



**New Hires Survey
Technical Paper #1**

**Initial Impressions –
Initially Impressed**
**Post-Secondary Recruitess' work
experiences and career plans**

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Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	3
2.0 METHODOLOGY	4
2.1 POPULATION AND SAMPLE	4
3.0 RESULTS	5
3.1 SURVEY RESPONDENT PROFILE	5
3.2 MAIN ACTIVITY PRIOR TO ENTERING FPS	6
3.3 IMPORTANT SOURCES OF INFORMATION	8
3.4 INTERNET USAGE.....	9
3.5 INFORMATION PROVIDED TO NEW HIRES	10
3.6 REASONS FOR TAKING UP INITIAL JOB OFFERS	11
3.7 JOB SATISFACTION.....	12
3.8 CAREER PLANS	13
4.0 CONCLUSION	15

Executive Summary

In response to an increasingly competitive labour market and demographic changes in the Canadian population, the federal Public Service (FPS) is pursuing new strategies to recruit and retain employees. Given the resources allocated to the Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR) campaigns, it was worth exploring this group's experiences as compared to those who were not recruited through this program. This report is based on research conducted by the Research Directorate of the Public Service Commission in a survey of recently hired indeterminate public servants across all occupational categories in January and February 2001. The survey examined the recruitment experiences, job satisfaction and career plans of a representative sample of the 8,743 people hired into the indeterminate core of the FPS during the 12 month period between July 1, 1999 and June 30, 2000.

The key issues identified in the analyses include the following:

- A large proportion of new PSR recruits are coming to the Public Service with previous experience in non-permanent positions. As such, the stability of an indeterminate position is a new dimension in their employment status.
- For a quarter of PSR respondents, their previous positions were not in their field of study, which may reflect the casual and “bridge” jobs held by students and recent graduates before securing their first full-time permanent position.
- The PSC website (jobs.gc.ca) was considered an extremely useful source of information during PSR new hires' job searches – this is definitely an area that is reaping benefits in terms of the recruitment experience.
- PSR participants indicated that their top three reasons for accepting their first job offer with the FPS was:
 - to work in their field of study,
 - gain experience in this type of work and,
 - take up the opportunity to get into the FPS.
- Despite the good match between participants' fields of study and their jobs, one in five of them plan to leave the FPS within three years. Their reasons for leaving include to find more meaningful work and to earn more money.

The picture of PSR new hires that emerges from the survey is that of a young, highly educated, professional group of men and women who wish to not only use their skills, but also have them recognized in the workplace. Furthermore, they are willing to leave the Public Service in order to achieve these ends. This report provides in-depth information on PSR new hires' experiences and as such highlights important challenges facing the PS in not only recruiting this group, but retaining them. On account of their life stage and lesser labour market experience, they present the FPS with an opportunity for renewal over the longer term thus, we need to pay attention to these early signs so that we may address issues before they become critical.

1.0 Introduction and Background

In February 2001 the Research Directorate conducted a survey of newly hired indeterminate employees in the federal Public Service.¹ The current report explores in further detail the issues of particular concern among respondents who joined the PS through the Post-Secondary Recruitment program. Questions that are addressed include, how were they recruited to the FPS? What have been their experiences? What are their intentions regarding remaining in the FPS?

The Post-Secondary Recruitment program is a twice a year program designed to recruit recent graduates to the FPS. A number of departments recruit through the program and as such it includes occupations across the job spectrum both in the National Capital Region and in the regions. The majority of the positions are at the entry-level, but one can also apply to more intermediate positions through, for example, the Management Trainee (MTP) and Accelerated Economist Training (AETP) programs. Individuals apply on-line indicating their qualifications, skills and preferred departments and locations. It is a highly open recruitment campaign in the sense that individuals are not applying to specific jobs, but rather submitting their information for consideration for several career possibilities.

¹ McDougall, Brian; Nehmé, 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>).

2.0 Methodology

Results from the New Hires Survey (NHS) are based on an analysis of responses by 990 public servants to a questionnaire that was administered during a three-week period between 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.

The NHS was administered via E-mail and the Internet by Ipsos-Reid under contract to the PSC. 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. Employees were sent several reminder notices encouraging them to participate in the study.

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.

	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			
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*, a representative sample of 4,328 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 by inviting all those who identified themselves as Aboriginal peoples, visible minorities and persons with disabilities to participate.

3.0 Results

3.1 Survey Respondent Profile

Of the 990 respondents, 167 had been recruited through the PSR program, 774 had not been recruited through this program and 49 did not know if they had or not. Therefore, the analyses in this report draw on data from the 941 respondents to the New Hires Survey who were certain of their participation in the program. Less than half (48%) of PSR new hires were female while just over half (52%) were male. PSR respondents had a much lower average age (31) than all others in the survey (37). There was no pattern of difference between PSR and non-PSR new hires based on membership in the visible minority, Aboriginal people, or persons with disabilities groups.

Overall, almost half (46%) of PSR new hires had post-graduate qualifications, 44% had undergraduate degrees and nine percent had college, CEGEP or technical training. Differences are found on educational attainment with those recruited through the PSR program being more likely to have an undergraduate degree (44% v.s. 31% for others) or post-graduate degree (46% v.s. 23%). Given that the PSR campaign is targeted at those with further education, these differences are not surprising. Nonetheless, as a group PSR recruits will vary in their expectations and attitudes on account of being more highly educated than others in the sample and it is important to keep this aspect of their background in mind.

Differences between PSR and non-PSR new hires were also found with regard to occupational category. Specifically, PSR hires were more likely to be in the scientific and professional category (22% v.s. 20% of others) and much more likely to be in the administrative and foreign service category (71% v.s. 43% of others). Only 5% of PSR new hires were in the technical category compared to 11% of all others. Clearly, the PSR program is focussed on recruiting for professional and administrative positions, which has implications for recruitment and more general human resource planning for this group.

Given that about two-thirds of federal employees work outside the National Capital Region, it was surprising to find that the overwhelming majority of PSR new hires were working in this location (78% v.s. 39%). However, from an occupational perspective, professional jobs are concentrated in the NCR. Small proportions of PSR hires were working in Quebec (excluding NCR) (7%), Ontario (excluding NCR) (4%) and outside of Canada (4%). These results indicate that this program primarily recruits people to the National Capital Region. This raises the question of what proportion of post-secondary graduates are willing to move in order to take up a position with the PS? Finnie (2000) finds that there is an inverse relationship between province size and inter-provincial mobility – in other words, those from smaller provinces are more likely to migrate and vice versa.² Among men and women, age, marriage and presence of children are negatively related to mobility. Furthermore, departments vary in their coverage of recruits' moving expenses. These factors are worthy of consideration if the campaign aims to be a truly

² Ross Finnie (August 2000) *The Who Moves? A Panel Logit Model Analysis of Inter-Provincial Migration in Canada*, Business and Labour Market Analysis, Statistics Canada, 11F0019MPE No.142.

national one – both in terms of the location of jobs and opportunities available to Canadians across the country to join the PS soon after completing their post-secondary education.

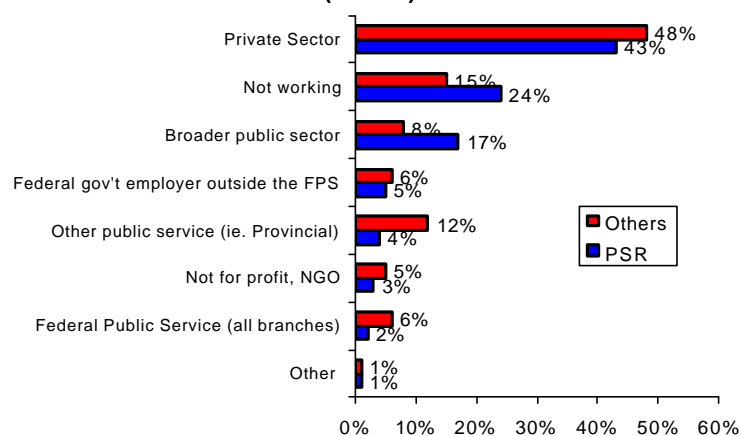
3.2 Main activity prior to entering FPS

This section examines respondents’ work experiences prior to starting their current jobs. As one would expect from a program targeting recent graduates, a much higher percentage of PSR recruits (55%) were in school prior to starting work in the Public Service. In contrast, 39% of PSR new hires were employed prior to starting work in the FPS compared to 67% of all others. Only five percent of PSR new hires were looking for work prior to taking up their jobs.

Respondents were also asked in which sector of the labour market they were employed prior to coming to work for the FPS (Graph 1). Slightly fewer PSR respondents (43%) than all others (48%) were working in the private sector. Almost one quarter (24%) of PSR new hires compared to 15% of all others indicated that they were not working. However, a greater proportion of PSR new hires (17%) had worked in the broader public sector (i.e. health, education, etc) compared to all others (8%). This indicates that recent graduates who have experience with this sector are more likely to be drawn to working in the FPS than others. Alternatively, the broader public sector may have more jobs available for recent graduates than other sectors.

Looking further into the type of work respondents were involved in prior to starting work with the FPS reveals that PSR new hires (28%) were much less likely to have been working in a main job that was permanent compared to others (51%). As such, PSR new hires are coming from different employment conditions than other respondents. However, given the fact that they are recent graduates, this is as one might expect. Since all positions in the PSR are for indeterminate positions, this is a real strength in the program as it represents a strong draw for new graduates.

Graph 1: Sector of previous employment comparing PSR new hires with all others (n=940)

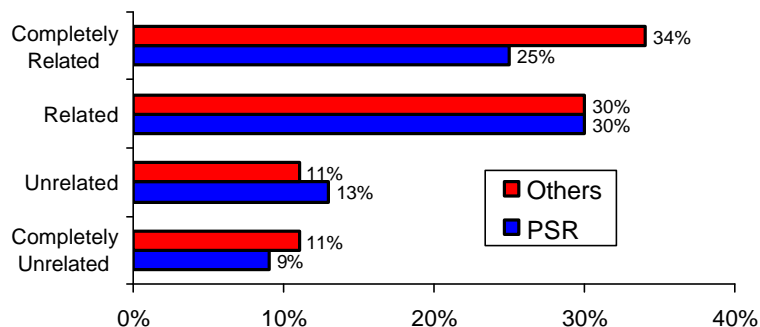


Survey respondents were asked to indicate their first and second choices of sector of the economy in which they wished to work. The three most popular choices among PSR new hires were: federal Public Service (81%); private sector (57%); and other public service (14%).

However, differences between those recruited through the PSR campaign versus others were only found on two indicators. For instance, 22% of all others indicated that other public service (i.e. provincial, territorial, municipal, etc) was their first or second choice, while only 14% of PSR respondents responded this way. In contrast, 10% of PSR new hires selected the not-for-profit or volunteer sector as their first or second choice compared to 4% of others. Part of this difference in preferences could be due to more liberal and idealistic attitudes among younger (and educated) people. With greater awareness of opportunities in various sectors these attitudes may undergo change. This period presents the PS with a window of opportunity in which to get them interested in working here. There were no differences in preferences regarding working in the private sector which suggests that the PSR new hires are not more or less likely to be drawn to that sector. Also, one must recognize that job applicants do not necessarily think of their choices in terms of sectors – as social scientists would – rather, they consider jobs that offer ongoing interest and challenge. Much of the discourse on “competition with the private sector” distracts our recruitment efforts from job content and the work environment, which are by far two of the most important elements of recruitment and retention and thus, ought to remain our foci.

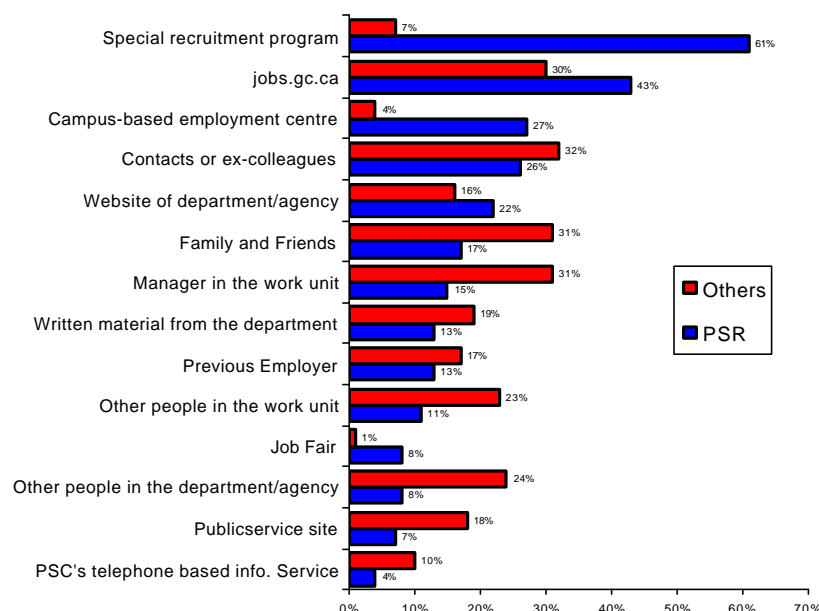
The match between respondents’ field of study and their job was also examined (Graph 2). PSR participants (25%) were less likely than others (34%) to indicate that they were previously in jobs that were completely related to their field of study. This may reflect their employment in part-time and casual jobs while still students and thus, prior to securing their first full-time career-oriented position. As subsequent analyses will show, this match is central to job satisfaction and retention.

Graph 2: Match between previous job and field of study comparing PSR new hires with all others (n=795)



In terms of the intensity of applicants’ job searches, there are some differences between those in the PSR group and all others. For example, a slightly smaller proportion of PSR new hires (27%) was looking for work actively (3 times a week or more) the month prior to being hired compared to all others (32%). However, PSR respondents (48%) were more likely than others (42%) to have been seeking work on a casual basis (less than 3 times a week). A greater proportion of PSR new hires (11%) were already employed compared to all others (6%), although as shown above PSR hires were less likely to be working in jobs that were related to their field of study or that were permanent.

Graph3: Important sources of job information comparing PSR recruits to Others (n=990)



3.3 Important sources of information

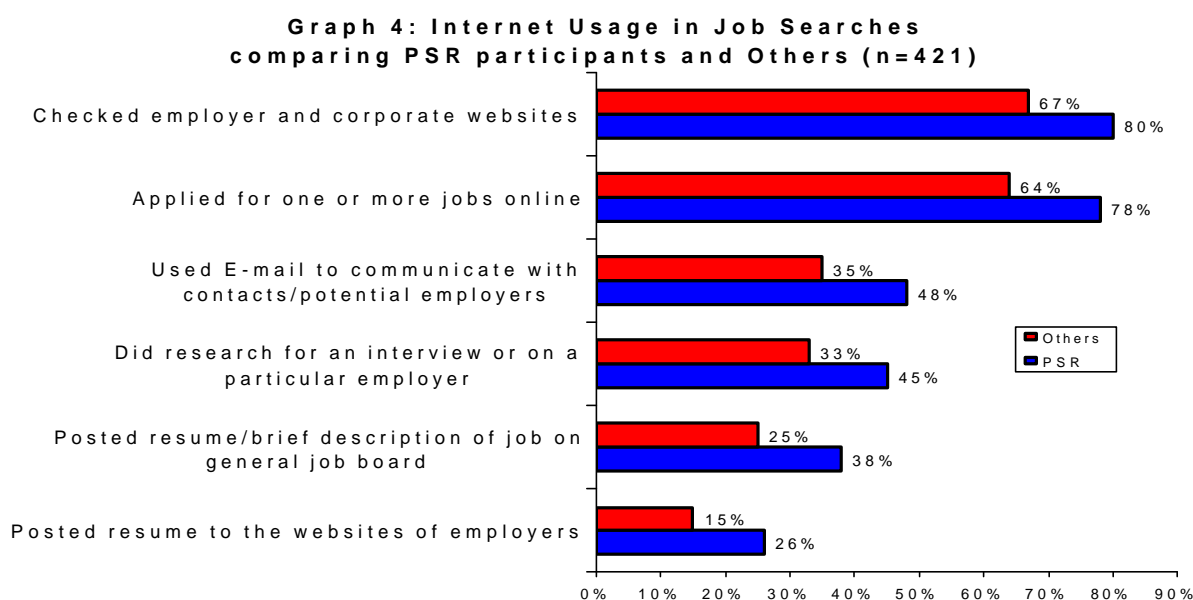
PSR recruits indicated that they have very different sources of information about jobs than other New Hires. PSR recruits indicated their most valuable sources of information were: 1) Specialized recruitment programs (61%); 2) The PSC website (43%); 3) a campus employment center (27%); and 4) contacts or colleagues from a previous job (26%)³. Again, differences were found between the PSR group and all other respondents on a number of indicators (Graph 3). Among the more stark differences is the proportion of PSR new hires (43% v.s. 30% of others) who indicated that they found looking at the PSC’s job website (jobs.gc.ca) to be one of their three most valued job search activities. Similarly, PSR respondents (27%) were much more likely to indicate that they considered going to a campus based placement office worthwhile compared to others (4%). As one would expect, a greater proportion of PSR new hires (8% v.s. 1% of others) found going to a job fair important to their job search. On account of their recent student status and contact with educational institutions, it is easy to understand why PSR new recruits were more likely to have visited campus placement offices and attended job fairs, which are traditional points of contact for these job seekers and employers. Interestingly, fewer PSR participants (17% v.s. 31% of others) found talking to family, friends and their contacts important to their job searches. Nonetheless, social networking was the fourth most frequently selected item by PSR new hires. Their lower likelihood of using social networks indicates that this method is less important for this group than others. Given the lower average age of PSR participants, it is not surprising that fewer of them indicated that personal contacts were useful in their job search. One’s stage in the life course does have an impact on the development of his social networks and as such younger people will not have as extensive a network as those who are older and have more labour market experience. For this reason, formal recruitment programs

³ Survey respondents were asked to select their top three most valuable sources of information in finding out about their first job in the FPS.

such as the PSR are particularly effective for attracting younger people. Similarly, only 8% of PSR respondents found contacting other people in the department where they were applying for a job as valuable compared to 24% of others. Again, it may be the case that younger job applicants are less likely to contact departments directly on account of their more limited labour market experience.

3.4 Internet Usage

Increasingly, job seekers are turning to the Internet to find out about job openings and employer information. The current survey inquired about respondents' use of the Internet in order to gain a better understanding of their use of this technology. Only a small (8%) proportion of PSR participants did not have access to the Internet, which is indicative of the highly *connected* environments typically found in educational institutions. Among those who did have access, a greater proportion of PSR new hires (75% v.s. 57%) used the Internet in their job searches. This use of technology simply reflects higher Internet usage among younger people as established by previous research.⁴



Respondents who did have access and used the Internet to look for work were asked to indicate how they used it (Graph 4). A greater proportion of those in the PSR group used the Internet for various job seeking purposes including applying online (78% v.s. 64%), checking employers' websites (80% v.s. 67%), communicating via e-mail with contacts and prospective employers (48% v.s. 35%), and posting their resumes to employer websites (26% v.s. 15%). These results indicate that PSR participants are not only more likely than others to use the Internet for certain job search purposes, but also that they do so in a more aggressive way as evidenced, for example, by their higher likelihood of posting their resume to employers' websites. In order to continue to

⁴ See for example, Heather Dryburgh's (2001) paper *Changing our ways: Why and how Canadians use the Internet* Analytical Studies Branch, Statistics Canada Cat. No. 56F0006XIE.

remain competitive the Public Service must continue to adapt itself to the e-recruitment environment.⁵

3.5 Information provided to new hires

Survey respondents were asked what type of information was provided to them regarding their first job in the FPS before they received a job offer. Table 2 below indicates what proportions of PSR hires in the survey received various types of information. Although almost three-quarters (71%) of this group received salary information, given the importance of compensation in considering a job offer, this is basic information that all candidates ought to receive. Similarly, even though almost two-thirds (62%) of these respondents received job descriptions, over one third did not. Considering our interested in recruiting individuals for careers in the FPS, it is disappointing to find that only a third of PSR new hires received information on career advancement opportunities in their jobs (32%) and training (31%). If individuals are going to take a long-term view of working in the FPS, recruitment efforts need to provide them with information from this perspective as well.

Table 2:
Type of Information received by PSR new hires (n=167)

Salary scale	71%
Job description	62%
General description of the activities of the department or agency	62%
Statement of qualifications	61%
General description of the work unit's activities and responsibilities	40%
Information about the opportunities for career advancement in that job	33%
Information about the opportunities for training	32%
Information about the working conditions	30%
Information about the hiring manager	13%

Although there were no differences between PSR new hires and others on a number of indicators, we do find differences in four areas. PSR participants (42%) were less likely than others (58%) to have reported receiving a general description of the work unit's activities and responsibilities. However, they (60%) were more likely than others (43%) to have received a general description of the department/agency's activities. These differences could be due to the fact that departments rather than units within branches organize the campaign. PSR participants (31%) were more than twice as likely as others (12%) to have received information regarding opportunities for training. Some hiring managers recognize that PSR applicants are at an earlier stage in their careers than others are and so, they actively try to provide information on training. This was also found to be the case in terms of receiving information about the opportunities for advancement in the job they were being offered. Specifically, 32% of PSR new hires compared to 13% of others were provided with career advancement information. Despite distinct differences on these indicators between these two groups, it appears that generally, a small proportion of survey respondents received training and career opportunity information. This is a potential cause for concern given that these factors are important for all candidates considering job offers

⁵ See for example, iLogos (2000) *Best Practices for Fortune 500 Career Web Site Recruiting* and *Canadian Top 100 Companies: Addendum to Best Practices for Fortune 500 Career Web Site Recruiting* <https://www.recruitsoft.com/iLogosBestPractices/secure/>

3.6 Reasons for taking up initial job offers

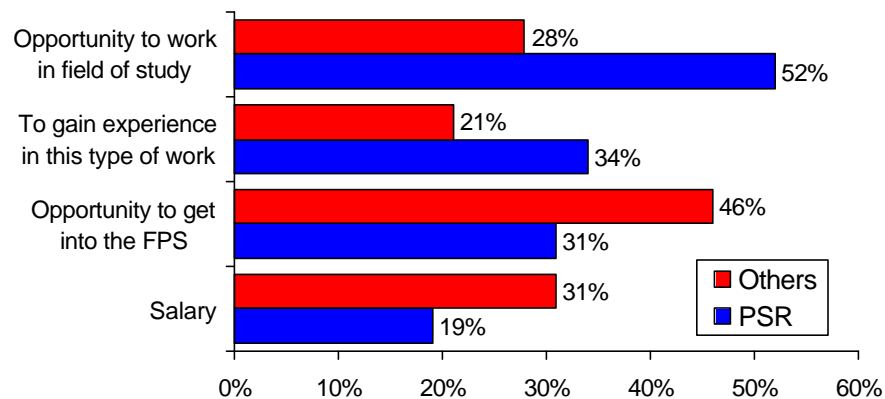
Given that individuals take up job offers for various reasons, there was a strong interest in asking survey participants to identify why they accepted their first jobs in the FPS⁶ (See Table 3 below). Over half (51%) of this group indicated working in their field of study as one of their three most important reasons for accepting their job offers. Interestingly, job security (33%) is the third most important reason. This result is noteworthy because it is frequently assumed that younger people – on account of more likely to be single and have fewer responsibilities – are less concerned with job security. These results indicate the opposite of what we might expect. One possible reason for this outcome is that this cohort of graduates was studying while Canada was in an almost decade long recession thus, they may be more aware of job insecurity than graduates who were studying during prosperous times. Additionally, these graduates are carrying greater debt loads than previous cohorts and therefore, they have the additional pressure of requiring a steady income in order to repay their student loans.

Table 3:
PSR new hires' reasons for their accepting job offers (n=167)

Opportunity to work in my field of study	51%
To make full use of my knowledge, skills, and abilities	37%
Job security	33%
To gain experience in this type of work	32%
Opportunity to get into the FPS	31%
To increase opportunities for advancement	19%
Salary	17%
Flexibility to balance work with family and other personal needs	13%
Benefits	12%
Only job offer at the time	11%
Location of the job	10%

Differences were found between PSR participants and others on four indicators. Over half (52%) of PSR participants v.s. 28% of others indicated that one of their top reasons for accepting their

Graph 5: Top Four Reasons for Accepting First Job Offer comparing PSR participants with Others (n=941)



first job offer with the FPS was to take up the opportunity to work in their field of study. Working in one's field of study was also an important consideration among the respondents to the Student Survey conducted in the summer of 2000.⁷ Similarly, PSR new hires (34% v.s. 21%) were more likely to indicate that they accepted their job offers on account of wanting to gain experience in that type of work. The match between one's field of study and job is especially important for recent graduates because the current cohort of post-secondary graduates have invested more time and resources in their education than previous cohorts mainly due to increasing credential requirements and rising tuition costs. Therefore, they are particularly aware of the linkages between that investment and the use of their skills and education on the job. Of course, this is not to say that this match is irrelevant for other new hires, but it may be less the case for those who have developed a more extensive set of transferable skills. Similarly, the issue of gaining experience in a specific type of work is more of a concern for those in the early stages of their careers than those with greater work experience to draw upon.

In contrast, a smaller proportion of PSR respondents (31% v.s. 46% of others) took up their jobs because they saw it as an opportunity to get into the FPS. This difference may be due to the fact that many of the PSR individuals are at the beginning stages of their careers and thus, may not necessarily make distinctions at the employer level, but simply wish to secure a good job. Along similar lines, only 19% of those in the PSR group v.s. 31% of others took up their jobs on account of the salary. Again, salary may not be as important an issue for this group in that they are in the early stages of their careers and may give greater emphasis to gaining experience and other opportunities. These results vary from those in a recent study conducted by the Corporate Leadership Council (1999:16-17) in the United States, which found that compensation is "the strongest driver of employment decisions" among high value employees.⁸ A possible explanation for this discrepancy is that PSR new hires are new to the labour market; whereas, the CLC participants included those in various stages of their careers.

3.7 Job Satisfaction

Survey participants were asked a series of questions regarding satisfaction with working in the FPS and more specifically, in regards to their specific jobs. The highest levels of agreement by PSR new hires was found in response to the following five items: the FPS is committed to diversity in the workplace (91%); offers sufficient flexibility to balance work and personal life (89%); offers a wide variety of jobs (89%); has excellent benefits (85%); and does really interesting work (83%). Items for which there was the least amount of agreement include: the FPS makes hiring decision in a reasonable amount of time (23%) and offers competitive salaries compared to the private sector (29%).

⁶ Respondents were asked to select their first, second and third choices from a list of 16 reasons for taking up their offers. In this analysis the three choices have been aggregated so that we can analyze respondents' most important reasons.

⁷ Douglas Booker, Kathy Malizia, Leah Ben-Porat, Deborah Yin and Andreas Chatterton (May 2001) *Recruiting the Next Wave: A Survey of Student Employee Opinion in the Federal Public Service, Summer 2000* Research Directorate, Public Service Commission, www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/surveys/students/final_e.htm.

⁸ Corporate Leadership Council (1999) *Executive Overview of The Compelling Offer: Salient Findings from a Quantitative Analysis of the Career Preferences and Decisions of High Value Employees, Workforce Commitment Series Volume 3*. A "high value" employee has one or more of the following qualities: top performance, holding valuable skills, and/or a "high trajectory" or promise in the organization (p.vii).

Differences were found between the PSR group and others on two items. Those who had been recruited through the PSR program (56%) were more likely than others (44%) to agree with the statement, the FPS has good employee morale. This difference may reflect PSR hires' more secure employment status versus others whom were initially hired as term employees and converted to indeterminate. In contrast, PSR participants (29%) were much less likely than others (42%) to agree that the FPS has competitive salaries compared to the private sector. PSR new hires' response to this statement is evidence of their awareness of the PS vis a vis the "private sector" in terms of compensation. However, it is difficult to determine if they had this evaluation prior to starting work here, which if not the case, suggests that there a number of forces at work (e.g. public perception, media influences and anecdotal evidence).

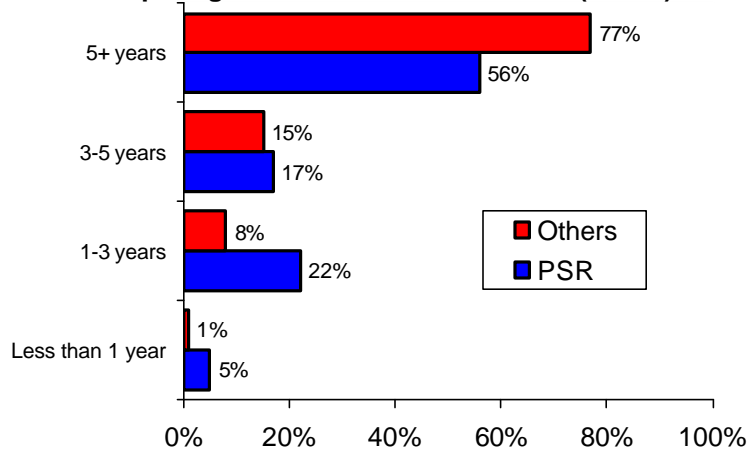
Responses to questions regarding particular aspects of respondents' jobs varied by whether or not they participated in the PSR campaign. For example, those who did participate in the program (33%) were less likely than others (44%) to agree that their job makes full use of their education. *This difference may be a product of PSR new recruits' higher expectations that there be a match between their education and jobs.* With regard to career advancement, a larger proportion of PSR new hires (75% v.s. 62%) agreed that they had a good opportunity for a promotion. PSR participants were also more likely to agree (57% v.s. 52%) that their department or agency supports career development. New recruits from the PSR campaign may see opportunities in a more positive light than others because of their inexperience in the labour market, as such this is evidence of a "halo effect" in which opportunities look especially bright at this stage of their careers – that could change as their careers progress.

3.8 Career Plans

Major differences were found between PSR new hires and others regarding their intentions to remain in the FPS. As Graph 6 below illustrates, PSR new hires were much more likely to have an intention of leaving in the near future than other new hires. For example, a much larger proportion (22%) of PSR new hires than others (8%) indicated that they plan only to remain for between one and three years. Perhaps even more startling was that 5% of PSR hires planned to remain in government service less than one year compared to a 1% projected departure for other new hires. This considerable difference between the two groups suggests that PSR hires may be at greater risk of leaving the Public Service than other new hires. A high departure rate among PSR recruits is problematic given both the difficulty of attracting youth to the public service and the investments made to recruit these recent graduates.

It is important to note that this pattern is consistent with greater job mobility among younger people. Moreover, there are three main retention drivers among new hires that parallel the PSR population: (1) high educational attainment; (2) newly hired into the PS; and (3) age.

Graph 6: Intentions to remain in the FPS comparing PSR new hires with Others (n=941)



Survey participants who indicated that they plan to leave within three years were asked to indicate the importance of a series of reasons for their decision to look for another job. Differences were found between PSR participants and others on five statements. For instance, PSR new hires (44%) were much more likely than others (24%) to indicate that getting more meaningful work is an important reason for their decision to look for work outside the FPS. However, PSR new hires (4%) were less likely than others (13%) to identify as important the reason, to get away from problems with my immediate supervisor. Similarly, a smaller proportion of PSR participants (17%) than others (31%) considered important the reason, to improve opportunities for training. In contrast, a greater proportion of those PSR new hires who intend to leave (37% v.s. 19%) indicated that earning more money was an important reason. Interestingly, salary was not a major consideration in accepting their jobs, but it is an important one in their intention to leave. The robust state of the labour market at the time of respondents' recruitment into indeterminate positions between 1999 and 2000 could be related to this result. In other words, the unemployment rate and demand for particular skills in the broader labour market influences individuals' perceptions of the value of their skills and employability. Also, it could be the case that after gaining a few years of government work experience, they plan to seek opportunities that would increase their earning potential, which are more likely to be found in the private sector of the economy.

4.0 Conclusion

Despite overall positive appraisals of working in the FPS among all survey participants, PSR participants (33%) were less likely than others (44%) to agree that their job makes full use of their education. The increasing concern with working in a job that utilizes one's skills and abilities among all labour force participants suggests that job fit is a key concern especially with regards to recruiting and retaining PSR participants.

Results from this survey indicate that retaining PSR new hires could be a challenge. This is cause for concern given that significant resources are invested in attracting these recruits to the FPS. Steps to improve the match between their skills and education and jobs would go a long way in addressing this potential problem. Moreover, even though salary was not a major concern at the job offer stage, after some experience in the federal Public Service PSR new hires indicated that earning more money was a key driver for leaving within three years. This raises the question of how do individuals shift their emphasis from intrinsic concerns (e.g. working in one's field) to more extrinsic ones (e.g. higher compensation)? Further research into work experiences of PSR new hires would benefit from collecting qualitative data (e.g. interviews and focus groups) so that we could gain insight into this quandary.

This report has shown how PSRs are different from other new recruits in their experiences and plans. Most importantly, this group's initial experiences in conjunction with their greater mobility at this early stage of their careers will strongly influence their intentions in the near future and as such, greater awareness of their concerns is needed. These recruits are at their keenest when they begin work in the PS, which presents us with the opportunity to maintain that enthusiasm and thus, increase the likelihood that they will decide to build a career in the organization.