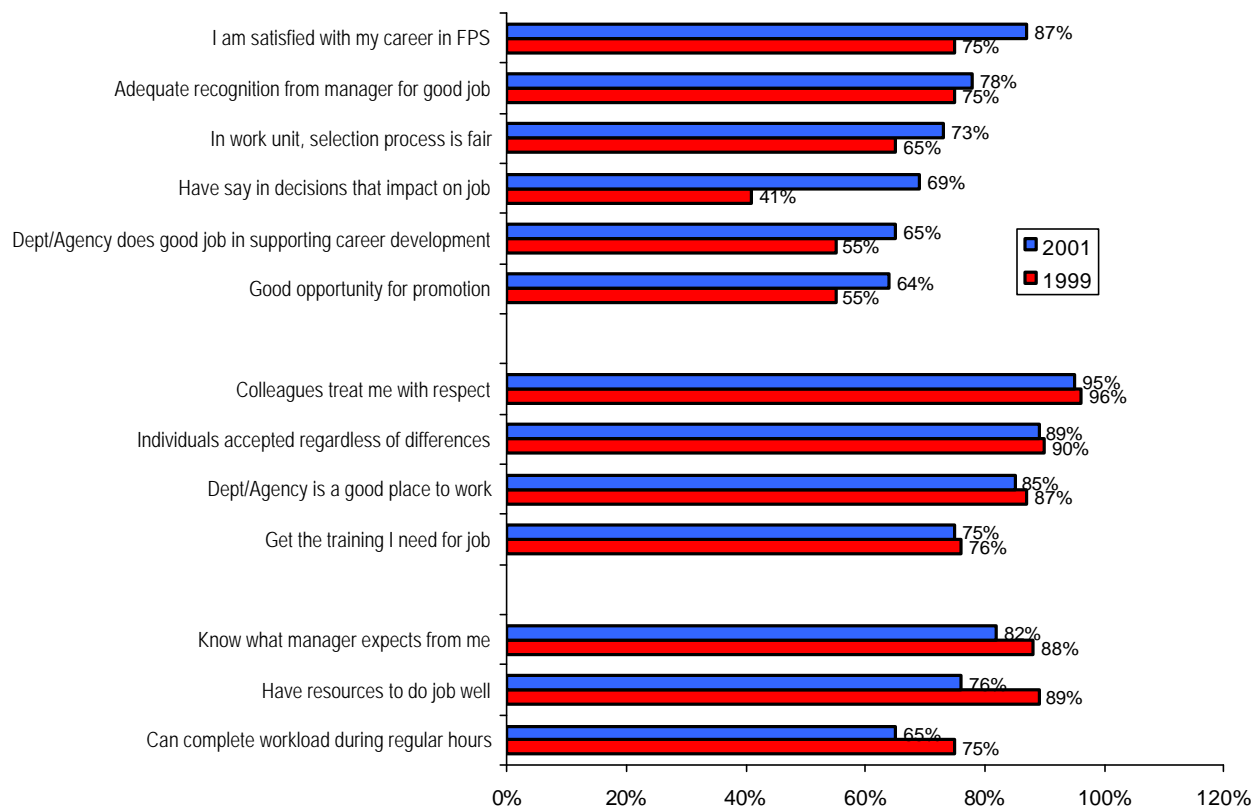
Several areas appear to have improved. In particular, new hires in 2001 indicated greater satisfaction with the following items: being satisfied with their careers in the FPS (87% versus

75% in 1999); viewing the selection process in their work unit as fair (73% versus 65% in 1999); receiving recognition from their manager for doing a good job (78% versus 75% in 1999); having a say in decisions which impact on their work (69% versus 41% in 1999); their department or agency is doing a good job in supporting career development (68% versus 55% in 1999); and believing that they have a good opportunity for promotion (64% versus 55% in 1999).

Workplace environment, including being treated with respect, being accepted regardless of differences in gender, race or disability appear to be relatively the same in terms of levels of satisfaction among the recent hires in 2001 as compared to 1999. Although the agreement with the statement, 'I get the training I need to do my job' was similar between 2001 (75%) and 1999 (76%) this is an area that could be improved overall.

Three areas appear to be problematic in that ratings have decreased over a short period of time. Specifically, in 1999 88% of individuals indicated that they knew what their manager expected of them, but in 2001 82% of individuals agreed with this statement. Whereas in 1999 89% of recent hires agreed that they had the resources necessary to do their job, 76% in 2001 indicated this. Finally, compared to 1999 when 75% of recent hires indicated that their workload could be completed within regular work hours, 65% of new hires in 2001 felt this way.

3.8   Comparisons by Channel of Recruitment

Analyses were also conducted comparing job satisfaction between those who were hired from the external labour market and those drawn upon from the term population. Clear differences are evident on a number of indicators. Specifically, a greater proportion of external hires (69%) than term conversions (59%) agreed that in their job they have a good opportunity to get a promotion. There is also a difference in terms of feelings regarding the equal acceptance of members of respondents' work unit with external recruits (43%) more likely than term hires (35%) to strongly agree that this is the case. There were two other indicators on which there were differences between these groups. Those who were recruited from the term population (83%) were more likely than external hires (73%) to agree that they get adequate recognition from their manager when they do a good job. In contrast, more external hires (79%) than term recruits (72%) agreed that they had the necessary resources to do their job well.

4.0 Conclusion

This report has raised several key points worth emphasizing here. In their job searches prior to working in the FPS, 59% of respondents indicated that looking at the PSC job website (jobs.gc.ca) was a valuable source of information. However, talking to family, friends and other contacts was also reported as important by 40% of respondents. Future research would benefit from delving further into the relationship between these two sources of information. For example, do personal contacts direct individuals to the PSC website, or take a more active role in assisting individuals in their job searches? Exploring this research question would provide us with great insight into how new information technology is being used alongside traditional social networking.

Although there are high levels of agreement on several job satisfaction indicators, there are areas where improvements can be directed. In particular, respondents indicated lowest agreement on the following statements: the FPS is open to change and makes hiring decisions in a reasonable amount of time. Moreover, as shown in a previous report, both of these indicators are associated with higher intentions of leaving the FPS within five years. Regarding their actual job, respondents showed the least agreement with three factors: being able to complete their workload within regular hours, opportunities for promotion and skills utilization.

An analysis comparing satisfaction on a number of items between 2001 and 1999 revealed a decline in satisfaction with three factors. These are: recent hires knowing what managers expected of them; having the resources to do their jobs; and being able to complete their workload within regular hours. Given that these areas appear to be getting worse over time, these findings provide timely information that can be used to inform policies to address these areas.

These results provide general observations of the early experiences of new hires. Other reports in this series address more particular issues, such as retention, and analyze the experiences of groups, such as those within specific occupational groups (i.e. Computer Systems Administrators).