



Public Service Commission
of Canada

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New Hires Survey Technical Report #6

Recently Hired Visible Minorities

Recruitment Experience, Job Satisfaction and Career Plans

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Executive Summary

As part of the on-going effort to provide the Public Service with a better understanding of recruitment and retention challenges facing the federal government, the Public Service Commission of Canada (PSC) undertook a survey of recently hired employees. The *New Hires Survey* was administered in January and February 2001 and targeted employees newly recruited to an indeterminate position.

Issues of recruitment and retention are inextricably linked to Employment Equity representation. Relative to their qualifications and availability to work, visible minorities are currently under-represented in the Public Service. This report focusses on the experiences and perceptions of survey respondents who self-identified as members of a visible minority group. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of what attracts visible minorities to the Public Service, the quality of their job experience, and how their perceptions of and experiences within the workplace may differ from their colleagues who are not members of a visible minority group.

The data is based on 990 responses to a web-based survey administered by the polling firm Ipsos-Reid. Among respondents, 189 (19%) self-identified as a member of a visible minority group. All respondents who identified as belonging to a visible minority were included in the final data set.

The key findings of this report include:

- The Public Service Commission's web site, *jobs.gc.ca*, is an extremely popular Internet destination among visible minority respondents. Overall, 69% selected looking at this web site as one of their three most valuable job search activities, compared to 57% of respondents who are not visible minorities.
- The PSC's Post-Secondary Recruitment Program is an important conduit through which visible minorities enter the Public Service. One in five visible minority respondents overall (21%) and one-third (34%) of those who were externally recruited, obtained their first position through this channel.
- Visible minority respondents are likely to have accepted a job for the following reasons: to make full use of their knowledge, skills and abilities; to gain the opportunity to work in their field of study; and as an opportunity to enter the Public Service.
- A large majority (95%) of visible minority respondents agreed that their colleagues treat them with respect, while 84% agreed that in their work units, every individual is accepted as an equal member of the team, regardless of her/his race, colour, gender or disability.
- Among visible minority respondents, 44% felt that their present job did not provide them with a good opportunity for promotion, significantly higher than the 34% of respondents not belonging to a visible minority who expressed this opinion.

- When compared to the rest of the respondents, visible minority respondents indicated that they are less satisfied in general with their careers in the federal government. Only 65% of visible minority recruits expressed overall satisfaction with their careers, as opposed to 80% of the rest of the respondents.
- One in five (20%) visible minority respondents foresaw a departure from the Public Service within three years. Of this group, 92% suggested they would be motivated to leave in order to make better use of their knowledge, skills and abilities. In contrast, only 10% of respondents not belonging to a visible minority anticipated leaving within three years.

These results highlight some of the recruitment and retention successes of the Public Service, as well as the challenges we may face in the future. Continued promotion of the Public Service Commission's *jobs.gc.ca* web site, combined with a renewed commitment to the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program will help in the drive to increase the number of recruits from the visible minority population.

The retention of visible minority recruits may present one of the most serious challenges in the coming years. In order to better understand the departure intentions of visible minority employees, consideration should be given to the administration of exit interviews to all departing employees. Furthermore, the perception among visible minority respondents that their opportunities for promotion are limited requires further investigation.

Finally, it is clear that the Public Service must intensify efforts to maximize correspondence between employee skill sets and job responsibilities. The results clearly demonstrate that departure intentions are often linked to unfulfilled job expectations.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Visible Minorities, Recruitment and the Public Service

Much attention has recently been devoted to issues of recruitment and representativeness in the Canadian Public Service. With the baby-boom generation nearing retirement age, a substantial surge in the number of departures is anticipated to begin within the next five years. The need to develop and implement recruitment strategies that will effectively replenish the Public Service is urgent. Furthermore, recent reports have clearly identified the need to transform the composition of the Public Service in order to create a workforce that more accurately reflects the diversity of Canadian society. For example, in 1999, one in nine Canadians belonged to a visible minority, yet only one in seventeen employees in the Public Service was a visible minority.¹ Low levels of external recruitment of visible minorities has been a significant barrier to improved representation of this designated group².

It is crucial that recruitment plans aimed at attracting the next generation of Public Service employees address already existing Employment Equity deficiencies. In March 2000, the Task Force on the Participation of Visible Minorities in the Federal Public Service, chaired by Lewis Perinbam, released a report entitled *Embracing Change in the Federal Public Service*. In order to make the Public Service more representative of the people it serves, that report established a benchmark of one in five for visible minority participation across the Public Service, including a one in five share of external recruitment to both term and indeterminate positions by the year 2003. However, the Public Service is not the only organization seeking young, skilled workers; it must ensure that it remains competitive in today's job market. Obviously, a better understanding of the recruitment and job experiences of visible minorities is necessary in order to successfully attract and retain employees belonging to this group.

It was within this context that the Public Service Commission (PSC), in January and February 2001, undertook a survey of employees newly recruited to an indeterminate position in the federal Public Service (FPS).³

The purpose of the current report is to provide insight into the particular experiences of newly hired visible minorities.

- What attracts visible minorities to the FPS?
- How do visible minorities assess the FPS as an employer?
- Why do visible minorities decide to leave the FPS?
- Do the opinions, perceptions and experiences of visible minorities differ from those persons who do not belong to a visible minority? If so, how?

These and other questions will be addressed in order to provide background for the development of effective strategies to recruit and retain visible minorities as Public Service employees.

2.0 Methodology

The following report is based on analysis of the data gathered from a questionnaire completed by 990 public servants during a three-week period in January and February 2001.

2.1 Population and Sample

The new hires survey targeted 4328 employees selected from a population of 8743 people hired to an indeterminate position in the Public Service Employment Act (PSEA) defined federal Public Service (FPS) between July 1, 1999 and June 30, 2000.⁴ Invitations to participate in the survey were also extended to 724 people recruited into the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) during the same period.

2.2 Survey Instrument and Method of Delivery

The *New Hires Survey* explored the recruitment experiences of people recently hired into the indeterminate workforce.⁵ Survey questions probed a range of issues, such as the reasons why recruits accepted a position, their overall job satisfaction, how recruits rated the FPS as an employer, as well as the future career plans of these newly hired employees.

The survey was administered electronically.⁶ Potential respondents were invited to participate via e-mail notices and were each assigned a unique personal identification number (PIN). Respondents were provided with the Internet address for the web site on which the questionnaire itself was located. The subjects were sent several reminder notices encouraging them to respond.

Out of a total of 990 participants who completed the survey, approximately one in five (19% or 189) self-identified as a member of a visible minority group.⁷ These 189 respondents will be the focus of this report, however comparisons between visible minority respondents and those respondents not belonging to a visible minority shall frequently be made.⁸ It should be noted that the relatively high representation of visible minorities is a result of the decision to over-sample from all four designated Employment Equity groups (women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and persons in a visible minority) in order to provide a solid base for analysis of these groups. This was accomplished by including all members of a designated Employment Equity group who responded to the survey.

3.0 Profile of Visible Minority Respondents

3.1 Language and Gender

With 68% of visible minorities declaring English as their first language, their profile in this respect is on par with persons not belonging to a visible minority, of whom 67% declared English as their first language. Roughly one in five visible minority respondents (19%) selected a first language other than English or French, while 12% indicated their first language to be French. This differs considerably from the one-third (32%) of all survey respondents not belonging to a visible minority who declared French as their first language. Only 1% of the rest of the population spoke a first language that was neither English nor French.

Slightly less than half of all visible minority respondents were women (48%), a representation rate lower than that for women who are not members of a visible minority (57%). Visible minority women had a higher share of recruitment from the term population than did visible minority men. Women's share of term conversions was 54% compared to 46% for men. Conversely, visible minority men comprised a larger proportion of the total external recruits (59% vs. 41% for women).

3.2 Age and Education

The average age of visible minority respondents was 36 years, the same as the average age of the rest of respondents. A slightly higher proportion of visible minority respondents (32%) were aged 25 to 30 compared to 27% of the rest of the population in this age band. The fact that the survey targeted employees newly hired to an indeterminate position accounts for the relative youth of the population.

Table 1 highlights some interesting differences among respondents in levels of education. While a similar share of respondents held a bachelor's degree, (34% of visible minorities and 32% of others), a higher proportion of visible minority respondents had completed studies beyond the bachelor level, with 38% overall having a post-graduate degree (i.e. a master's degree, professional degree or doctorate) compared to 24% of other respondents.

Variations according to the type of recruitment were noted. Among visible minorities who were recruited from the term population, 33% held a post-graduate degree, as opposed to 42% of those who were externally recruited. The comparable figures for the rest of the population were: 17% of term conversions and 31% of external recruits had obtained a post-graduate degree.

Visible minorities in Canada tend to have higher education levels than persons not belonging to a visible minority. The 1996 Census shows that 23% of visible minority women and 30% of visible minority men had a university degree, as opposed to 17% of women and 19% of men who are not members of a visible minority. Taken in the context of the current shift to a knowledge-based economy, the FPS could profit from the development of strategies aimed at maximizing recruitment from this pool of highly educated visible minorities.

Table 1:
Language, Gender and Education Profile of Respondents

Respondent:	Visible Minority		Other	
Total:	189	100%	801	100%
First Language				
English	129	68%	537	67%
French	23	12%	253	32%
Other	36	19%	11	1%
Gender				
Women	90	48%	460	57%
Men	99	52%	341	43%
Education				
High School	13	7%	98	12%
College/Technical	34	18%	191	24%
University Diploma/Certificate	2	1%	29	4%
Bachelor Degree	65	34%	257	32%
Masters/Doctoral level	52	28%	148	18%
Professional degree	18	10%	45	6%

3.3 Department/Agency and Region

Visible minority respondents were hired by a variety of government departments and agencies. The largest employers were the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency and Human Resources Development Canada, each with 13% of visible minority respondents. Health Canada and Public Works and Government Services each employed 9% of visible minority respondents. The distribution of visible minority respondents in other departments/agencies was as follows: Statistics Canada (8%), Transport Canada (5%), Justice Canada (5%), and 4% in each of Canadian International Development Agency, Environment Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs.

By far, the largest share of visible minority respondents was employed in the National Capital Region (46%). An equal proportion of visible minority recruits (15%) held jobs in both British Columbia and Ontario excluding the National Capital Region, while an additional 11% were employed in Alberta. Fewer visible minority participants were located in Manitoba (4%) and Quebec excluding the National Capital Region (4%). In the other provinces and territories, visible minority respondents accounted for 2% or less of the sample.

3.4 Type of Work

The largest single occupational category into which visible minority respondents were hired was the Administrative and Foreign Service category (46%), with an additional 23% located in the Scientific and Professional category. The distribution of visible minority respondents in the remaining occupational categories was: Administrative Support (19%), Technical (10%) and Operational (3%).⁹

There were no statistically significant differences in the distribution by occupational category of visible minorities when compared to the rest of the population. Respondents not belonging to a visible minority were distributed as follows: 48% in Administrative and Foreign Service, 20% in Administrative Support, 19% in Scientific and Professional, 11% in Technical and 2% in the Operational category.

Gender differences relating to occupational category were noted among visible minority respondents. Specifically, there was a markedly higher concentration of visible minority women than men in the Administrative Support category (27% vs. 11%). Visible minority men, however, were much more likely to be found in the Technical category (16%), weighed against only 3% of visible minority women.

Turning to occupational groups, 17% of visible minority respondents were hired into the Clerical and Regulatory (CR) group. This was closely followed by the Program Administration (PM) group, into which 16% of visible minority respondents were recruited. An analysis of these two occupational groups by gender, however, reveals a very different picture. The CR group was the primary group into which visible minority women were hired (23%), while only 11% of visible minority men were found in this group. Conversely, the main group into which men were recruited was the PM group (20%) as opposed to 11% of women. Visible minority respondents also worked in the following occupational groups: 12% in Computer Systems Administration (CS), 9% in Economics, Sociology and Statistics (ES), 5% in Administrative Services (AS), 4% in both Social Science Support (SI) and Personnel Administration (PE), and 3% in each of, Purchasing and Supply (PG), Physical Sciences (PC), Law (LA) and Financial Administration (FI).

Given the concentration of visible minority women, relative to men, in the Administrative Support category as well as the CR occupational group, it is evident that the occupational segregation based on gender as it exists in the wider Public Service is also prevalent within the visible minority group. Newly hired visible minority women are disproportionately represented in pink-collar jobs, that is, clerical/secretarial jobs traditionally associated with, and occupied by women.

4.0 Overall Survey Results

4.1 Previous Employment

Respondents were asked about their employment history with the FPS prior to accepting their first indeterminate or term position. Overall, the responses of visible minorities were similar to the rest of the population; 40% of visible minorities and 39% of other new hires specified that they had no previous employment with the FPS before they accepted their first position. However, a considerable number of respondents indicated the contrary. For example, 30% of all internally recruited visible minorities had been term employees in the past, while another 28% had been casual employees. The comparable figure for other respondents was 20% in both instances. These results indicate that more visible minorities respondents have experience in the contingent workforce than do persons not belonging to a visible minority. Visible minority respondents also had a history of student employment in the FPS, with 19% of term conversions and 12% of external recruits mentioning past participation in the FPS through either the Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP) or the Post-Secondary Co-operative Education and Internship Program (CO-OP).

Approximately one-third (34%) of visible minority respondents were already working in the FPS when they acquired their first position. These participants were employed with the FPS in various capacities, including casual employees (12%), self-employed contractors/consultants (7%), student employees through the FSWEP or on a CO-OP assignment (7%) and temporary workers employed by a firm working for a federal government department or agency (4%).

The Public Service Commission's Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR) Program seems to provide an effective mechanism for bringing visible minorities into the Public Service. A considerable proportion of visible minority respondents were recruited through PSR. Overall, 21% entered their first position through this channel, compared to 16% of the rest of the population. Looking only at the visible minorities who were externally recruited, fully one-third (34%) obtained their first indeterminate position through the PSR Program, compared to a 24% share of respondents not belonging to a visible minority.

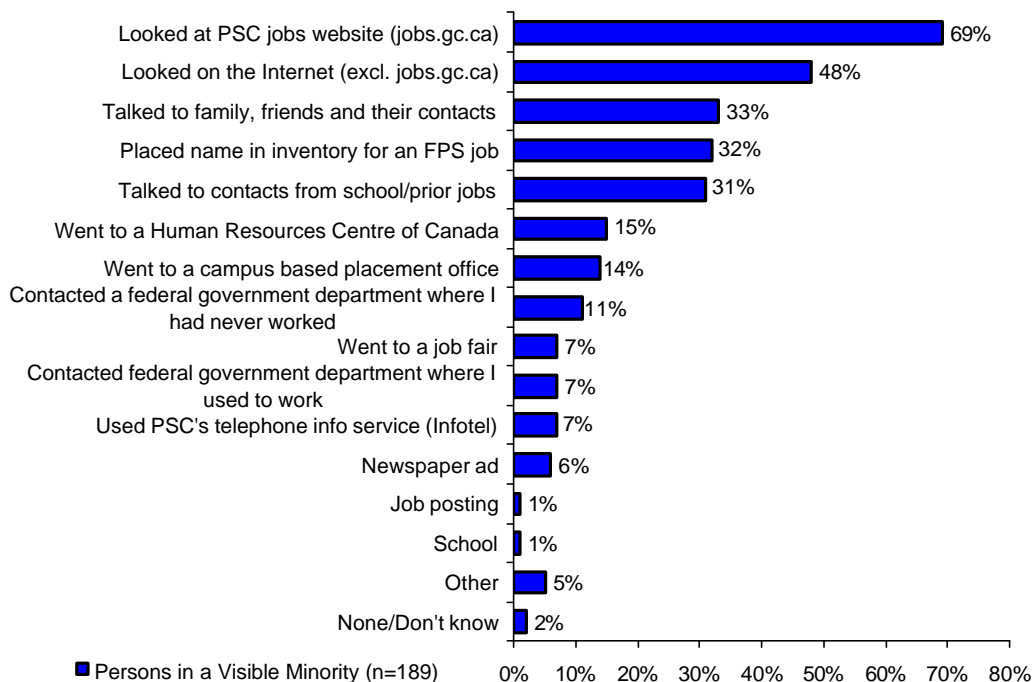
When participants were asked in which sector of the economy they had been working prior to joining the FPS, half of all visible minority recruits (50%) indicated that their main employment was in the private sector, marginally higher than among the rest of respondents (47%). However, visible minority hires were more likely to have been employed in the broader public sector (i.e. health, education) than were others (14% vs. 9%), and less likely to come from the provincial, territorial or municipal/regional public service (7% vs. 12%). During their job search, the federal Public Service was the number one choice of sectors of the economy in which visible minority recruits wished to be employed (47%), followed by the private sector (35%).

4.2 Job Search Activity

When respondents were asked to indicate the three most valuable job search activities in finding out about their first indeterminate or term position in the FPS, almost seven out of ten visible minorities

(69%) selected *looking at the Public Service Commission jobs web site (jobs.gc.ca)*. This is significantly higher than the 57% of other respondents who rated this web site as valuable, indicating that more visible minority respondents find the PSC jobs web site a useful tool when searching for employment. This site may be particularly attractive due to the strong presence of information concerning a variety of Employment Equity programs and initiatives. The data suggest that recruitment strategies targeting visible minorities and publicized on this web site would reach a large audience of visible minorities seeking employment in the FPS. Among visible minority survey respondents who were hired to their first indeterminate position from the external labour market, 83% rated the PSC web site as one of the most useful job search tools, compared to 55% among those who were hired to their first term position.

Figure 1
Three Most Valuable Job Search Activities in Finding Out About First Job in FPS - Visible Minority Respondents



Looking at other web sites on the Internet (excluding jobs.gc.ca) was also more frequently chosen among visible minority respondents, with 48% rating this activity as beneficial, as opposed to 37% of the rest of respondents. A smaller proportion of visible minority recruits (33%) found *talking to family, friends and their contacts* useful, whereas 41% of others rated this as a constructive job search activity. These results highlight the potential egalitarian effects of technological developments such as the Internet. Only a decade ago, social networks were of paramount importance in the job search process.¹⁰ Though social contacts remain an important resource today, a lack of personal connections can increasingly be countered through the use of technologies such as on-line job searches and applications. However, it is important to note that if technological advancements are to have an equalizing effect, they must be readily accessible to all segments of the population. In order to minimize pre-employment discrimination, equality of access to technology becomes a key concern.

Other job search activities mentioned by a large number of visible minority respondents included placing their names on an inventory for a federal Public Service job (32%) and talking to contacts or colleagues from previous jobs or school (31%).

4.2.1 Internet Use

Respondents were asked specific questions regarding their use of, and access to the Internet during the job search that led to their first indeterminate or term job. Although 17% of visible minority respondents did not have access to the Internet, almost 7 out of 10 (68%) used the Internet when searching for their FPS job. Internet use was more common among external recruits than term conversions, with 83% and 54%, correspondingly, reporting its use. An additional 15% of visible minority respondents had Internet access but did not use it.

Among the 68% of visible minority respondents who used it, the Internet was employed in a variety of different ways. Once again, the PSC web site was popular among visible minorities, with four out of five (80%) using the Internet to check the *jobs.gc.ca* site. The Internet was commonly employed by visible minority respondents to apply for jobs on-line (73%) as well as to investigate the web sites of potential employers (72%). Visible minority respondents more commonly used electronic mail to communicate with contacts or potential employers (46%) than did other recruits (35%). These results show that when access is available, visible minorities are intensive and consistent users of the Internet as a job search tool.

Four out of ten visible minority recruits (40%) requested a career alert by posting a brief description of the job they were looking for on the PSC web site (*jobs.gc.ca*), 35% did research for an interview or to find out what it might be like to work for a particular employer, while approximately one in three (32%) posted their resume or a brief description of the job they were looking for on a general job board. Interestingly, visible minority respondents were significantly more likely to use the Internet to seek advice on creating a resume (28%) than were the rest of the respondents (16%).

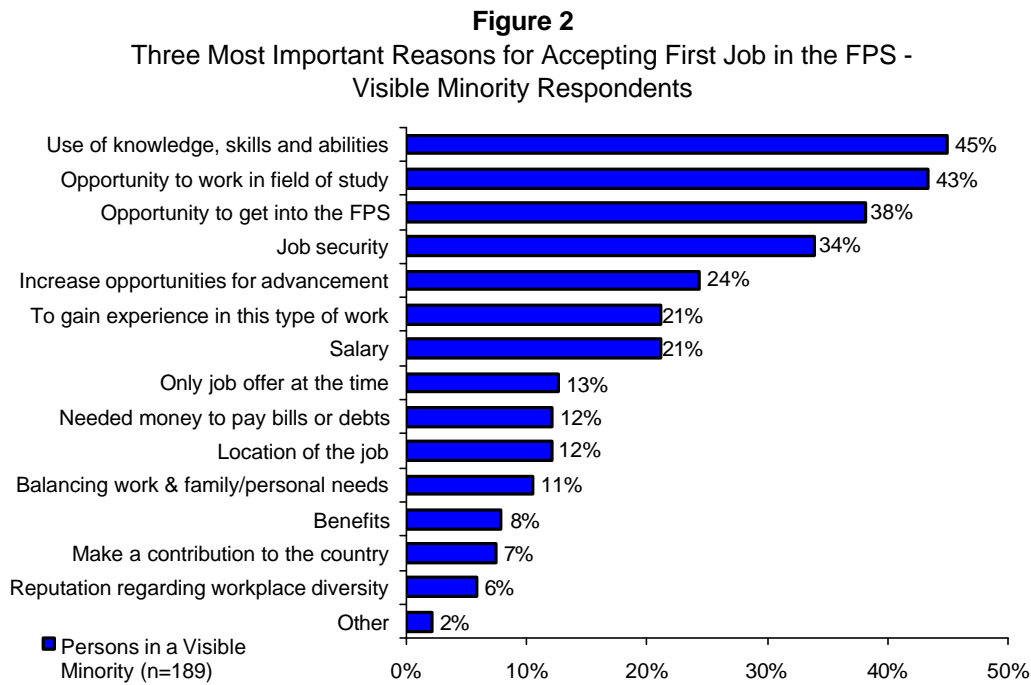
Visible minority respondents used the Internet much more intensively in their job search than other new hires. When asked what proportion of their overall job search involved Internet use, 36% of visible minority participants indicated that it was used over three-quarters of the time. An additional 27% used it for half of their job search and 21% for a quarter or less. Conversely, only 23% of other respondents used the Internet for more than three-quarters of their job search, 31% for half of it and 22% for a quarter or less. Clearly, the Internet is playing a vital role in the job search activities of visible minority recruits, with the PSC web site *jobs.gc.ca* emerging as one of their key Internet destinations.

In terms of gathering information that helped them to obtain their first (indeterminate or term) position in the FPS, the number one source, consistent with previous results, was the PSC web site (*jobs.gc.ca*). Roughly four out of ten visible minorities (42%) rated this site as one of the three most important ways in which information was collected. The PSC web site was a less valuable resource for the rest of the recruits, as less than one-third (29%) rated it as useful.

4.3 Reasons for Accepting First Job in the Public Service

Respondents were provided with a list of 14 possible choices and asked to select the three most important reasons for accepting their first position, whether indeterminate or term. With a few notable exceptions, visible minority respondents and other new hires cited similar reasons for accepting their positions. Visible minority respondents most frequently selected *the opportunity to make full use of their knowledge, skills and abilities* (45%) as one of the three most important reasons for accepting their first position. Though the proportion of other respondents who chose this same reason is slightly lower (39%), the difference did not prove to be statistically significant.

The second most commonly chosen reason among visible minority respondents was the *opportunity to work in their field of study* (43%). In contrast, less than one-third (30%) of the rest of the population mentioned this as an important reason for accepting their first position. *The opportunity to get into the FPS* was a point of convergence among respondents, with 38% of visible minorities and 40% of the rest of the respondents ranking this reason in the top three.



Other considerations regularly mentioned by visible minority respondents included: *job security* (34%), *to increase opportunities for advancement* (24%) and *to gain experience in this type of work* (21%). Though differences were not statistically significant, the corresponding figures for other new hires were 35%, 25% and 24%. It is noteworthy that the Public Service's *reputation regarding workplace diversity* was the least frequently chosen reason for accepting their first position among visible minority respondents (6%). However, in spite of its low overall ranking, visible minority respondents were twice as likely to choose this reason than were others (3%).

One of the most interesting points of divergence between visible minorities and others relates to salary and benefits. When compared to the rest of the population, visible minority respondents were in fact less likely to have accepted positions based on salary and benefits. Salary was ranked among the top three reasons by 21% of visible minority respondents, weighed against 29% of others. Additionally, respondents not belonging to a visible minority were two and a half times more likely (19%) to cite *benefits* as important than were visible minorities (8%).

The results of another survey conducted by the PSC in the summer of 2000, *Recruiting the Next Wave: A Survey of Student Employee Opinion in the Federal Public Service*¹¹, provide additional insight into the issue of salary. When students were asked about the three most important factors in their choice of a job *following graduation*, 59% of visible minorities chose competitive wages, compared to 51% of other students. While these results may seem inconsistent, it should be noted that the comparison involves two distinct populations, each with distinct sets of priorities: employees newly hired to an indeterminate position versus student employees. This factor likely accounts for the differential rating of salary between these two groups. It is not surprising that students in general attach a higher overall importance to salary/competitive wages, as rising tuition fees translate into increasing debt-loads for more and more graduating students. In this instance, the more meaningful distinction is student status as opposed to visible minority status. In the context of recruitment strategies, this comparison highlights the heterogeneity that exists *within* the visible minority community wherein priorities are not always consistent among visible minority respondents.

The reasons cited by respondents for accepting employment with the FPS not only highlight the existence of commonalities between visible minorities and others, they also show that visible minorities are, in certain instances, motivated by different factors to accept a Public Service position. As such, these results speak to the need to tailor recruitment and retention strategies accordingly.

4.4 Perceptions of the Public Service

Generally speaking, visible minority respondents hold positive opinions regarding Public Service employment. Their favourable evaluation is based on factors such as *the flexibility to balance work and personal life* (86%), *the interesting nature of the work* (83%), *the wide variety of career jobs offered* (83%) and a perceived *commitment to diversity in the workplace* (81%).

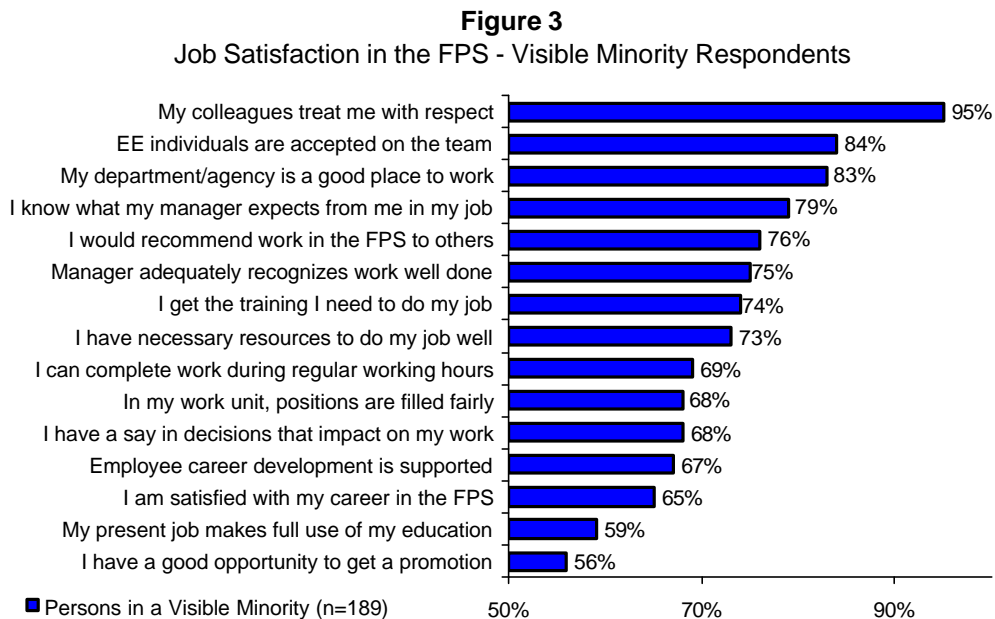
However, a significantly smaller share of visible minority respondents agreed that *hiring decisions are made within a reasonable period of time* (23%), that the FPS is *open to change* (44%) and that it *encourages independent decision making* (46%). Despite having rated salary and benefits as less important reasons for accepting their positions, visible minority respondents were particularly less optimistic than were the rest of the survey participants in their evaluation of these two factors. While 51% of the rest of the respondents agreed that the FPS *offers competitive salaries* and 88% agreed that the *benefits are excellent*, only 32% of visible minority respondents rated salaries as competitive while 80% characterized the benefits as excellent. Only 37% of visible minority women rated the FPS as having *good employee morale*, considerably below the 63% of visible minority men who agreed with this statement.

4.5 Job Satisfaction

Visible minority respondents and the rest of the population overwhelmingly concurred that their *colleagues treat them with respect*, with 95% of both groups expressing this opinion. A large share of visible minority respondents agreed that *in their work units, every individual, regardless of her/his race, colour, gender or disability is accepted as an equal member of the team* (84%) and that their *department/agency is a good place to work* (83%). While a higher proportion of the rest of the respondents agreed that all individuals are accepted as equal team members (90%) and that their department is a good place to work (89%), these differences did not prove to be statistically significant.

Though their evaluations do imply a general degree of job satisfaction, respondents did express obvious dissatisfaction with certain elements of their jobs. Specifically, one out of three visible minority respondents (32%) and one out of four (26%) of the rest of respondents felt that *positions in their work unit were not filled fairly*. On a related note, 44% of visible minority respondents felt that *their present job did not provide them with a good opportunity for promotion*, significantly higher than among other respondents (34%). These results are worrisome, as they could be indicative of inconsistencies between the valuation placed on merit and how the actual competitive process unfolds. If visible minorities are to be retained as employees, it is crucial that all barriers to advancement be removed.

A sizeable share of visible minority respondents (41%) and others (35%) indicated that *their current job did not make full use of their education*. The issue of correspondence between an employee's position and his/her level of education is a particularly pertinent one, recalling the 45% of visible



minority respondents who singled out the desire to make full use of their knowledge, skills and abilities as a key reason for accepting a position.

Visible minorities are less likely to recommend the Public Service to family members or friends as a good place to work, with approximately three-quarters (76%) of visible minority respondents, compared to 87% of others, saying they would do so. However, among visible minority recruits, only 71% of women versus 81% of men would promote the FPS as a good place to work. The opposite is true for the rest of the population, wherein women respondents were more likely than men to recommend the FPS as a good employer (89% vs. 83%).

Significantly, only 65% of visible minority respondents expressed overall satisfaction with their career, weighed against 80% of other new hires. Among visible minority respondents whose first choice was to work in the private sector, only 47% (n=53) were satisfied with their career. However, 80% (n=71) of visible minority respondents who ranked the FPS as their first choice indicated that they were satisfied with their career. Visible minorities who accepted their job because it provided the opportunity to get into the FPS also expressed a higher than average level of general satisfaction with their career (75%, n=72).

The perceptions of visible minority respondents can also be statistically linked to their overall satisfaction with their jobs. For instance, those who perceived that the FPS values its employees were quite satisfied overall with their careers (78% satisfied, n=123) as were those who felt the salaries were competitive compared to the private sector (73% satisfied, n=60) and believed that the FPS is committed to diversity in the workplace (70% satisfied, n=153). Visible minorities less satisfied with their careers included those who perceived that the FPS is not open to change, almost half of whom (49%, n=106) indicated that they were not satisfied with their careers. In addition, 52% (n=102) of those who felt that the FPS does not encourage independent decision-making were dissatisfied with their jobs.

4.6 Departure Intentions

Visible minority respondents are less likely than other new hires to express intentions to continue their careers with the FPS. In fact, one out of five visible minority respondents (20%) anticipates a departure within three years, compared to only one out of ten remaining respondents (10%). Furthermore, while only two-thirds (66%) of visible minority respondents expect to remain in the FPS for more than five years, three-quarters (75%) of other participants envision doing so.

The reasons cited by visible minority respondents for accepting their positions, their perceptions of the FPS as an employer as well as their satisfaction with their jobs can, in specific instances, be statistically linked to their departure intentions. For instance, among visible minorities who selected *an opportunity to get into the FPS* as one of the top three reasons why they accepted their position, only 10% (n=72) expect to leave the FPS within three years, compared to 20% (n=189) of visible minority respondents overall. Looking at those who accepted a position for reasons of *job security*, 13% (n=64) plan to stay for less than three years. Conversely, 22% (n=40) of visible minority respondents who accepted their position *to gain experience in this type of work* intend to remain for less than three years, while 35% (n=82) of visible minorities who were seeking *an opportunity to work in their field of study* expect to remain for less than three years.

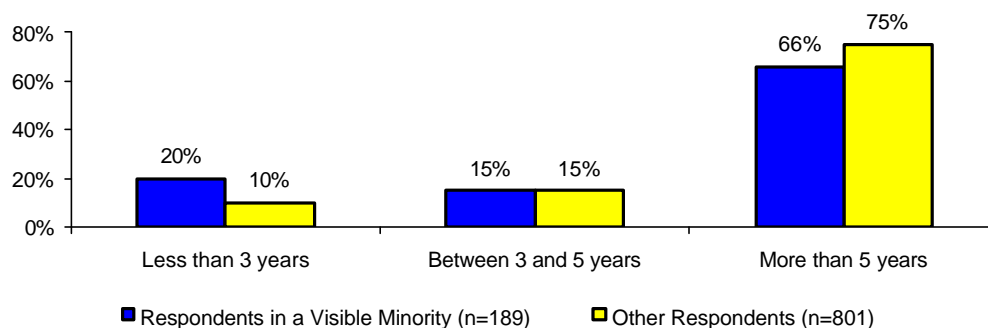
Visible minorities=perceptions also exert influence over their departure intentions. Not surprisingly, visible minority respondents who felt that the Public Service does not have a good quality work environment, that it does not value its employees and that it is not open to change expressed lower levels of commitment to their FPS careers, wherein 39% (n=49), 32% (n=66) and 27% (n=106), respectively, suggested that they intend to leave within three years or less, much higher than the 20% (n=189) share among all visible minority respondents.

While 66% of visible minorities overall intend to remain for more than five years, 82% (n=83) of those who assessed the FPS as open to change and 72% among both those who agreed that the FPS has a good quality work environment (n=140) and those who felt the FPS values its employees (n=123) stated that they plan to continue their careers in the FPS for more than five years.

The link between certain elements of job satisfaction and respondents=departure intentions, while insightful, is not unexpected. The aforementioned issue of the need for an acceptable correspondence between education and position once again resurfaces, wherein visible minority respondents who felt that their current job does not make full use of their education are more likely to foresee a departure within three years (29%, n=77). Furthermore, one-third (33%, n=51) of visible minorities who felt that they lacked the resources necessary to do their jobs expect to remain for three years or less. Among visible minority respondents who indicated that they are not receiving the training they need to do their job, one-third foresee a departure within three years (33%, n=49).

A high proportion of visible minority respondents who would *not* recommend the FPS to their family or friends as a good place to work anticipate a tenure of less than three years (44%, n=45) whereas among visible minority respondents who assessed their department as a good place to work, only 14% (n=156) intend to leave within three years. The responses of visible minorities who are satisfied overall with their jobs suggest that they are most committed to their careers, as only 9% (n=122) anticipate a departure within three years, while the proportion expecting to remain for more than five years jumps to 78%, even higher than the 75% of respondents not belonging to a visible minority who expect to remain for more than five years.

Figure 4
Departure Intentions: How long do you intend to remain in the FPS?



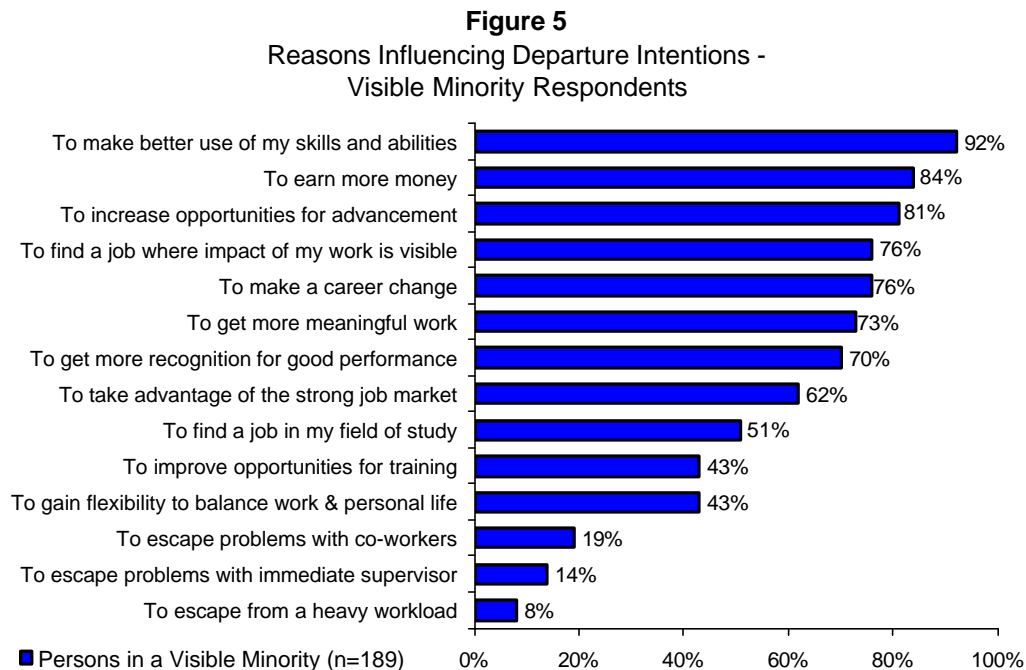
Among visible minority respondents who were externally recruited, those expecting to remain for more than five years drops from 66% to 57%, while those anticipating a departure within three years

rises from 20% to 29%. This contrasts sharply with internally recruited visible minority respondents, of whom three-quarters (75%) expect to remain for more than five years while only 11% predict a separation within three years. The same proportion (15%) of both groups (visible minority and others) estimate that they will spend between three and five years in the FPS.

Among visible minority respondents planning to leave within three years, only a small proportion (5%) were actively searching for employment (gathering information or making applications for a new job at least three times a week), 49% were casually searching for work (gathering information or making applications for a new job less than three times a week) while 46% were not presently engaged in a job search.

The majority of visible minority respondents intending to leave within three years plan to take a job outside of the Public Service (70%). Another 11% plan to start their own business, 8% foresee a return to school and 5% anticipate a relocation.

When asked why they plan to leave their employment, the prime motivation among visible minority respondents was the desire to make better use of their skills and abilities (92%). Even though salary was generally a less important reason for accepting their job, 84% of visible minority respondents will leave to earn more money, in contrast to seven out of ten (70%) of the rest of respondents looking for a higher salary. Consistent with the 44% who believed that they did not have a good opportunity for promotion in their current job, four out of five visible minority survey participants (81%) hope to increase their opportunities for advancement by taking an outside position. Seven out of ten visible minority respondents (70%) were seeking more recognition for good performance.



5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The need to develop effective recruitment and retention strategies must be balanced with Employment Equity objectives, in order to create an inclusive and vital Public Service. As large numbers of public servants are expected to retire over the next 10 years, the opportunity to renew is now. The *New Hires Survey* brings into relief several key issues concerning the recruitment and retention of visible minorities.

Visible minority new hires tend to place much more value on technology than on social networks in their job search activities. These respondents intensively use the Internet, as both a job search tool and a source of information about employment opportunities in the FPS. The Public Service Commission's *jobs.gc.ca* web site is particularly popular among visible minority respondents. In light of this, the PSC should continue to vigorously promote existing Employment Equity programs and initiatives on this web site, especially those aimed at the recruitment of persons in a visible minority group.

The Post Secondary Recruitment Program has been an effective vehicle for attracting and hiring visible minorities into the Public Service. Given that one out of five (21%) visible minority respondents overall, and one-third (34%) of those who were externally recruited, obtained their first position through the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program, the PSC should attempt to expand the use of PSR. This program needs to be promoted to departments as an effective tool for meeting broader goals of increased visible minority representation in the Public Service. Plans outlined by the PSC to revise the PSR program in the upcoming year¹², including the extension of the PSR program to a greater number of departments, the decision to engage in post-secondary recruitment year-round (beginning 2001-2002), as well as the use of student ambassadors in all regions as promoters of the PSR program, will aid departments and agencies in their drive to recruit greater numbers of visible minorities.

Previous studies, as well as Statistics Canada 1996 census data have already established that visible minorities in Canada tend to have higher education profiles than do persons not belonging to a visible minority group. Indeed, the findings of the *New Hires Survey* support this. Furthermore, the survey suggests that visible minority respondents have more extensive experience in the contingent FPS workforce when compared to other respondents. Evidently, visible minorities have the credentials as well as the desire to advance, as one-quarter (24%) of visible minority respondents indicated that increasing their opportunities for advancement was one of the top three reasons for accepting a position with the FPS.

Unfortunately, these expectations are not necessarily being fulfilled in the workplace, as 44% of visible minority respondents feel their opportunities for promotion are limited, while a further 32% feel that positions in their work unit are not filled fairly. That one in three visible minority respondents perceives the competitive process as unfair is particularly alarming. Level of education and job experience are two of the key assessment criteria used when a candidate is seeking employment, including promotions, within an organization. Yet, as previously mentioned, we have a group of highly educated employees with previous experience in the FPS who are much more likely to feel that their opportunities for promotion are limited. While these results cannot test each selection process, they

suggest that there remain significant barriers to promotional opportunities for visible minorities despite evidence of superior education and experience.

The *New Hires Survey* data suggest a potential retention problem among newly hired visible minorities. Visible minority respondents are less satisfied overall with their careers. While 80% of other respondents expressed satisfaction with their jobs, only 65% of visible minority respondents made similar statements. Furthermore, visible minority respondents are less likely than other respondents to consider continuing their careers in the FPS. Among the 20% of visible minority recruits planning to leave the FPS within three (3) years, 92% will do so in order to make better use of their knowledge, skills and abilities. Given that visible minorities are most likely to have accepted their first position in the FPS in order to make full use of their knowledge, skills and abilities (45%), retention strategies must focus on the importance of recognizing competencies and encouraging the realization of career goals. For those employees who do decide to leave, exit interviews would provide more detailed, qualitative information concerning their motivations for leaving the FPS.

Only 6% of visible minorities indicated that the Public Service's reputation regarding workplace diversity was one of the three most important reasons for accepting their first job. Based on the survey results, it is impossible to determine whether this is because the Public Service lacks a positive reputation regarding diversity or whether this factor is simply low priority compared to other factors. Nonetheless, establishing and maintaining a reputation as a champion of diversity in the workplace can only make the Public Service a more attractive choice to persons who are members of a visible minority group, as well as to other potential recruits. Beyond marketing itself as a diversity-friendly employer, the Public Service must also ensure that employees at all levels understand and fulfill their role in creating an organizational culture that promotes and indeed, celebrates diversity in the workplace.

This research highlights key challenges for the Public Service with respect to the recruitment and retention of visible minorities. While the survey indicates that visible minorities share many of the characteristics of other new hires with respect to recruitment and retention motivators, the patterns are not always identical. In order to develop more effective recruitment and retention strategies, we must remain cognizant of both the similarities and the differences, and integrate these into our HR strategies. We must fully exploit the tools that have proven effective in bringing visible minorities into the public service. Only through a better understanding of these challenges will we achieve the goal of a more representative Public Service.

6.0 Endnotes

1. Recruitment and Results: Report of the COSO Sub-Committee on Recruitment, Privy Council Office, July 2000.
2. Booker, Douglas, Natalie Dole, Stan Lee, Kathy Malizia, Daniel O'Connor and Rhonda Nause. Demographic Study of the Visible Minority Community in the Federal Public Service, PSC, Research Directorate, 2000. < http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/demographics/communities/visible_demo_e.htm >
3. An *indeterminate position* refers to a position whose tenure is of an indefinite duration. The workers who fill these positions are usually referred to as either *indeterminate* or *permanent* employees. In contrast, a *term position* refers to a position whose tenure is predetermined.
4. There are two main sources from which people are recruited into the indeterminate workforce in the federal Public Service: the external labour market and the existing population of term employees already working in the FPS. Comparisons will be made between these two groups throughout this report and will refer to *external recruits* or *externally recruited respondents* and *recruits from the term population* or *term conversions*.
5. Due to the existence of the two previously mentioned sub-groups of newly hired employees (external recruits and term conversions), two slightly different versions of the questionnaire were designed and employed. Term conversions were asked certain questions regarding their first term job, questions that were not relevant to the external recruits.
6. While the questionnaire was designed by the Research Directorate of the PSC, it was actually administered by the Ipsos-Reid polling company under contract to the PSC.
7. A person in a visible minority in Canada is someone (other than an Aboriginal person) who is non-white in colour/race, regardless of place of birth.
8. For the purpose of comparative analysis, visible minority respondents were separated from those respondents who did not self-identify as a member of a visible minority group. The latter group will be alternatively referred to as *the rest of respondents*, *the rest of the population*, *other respondents* and *others* throughout the remainder of this report. References to *both groups* should be interpreted as the collective of all survey participants (n=990).
9. Of all survey respondents (n=990), only 0.2% (2 respondents) were recruited into the Executive category. Neither of these two respondents was a member of a visible minority group.
10. Summary of Findings: New Hires Survey, PSC, 1988.
11. Booker, Douglas, Kathy Malizia, Leah Ben-Porat, Deborah Yin and Andrea Chatterton. Recruiting the Next Wave: A Survey of Student Employee Opinion in the Federal Public Service, PSC, Research Directorate, May 2001. p.25 < http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/surveys/students/final_e.htm >
12. Recruitment Action Plan Year One: 2000-2001: Looking Back, Looking Ahead. PSC, September, 2001. < http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/centres/rap/index_e.htm >