

# Securing Talent: Contemporary HRM Practices for the Recruitment, Selection, and Promotion of Civil Servants



This publication is a review of contemporary human resource management (HRM) practices for the recruitment, selection, and promotion of civil servants. It begins with a review of recruitment issues, including the concepts of the recruitment and staffing process, passive and active recruitment, qualifications of candidates for recruitment, recruitment strategies, effects of recruitment strategies, and internal versus external recruitment. It continues with issues of selection, including the concept of selection, the principles underlying selection in terms of patronage and merit, the screening of applicants, and various selection techniques, including written and other examinations, interviews, testing issues, and measurement terms. Third, it reviews issues of promotion, including the concept of promotion, type of promotion, promotion review and minimum years required for promotion, listing of candidates for promotion, and demotion. Finally, the paper briefly reviews diversity management, followed by concluding remarks. Regarding the nature of the issues, detailed examples are provided in text boxes to help prospective readers understand interesting cases in terms of good HRM practices.

The knowledge product is intended for policy makers, practitioners, experts, scholars, students, and all those interested in public human resource management issues.

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## Prologue

Human resource management and personnel administration are undoubtedly vital components of public administration entities, as they are necessary for engaging the appropriate individuals. Hence, securing appropriate talent is a primary goal of public administrations' human resources management and personnel administration organisations. For this purpose, they employ specific processes for the recruitment and selection of prospective personnel aimed at ensuring that dedicated, loyal, and competent individuals work in the public service.

Recruitment processes involve the identification, sourcing, and attraction of candidates to apply for jobs in public organisations. Conversely, selection processes entail the identification of the most suitable candidates among the applicants. In other words, recruitment refers to the process of selecting the most appropriate recruitment strategy, issuing recruitment notices, and announcing vacant positions to receiving an application; while selection refers to the process after applications are received, including selection of tests, screening of applicants, conducting interviews, checking references, and making the final decision to employ the most qualified applicants.

It should also be stated that it is important for recruitment strategies to be guided by public organisations' mission and goals. In essence, the use of strategic HR is essential, as effective HR planning determines the human resources needs in a public organisation. Thus, public organisations must always determine their current objectives and future directions, while forecasting their employment needs to align them closely with their missions and goals.

In this context, the role of the HR departments is crucial, as they must be able to understand how to determine job requirements envisioned, where to seek applicants, and how to screen them so they select highly qualified and competent candidates, who may fit into the public service culture. To accomplish this important task, HR departments specify their recruitment strategies, and form actions plans to successfully identify, recruit, and employ high-quality individuals for the purpose of filling vacant positions.

Furthermore, public organisations increasingly employ active recruitment practices. Realising that societies are becoming more complex and diverse; they seek to secure human resources suitable for complex and specialised jobs, a task that has become more difficult, however. As the role of professional administrators has become more important – in recent years – it has also become more difficult to recruit talented candidates suitable for the new role, i.e., creative, and innovative capable individuals, as they prefer jobs in the private sector or international organisations rather than public institutions. Undoubtedly, this observation further accentuates the importance of human resource management process to keep up with rapid changes in the environment and continue to be able to recruit and select capable individuals to serve in the public service.

In conclusion, this paper provides a comprehensive review of contemporary human resources management practices for recruitment, selection, and promotion of public servants; as well as of diversity management; that is also rather essential nowadays. In doing this, it also provides examples from the Republic of Korea; considered a benchmark country in public human resource management practices in our region.

It constitutes another contribution of the Astana Civil Service Hub to knowledge sharing among its participating countries; consequently, fulfilling their expressed demand for contemporary knowledge and experience in the public administration and civil service development realm.



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## **About the Astana Civil Service Hub (ACSH)**

The Astana Civil Service Hub is a flagship initiative of the Government of Kazakhstan and the United Nations Development Programme. It was created in 2013 by five international organisations and 25 countries: now comprising 43 participating countries. The geographical range of its participants stretches from the Americas and Europe through the CIS, the Caucasus, and Central Asia to ASEAN countries, demonstrating that partnerships for civil service excellence is a constant and universal need for all nations.

Its mandate is to assist in the promotion of public service effectiveness by supporting the efforts of governments of its participating countries in building institutional and human capacity; and thus, contributing to the improvement of civil service systems in the countries of the region and beyond.

The Astana Civil Service Hub is a multilateral institutional platform for the continuous exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of public service development, aiming at supporting government in the region through fostering partnerships, capacity building and peer-to-peer learning activities, and evidence-based research.

More information at [www.astanacivilservicehub.org](http://www.astanacivilservicehub.org)

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## Introduction

Historically, the field of human resource management in government agencies has been called “Public Personnel Administration” (Riley, 2001; Cayer and Sabharwal, 2013; Nigro and Kellough, 2014) or “Public Personnel Management” (Llorens et al., 2017) in the field of public administration. The fundamentals of business management and public administration differ in being based in the private sector and the public sector, respectively. In business management, it was called “Personnel Management” in the past, but recently it has often been called “Human Resource Management” (Frederickson et al., 2016). In public administration, some American public administration academics call it “Personnel Management in Government” (Naff et al., 2014), “Human Resource Management in Public Service” (Berman et al., 2013), Human Resource Management for Public and Non-profit Organizations (Pynes, 2013), or “Public Human Resource Management” (Battaglio, 2015; Kearney and Coggburn, 2015). However, many still call it “Public Personnel Management” in many countries. In the Republic of Korea (hereafter, Korea), it is still mostly referred to as “Public Personnel Administration”, because it is a general term for administration related to the human resource management (HRM) and human resource development (HRD) of government agencies, such as the human resource system of government agencies, human resource (HR) acquisition and appointment, human resource development (HRD), compensation, ethics, and labour-management relations.

It is impractical to deal with all the issues of HRM or public personnel administration here, so, this paper examines one of the most prominent issues in HRM, securing talent. It is time to strengthen government performance and competitiveness, for which it is important to secure the excellence and competitiveness of public officials. Therefore, recruitment and selection are the most crucial factors in securing talent. In addition, promotion is the ultimate reward for the dedication and loyalty of civil servants toward an organisation, so it is necessary to promote high-performing people through performance management after they enter the civil service. An employee’s promotion is a recognition of that person’s contribution to the organisation. In the process of managing the secured [retained] human resources, promotion is a vertical movement most desired by incumbents, and this paper will, thus, deal with the three issues of recruitment, selection, and promotion.

## I. Recruitment

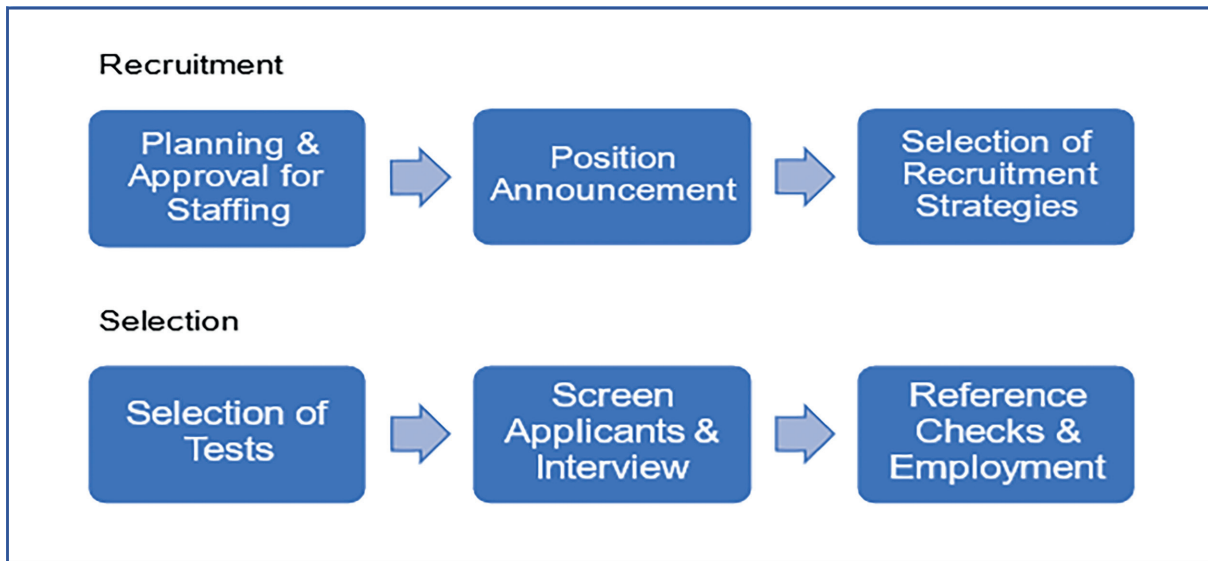
This paper first deals with recruitment because government agencies confront serious recruitment challenges around the world. Recruitment is often criticised by the public and mass media for the following reasons: passive methods of recruitment, a time-consuming hiring process (red-tape or proceduralism), a lack of attraction to the loss of prestige and “bureaucracy-bashing,” and the lack of financial incentives in government jobs. Accordingly, the need to adapt to rapidly changing situations in the VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) era requires public agencies to recruit and select highly qualified individuals more actively.

### 1-1. The Concept of Recruitment and the Staffing Process

Recruitment provides job information about open positions and encourages qualified candidates to apply. Recruitment is often defined as the process of identifying, sourcing, and attracting candidates to apply for jobs within a public organisation. In the staffing process, recruitment can be differentiated from selection, which is the final stage of the staffing process when decisions are made as to who will be selected for the vacant positions. Steps in the staffing process include: (1) identify HR needs; (2) seek budgetary approval to create and/or fill the position; (3) develop valid selection criteria; (4) recruit candidates; (5) test or otherwise screen applicants with questions; (6) prepare a list of qualified applicants; (7) interview the most highly qualified applicants; (8) conduct background and reference checks where appropriate; (9) select the most qualified applicants; and (10) provide new employee orientation and training.

In the staffing process, recruitment is the process of attracting the people an organisation needs into that organisation. In other words, it is the process of gathering candidates for the human resources needed by the organisation. Therefore, it is distinguished from selection, which is the process of selecting the most suitable candidate from among applicants. In other words, recruitment is an application induction process that encourages many candidates for public office to apply. Therefore, recruitment refers to the process from issuing a recruitment notice with a position announcement, and selection of recruitment strategies to receiving an application, while selection refers to the process after the application is received, including the selection of tests, screening of applicants, interviews, and reference checks and the final decision to employ the most qualified applicants.

**Figure 1. Recruitment and Selection in the Staffing Process**



Recruitment must be tied to the organisation's mission and organisational goals, and attempts should be made to anticipate its future HR needs. For recruitment to be successful, strategic HR planning is essential. Recruitment efforts must be consistent with the agency's mission and organisational goals for further development. HR departments must understand how to determine the job requirements, where to seek applicants, and how to screen them so that they select highly qualified and competent candidates.

Recruitment has three stages: (1) planning and approval of the position; (2) preparation of the position announcement; and (3) selection and use of specific recruitment strategies, as shown in Figure 1. All these recruitment processes should be well connected with the selection process. First, both recruitment and selection require effective HR planning to determine the human resources needs of the organisation. The organisation must determine its immediate objectives and future directions, and it must forecast its employment needs so that those needs are aligned with the organisation's strategies and goals.

Second, position announcements should be reviewed carefully for accuracy because misstatements become legally binding, and errors make the organisation look unprofessional or unreliable. Position announcements should be tied to the formal job descriptions, which are based on a formal job analysis. Once a job announcement is completed, and authorised, the HR department can focus on an appropriate set of recruitment strategies.

Third, an organisation needs to select and use specific recruitment strategies. A recruiting strategy is a formal plan of action involving the organisation's attempts to successfully identify, recruit, and employ high-quality candidates for the purpose of filling its vacant positions. In other words, a recruitment strategy is an employment plan that defines the roles the organisation plans to recruit for, when and where those job opportunities will be posted, and the assessment strategies.



**Table 1. Typical Steps in the US Federal Recruitment and Selection Process**

<b>Steps</b>		<b>Description of steps</b>
<b>Recruitment</b>		Recruiting the right individuals is crucial for organisations which need people with the right skills and capabilities to accomplish their goals. The complexity of the recruitment process will vary depending on an organisation's size and resources. However, each of the following stages should be followed: defining the role; attracting applicants; and managing the application process. Candidates' qualifications are not formally assessed at this stage.
<b>Selection</b>	<b>Screening</b>	This is the first hurdle in the selection process. The organisation sorts applicants into two groups: ineligible and eligible. Applicants who do not meet basic requirements, such as citizenship and minimum qualifications, are ineligible and thus "screened out." Applicants meeting basic requirements are eligible for further consideration. Common assessments used to screen candidates include written tests and ratings of training and experience (usually through review of a written application).
	<b>Ranking</b>	This is the second hurdle in the selection process, in which the organisation makes quality distinctions among the eligible candidates. The distinction may be simple sorting (such as assigning candidates into a qualified or best qualified group) or a rank ordering of candidates. The candidates in the highest group (or the top-ranked candidates) are then referred to the selecting official. The assessment tool used to make this distinction may be the same one used for screening, or it may be different. Common assessments used to rank applicants include ratings of training and experience (such as assigning scores to written descriptions of desired knowledge, skills, and abilities), and interviews.
	<b>Final Selection</b>	This is the final major hurdle in the selection process (there may be subsequent hurdles such as a background investigation and verification of experience and credentials, but these hurdles are generally applied after the candidate has been selected). The selecting official typically assesses some, or all the referred candidates through interviews (frequently supplemented by reference checks) and chooses an applicant from among the referred candidates.

Source: US Merit Systems Protection Board (2003: 8); modified by the author.

The HRM recruiters should review the qualifications needed for the position because the recruitment process involves finding the candidate with the best knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, and personality to fit the job. This review enables them to identify competencies or knowledge, skills, abilities, values, and attitudes (KSAVA) they will be looking for in the applicants, and it will guide them in developing an accurate job bulletin or advertisement. Finding relevant candidates meeting the job description can be done in two basic ways: passive recruitment or active recruitment.

## **1-2. Passive Recruitment and Active Recruitment**

Recruitment in a broad sense includes passive recruitment and active recruitment. Passive recruitment is to wait for applicants after announcing the recruitment plan for the human resources needed by the organisation. In the past, when recruiting public officials, the recruitment was done secretly, or recruitment notices were posted on the bulletin board in front of the personnel agency. In addition, recruitment notices were published only in designated newspapers supported by government agencies. This is a typical example of passive recruitment around the world.

In active recruitment, the organisation proactively informs more broadly to recruit human resources and provides attractive motives for excellent candidates to apply. Conditions that require active recruitment and those that do not are distinguished. If the social or organisational image of the civil service is somewhat negative, improvement of the public service reputation is needed. If the social image or preference for public officials is favourable, many talented people can be expected to apply without actively recruiting them. In addition, there may be a situation in which the economic situation is difficult, or the employment conditions are not good, while employment

jobs are maintained in the public sector.

Recently, active recruitment has been emphasised in public organisations. As society becomes more complex and diverse, it has become difficult to secure human resources suitable for complex and specialised public office jobs. In recent years, as the role of professional administrators has become more important, it has become more difficult to recruit talented candidates suitable for this role. Moreover, there is a growing tendency for creative and capable people to prefer jobs in private companies or international organisations rather than in public institutions. Yet, when the recruitment process is actively used, many talented people will apply.

There are various methods of active recruitment, such as providing and promoting information on the merits of public office or a positive image, inducing support through a public-private partnership process, and easing barriers to entry such as qualifications and selection requirements. To this end, it is necessary to utilise the media and public service job fairs and to activate cooperative programmes with universities. Another way is to lower the barriers to entry by easing the restrictions on eligibility to take the examination, reducing the number of examination subjects, adjusting the difficulty of the examinations, or streamlining the examination process to attract more applicants. In addition, it is possible to benchmark and adopt recruitment methods used in other fields such as private companies or other countries. Rather than passively waiting for candidates for public office to apply, it is necessary to actively seek out competent candidates for public office, or, if necessary, visit universities to promote them or conduct web recruiting.

### **1-3. Qualifications of Candidates for Recruitment**

#### **1) Improvement of eligibility requirements for recruitment**

The government needs to provide equal opportunities for public office to all and strive to eliminate social inequality in the recruitment process. In general, there is no gender restriction at the recruitment stage. In the past, there were fields that recognised the specificity of jobs according to gender, but in the present era, this specificity has become meaningless according to the principle of non-discrimination in many countries; regulations have been introduced to ensure practical equity between men and women.

Age is a limiting factor in the hiring process. In the case of Korea, anyone aged 18 or over can take the civil service examination. In the past, there was an upper age limit in order to promote the hire of younger candidates. However, the upper age limit was abolished in 2009 to give equal opportunities to all those wishing to enter public office. In other words, if a candidate's age is over 18, he or she is eligible to take the civil service examinations.

In many countries, a certain level of academic background is required to take the civil service examinations. Traditionally, academic background was restricted until 1972 in Korea, but in 1973, in order to ensure equal opportunity for all prospective candidates to take the test regardless of academic background, the academic background restriction was abolished in the civil service examination in 1973. Of course, a certain level of academic background is required for special fields or fields that require experience, but no academic background is required in the general open competitive recruitment examinations.

#### **2) Recruitment of foreign civil servants**

In general, in order to become a public official, candidates for public office must have citizenship. In particular, non-citizens cannot be employed in fields related to national security and security/ secrecy.<sup>1</sup> For example, when a job is open to "all U.S. citizens," it means anyone with U.S. citizenship, or who is a national (for example, a resident of American Samoa and Swains Island), may apply. However, it will be difficult to generalise, as each country may have different socio-

<sup>1</sup> Article 26-3 (Appointment of Foreigners) of the National Public Officials Act): The head of each state agency may appoint foreigners to public office, as prescribed by Presidential Decree, etc, except in fields related to national security, safety, and secrecy.

economic or socio-political situations and job application guidelines.

In the case of Korea, except for fields related to national security, safety, and confidentiality, foreigners can be hired as professional career officers and special public officials. For example, foreigners can be hired as public officials in the fields of foreign investment attraction, trade and industrial policy, education experts and national university professors, and in the culture, welfare, and urban planning domains. For a foreigner to be hired as a public official in Korea, he/she must undergo a background check 30 days prior to appointment.

### **3) Those who are not qualified to take the civil service examination**

In order to prevent unqualified persons from being hired for public office, applicants must meet certain qualification requirements. Each country will have a clear set of criteria for taking the civil service examination. For example, a person who has seriously violated the law and has been severely punished, or a person for whom a certain period has not elapsed since the person was subject to disciplinary action such as dismissal, cannot take the examination or a person who has been disqualified or suspended pursuant to a court judgment or other law.

In the case of Korea, Article 33 of the National Public Officials Act specifies various grounds for disqualification. For example, a person who has been declared bankrupt and has not been reinstated, or a person who has been sentenced to imprisonment or a heavier punishment and for which five years have not passed since the execution of the sentence was terminated or the decision not to be executed, etc, cannot take the civil service examination.

## **1-4. Recruitment Strategies**

There are numerous recruitment strategies, which are methods of contacting and informing potential applicants. Historically, governments have used somewhat passive recruitment strategies in many countries, but now many government organisations are taking more active approaches to attract more qualified candidates. There are various strategies, each of which has strengths and weaknesses.

Variables affecting active recruitment include operation of a cyber national examination centre (government jobs information site), improvement of recruitment methods, alleviation of barriers to civil service entrance examinations, simplification of application procedures including examinations and preparation procedures, conducting tests in conjunction with HRD institutions, and utilising e-posting strategies.

### **1) Job posting**

Job posting referred originally to the placing of the position announcement on walls in places such as bulletin boards of government organisations and agencies. Many government organisations still require physical posting in a number of places. In the past, there were many cases of posting recruitment notices on bulletin boards in the front door of government organisations or in the hallways of buildings. Its effectiveness is somewhat limited to organisation's personnel. Since many positions are recruited outside the organisation, traditional posting is unlikely to be effective.

### **2) Mail and e-mail recruitment**

Mail and e-mail recruitment is a personalised approach in which individuals are encouraged by letter to apply. It is an inexpensive, informal, and rapid outreach technique. However, it is not commonly used in the public sector, though it is a common approach for private companies or civil society organisations.

### **3) Newspaper recruitment**

The employment section of a newspaper is the most common vehicle for job announcements in the private sector. Newspapers were the main source for recruiting job candidates for many years in the past because they allowed for hiring more local candidates. However, fewer people

are reading print newspapers today, which decreases the viewing audience of job seekers. Circulation of print newspapers will continue to decline as publishers allocate more resources to their online newspapers or social media.

**Table 2. Recruitment Strategies: Passive, mid-range, and active strategies**

Passive	Mid-range	Active
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Job posting</li> <li>- Unsolicited inquiries: mail telephone, walk-ins</li> <li>- Word-of- mouth recruiting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Professional associations' newsletters</li> <li>- Newspapers</li> <li>- Television or radio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On-site recruiting (campus visits, college job fairs, conferences, and aiming special target groups)</li> <li>- One-stop employment shop, placement office</li> <li>- Web recruiting</li> <li>- Internships, fellowships</li> <li>- Co-ops</li> <li>- Active referral programmes, professional network</li> <li>- Utilisation of employment agencies</li> <li>- Use of search firms (head-hunting)</li> </ul>

#### 4) Personal contact recruitment (Employee referrals, job fairs, and on-campus recruiting)

Personal contact recruitment occurs when potential applicants are personally encouraged to apply for positions. An employee referral is a recruiting strategy in which employers encourage current employees through rewards to refer qualified candidates for jobs in their organisations. Employees often know others who are in the same field and are enthusiastic in their recommendations, but generally provide useful realistic job previews as well.

Another source of personnel contact is when recruiters attend job fairs, conduct on-campus recruiting, or individually target candidates for specific positions.

#### 5) E-posting

Electronic posting (e-posting) refers to listing jobs on government websites exclusively dedicated to job seekers. The Internet is an important recruitment tool with a minimal cost, so one-stop-shops or specialised government job boards have become a popular active strategy. In addition, recruitment notices for civil servants are widely advertised on recruitment bulletin boards of various academic societies.

##### **Box 1. E-posting in Korea**

In the case of South Korea, public recruitment information is effectively provided by the Ministry of Personnel Management. The Ministry of Personnel Management (MPM) has a Cyber National Examination Centre ([www.gosi.go.kr](http://www.gosi.go.kr)), where various test dates and content guides, application procedures and application submission guides, test questions guide, interview guides, test-related statistics, test announcements, etc are provided.

Agencies	Website
Central Government	<a href="https://www.gosi.kr/">https://www.gosi.kr/</a>
National Assembly	<a href="http://gosi.assembly.go.kr">http://gosi.assembly.go.kr</a>
Courts	<a href="http://exam.scourt.go.kr">http://exam.scourt.go.kr</a>
Police	<a href="http://gosi.police.go.kr">http://gosi.police.go.kr</a>
Firefighters	<a href="http://nfsa.go.kr">http://nfsa.go.kr</a>
Provincial Governments	<a href="http://local.gosi.go.kr">http://local.gosi.go.kr</a>
Public Organisations, including State-Owned Enterprises	<a href="https://job.alio.go.kr/recruit.do">https://job.alio.go.kr/recruit.do</a>

Source: [www.gosi.go.kr](http://www.gosi.go.kr)

### Box 2. E-posting in the U.S.A.

Most US federal government jobs, including paid internships, are posted online at [www.usajobs.com](http://www.usajobs.com), which is an official website of the US Government. Job seekers can use this online site to find jobs using keywords in a specific location, upload their resumes and apply for jobs across the United States. Anyone, including current federal employees, can apply for these jobs. Job seekers can open their own accounts on this site. With a USAJOBS profile, one can save jobs, automate job searches, and manage many things one needs to complete an application, including resumes and required documents. Depending on the job, one may need to provide several different documents with the application.

Candidates can write and store their resumes on the system. When a candidate finds a position on this site that matches his/her interests and qualifications, he/she can electronically send his/her resume and application form directly to the government organisation advertising the vacant position. The recruitment department begins reviewing applications when the job announcement period closes. The recruitment department agency will review the application to make sure the applicant is eligible and meets the qualifications for the position. The recruitment official will review the highest qualified applications and select applicants for an interview based on agency policy. The recruitment agency will contact applicants directly to schedule interviews. After all interviews are completed, the agency will select a candidate(s) and contact them to start the job offer process.

Source: <https://www.usajobs.gov/r>

## 6) Internship

An internship is a period of work experience offered by an organisation for a limited time, and it is a practice used for a wide range of placements in businesses, non-profit organisations, and government agencies.<sup>2</sup> For example, internship recruitment is often used in many local governments in the U.S.A.

<sup>2</sup> An internship can be described as a trial period at an organisation that helps students gain insight into a field they are considering as a career. People may use the term “internship” and “fellowship” interchangeably even though the two are quite different. Unlike many internship positions, fellowships are offered mostly to those at the graduate and post-graduate level. Many people at this level consider fellowships in their field in order to complete the training necessary for their area of interest without having to take a job outside their field.

### **Box 3. New York City Summer Internship Programme**

#### *1. Eligibility of Internships*

Undergraduate interns must either be currently enrolled in a college or university or must have graduated in the winter semester or current programme year. Graduate interns must be currently enrolled or accepted in a graduate programme. Unless otherwise specified, the internship is open to both undergraduate and graduate applicants.

#### *2. The Application Process*

Each government department will provide all application-processing information. All applicants must forward a cover letter and resume to the designated contact person. The agency contact person or assigned staff member will respond to questions about their agency internship programmes. Since agencies may revise their programme(s) at any time, please be sure to confirm all information when you apply for specific internships.

#### *3. Duration of Internships*

Internships are available between May and September for a maximum of 13 weeks. Individual agencies determine the actual length and start/end dates for their internship assignments.

#### *4. Compensation*

Salary is determined by individual agencies. Some positions are unpaid, and some offer volunteer, work study, or academic credit for work experience. Others may provide a travel stipend for programme participants.

Source: [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dcas/downloads/pdf/employment/summerinterns/summerintern\\_process.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dcas/downloads/pdf/employment/summerinterns/summerintern_process.pdf)

### **Box 4. Internship Programme for Regional Talent in Korea**

The president of a university located in a province or large city other than Seoul recommends excellent talented students who meet the recommendation requirements to the Ministry of Personnel Management for consideration as interns. “Excellent student” refers to applicants who are within the top 10% of their academic record: (1) university graduate: the GPA must be within the top 10% of each department; or (2) prospective university graduates: the GPA of all subjects completed at the time of recommendation must be within *the top 10% of each department (academic major)*.

Each local university can recommend 6 to 10 excellent students to the Ministry of Personnel Management based on the admission quota. The Ministry of Personnel Management selects interns through the Public Service Aptitude Test with a focus on constitutional law (multiple-choice tests), document screening (recommendation letters and Korean history and English proficiency test scores), and interview (rating factors are professional knowledge and ability, accuracy, and logic of expression of opinion, creativity, and potential for development). The president of the university sets his/her own criteria by the resolution of the recommendation review meeting, but the main criteria should be whether he/she has completed or almost completed university education and his/her GPA. After one year of internship work, the final stage will determine whether or not to employ as a national public official at *Grade 7*. Remuneration during internship work is paid and it is equivalent to the initial step of the Grade-7 salary in the general service.

Source: Cyber National Examination Centre ([www.gosi.go.kr](http://www.gosi.go.kr))

## **7) Fellowship**

A fellowship is the period of administrative or special training that a special expert may undertake after completing a specialty training programme. For example, the Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Programme is the US federal government’s flagship leadership development programme for early-career graduate degree holders.

### **Box 5. The US Presidential Management Fellow Programme**

The US Presidential Management Fellow (PMF) programme is an active recruitment method. It recruits young talented graduates with master's and doctoral degrees in the form of fellowships and appoints them as mid-level government officials after two-year fellowships. The PMF Programme is an opportunity for advanced degree holders across all academic disciplines and from all segments of society. The PMF Programme is administered by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Candidates are evaluated through oral presentations, group discussions, and essays. The assessment process will consist of three distinct parts: (1) Fellows Behavioural Assessment Tool (FBAT), (2) Fellows Situational Assessment Tool (FSAT), and (3) Fellows Structured Interview (FSI). In addition, the assessment process will be conducted in two stages: (1) the Online Assessment stage (which includes the FBAT and FSAT), and (2) the Semi-Finalist stage (which includes the FSI). The competencies on which applicants will be evaluated consist of: Attention to Detail, Flexibility, Integrity/Honesty, Interpersonal Skills, Oral Communication, Reasoning, Self-Management, and Supporting Diversity.

The PMF Programme was established in 1977 by Executive Order and has gone through changes over the years, but its essential mission remains the same: to recruit and develop a cadre of future government leaders from all segments of society. Eligible individuals apply to be selected as Finalists. Finalists then have 12 months to secure an appointment as a Fellow, which is a two-year, full-time, paid fellowship at a federal agency. The PMF Programme instils a spirit of public service, which, for Fellows who complete the programme successfully, can ultimately encourage and lead to a career in government.

Each year, candidates apply to the programme in an effort to be selected as finalists and finalists are then eligible for appointment as Presidential Management Fellows (PMFs) at a participating Federal Agency. Fellows are usually appointed at Grade GS-9 or higher in the federal government. Key fellowship benefits include a full-time job with salary and benefits as well as promotion potential to the GS-13. An array of substantial employment benefits (e.g., health, life, dental and vision, and long-term care insurance; Thrift Savings Plan; paid holidays and leave; and flexible work schedules) are provided. Additional potential benefits, depending on the agency, may include public transportation subsidies, telework, and student loan repayment.

Source: <https://www.pmf.gov/become-a-pmf/overview/>

## **8) Headhunting**

Headhunting is the process of finding the best possible candidate for a position; it is also known as an executive search. Professional headhunting is a particular style of hiring process that consists in the recruitment of professionals to fill highly skilled or senior positions. Head-hunters usually work for a government organisation hired to fill the organisation's high-level, specialised, or technical positions. Head-hunters approach professionals who are employed and not actively looking for another job, known as passive candidates, who would be ideal for the job. Head-hunters present job offers to these targeted candidates to entice them to leave their current positions. Headhunting is an exclusive process limited to hiring one or two top people for the organisation, unlike general recruitment, which is usually a mass hiring drive process. Headhunting is more a proactive process, wherein the employer is looking for an eligible candidate regardless of whether the candidate is currently actively searching for a new job. The top management and other executive members of the organisation generally undergo this type of hiring.

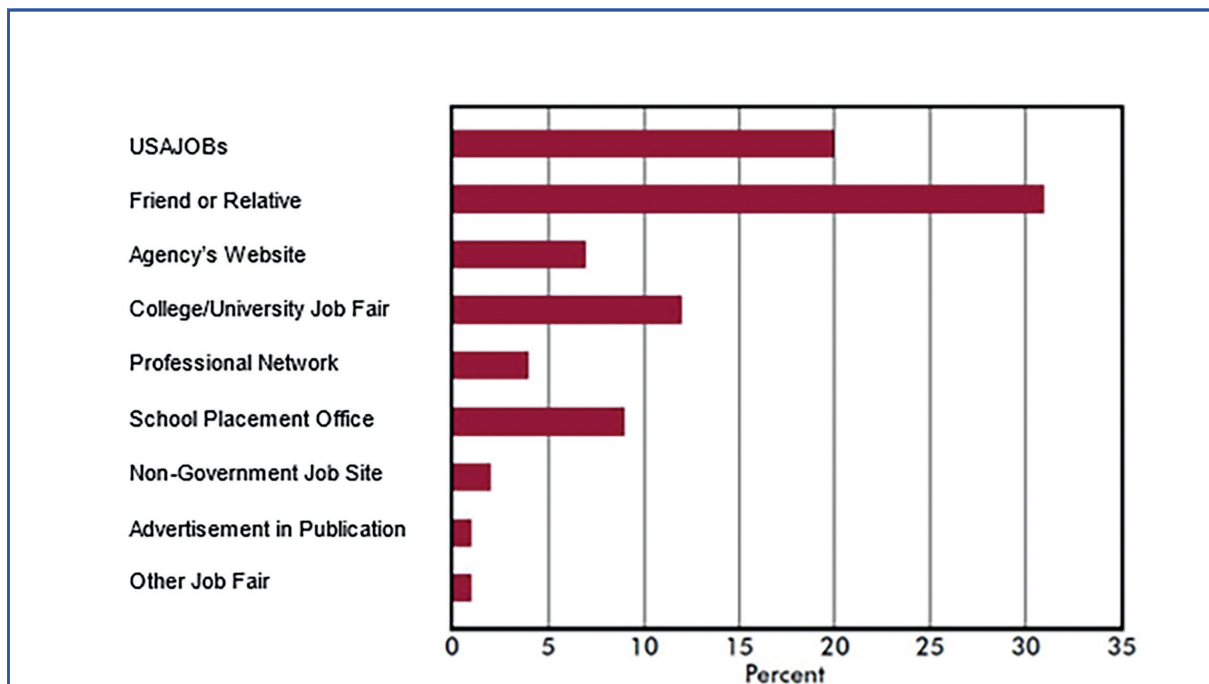
### **1-5. Effect of Recruitment Strategies**

The job search experience plays a key role in who is selected for government positions. It determines who hears about job vacancies, what steps they take to apply for jobs, and how long they must wait to be employed or not. Ultimately, recruitment strategies will affect who learns of job opportunities and therefore who applies. According to the US Merit Systems Protection Board (2008: 43), when asked how they first learned about their federal job, new employees' top answer (31 per cent) was that a friend or relative told them about it. Second, as 20 per cent of new employees reported that USAJOBS was how they first heard of their job, the website is obviously an important recruitment source. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) sponsors USAJOBS — the official federal job site, which provides potential applicants with full vacancy announcements for almost all competitive service and some excepted service job openings.

Third, college job fairs and school placement officials proved to be a significant employment source for recently graduated new employees. Fourth, it is surprising that only 7 per cent identified the agency website as the first place they learned of their job with US Merit Systems Protection Board (2008: 43).

As mentioned earlier, USAJOBS is the official federal job site that provides potential applicants with full vacancy announcements; it is updated in real time and is available to anyone who can access the Internet. Applicants can search job opportunities using a variety of criteria, such as job title or keywords, agency, location, and pay. Applicants can create a federal resume, store it on the site, and, in many instances, use that one resume to apply online for multiple federal jobs. It provides a useful feature that helps applicants track the status of their application (US Merit Systems Protection Board, 2008: 45).

**Figure 2. How survey respondents first learned of their government job**



Source: US Merit Systems Protection Board (2008: 43).

## 1-6. Recruitment Process: Internal Recruitment vs. External Recruitment

Employee recruiting is the activity of identifying and soliciting individuals — either from within or outside an organisation — to fill job vacancies or staff for growth. Recruitment processes are very challenging yet unavoidable. When making these choices, managers will face a trade-off between internal and external recruitment. On the one hand, internal recruitment entails fewer costs, more stability, and safer transitions. External recruitment strategies, on the other hand, offer a wider selection pool.

### 1) Internal Recruitment

Public sector organisations often look at current staff first to fill vacancies. In fact, many organisations give extra credit or points to employees already working for the organisation. Preference for incumbent employees may also exist in many agencies in which programme stability and connections to the community and funding sources are important. In these cases, employers first consider the internal labour market. For internal recruitment to work, government entities need to be proactive and incorporate strategic planning into their human resources practices. Organisations need to track the KSAVA needed for the various jobs within the organisation. Employees who possess those needed skills, whether administrative, managerial, or technological, should be identified.



HRM departments and department managers should work together and make workforce projections based on the current level of employee skills. They should review transfers, retirements, promotions, and termination patterns and conduct succession planning in order to identify individuals who might fill positions when an incumbent leaves. This requires keeping track of and updating the records of each employee's competencies and the demands required of each position. A human resources information system (HRIS) or electronic HRM (e-HRM) system can sort employee data by education, career interests, work histories, occupation fields, and other features. Many organisations favour internal recruitment because administrators can review and evaluate the KSAVA of internal applicants prior to selection. Promoting qualified incumbent employees rewards them for their performance and signals to other employees that the organisation is committed to their development and advancement.

There are many ways to recruit internally, including promotions, transfers, and employee referrals, along with simply advertising the job opening within the workplace. Hiring internal candidates can be more efficient than recruiting externally because it can: (1) reduce the time to hire as internal candidates are already part of the workplace and the organisation has a better knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of job candidates, so the time to find and engage those candidates is much less; (2) shorten onboarding times because everyone needs time to adjust to a new role, but internal candidates are quicker to onboard than external candidates; (3) cost less because it is easy to inform internal candidates about job openings through email or newsletter and it could save all the money and time attached to searching, interviewing, and selecting suitable new candidates; and (4) strengthen employee engagement and motivation, because giving employees more opportunities to advance their careers, or even letting them move to other same-level positions that may interest them, is good for morale, which helps to build a culture of trust that enhances employee engagement, as well as increase the levels of motivation among employees, as they realise the space of career development within the organisation.

However, there are some disadvantages of internal recruitment. One of the disadvantages is an effect of the Peter Principle, which states that people might be promoted to the point where they cannot successfully perform the job. Moreover, other disadvantages of internal recruitment include: (1) creating resentment among employees and managers because infighting for promotion can negatively affect morale, causing those who see themselves as worthy of promotion but who were not favoured to become demotivated, which may lead to undesirable group dynamics and an unsettled work environment that encourages jealousy and unhealthy competition among workers; (2) limiting the pool of applicants because the sole reliance on internal hiring could limit the chances to hire people with new skills and ideas, as well as minimising the pool of applicants, hindering the selection of a suitable employee for the needed position; and (3) inculcating a resulting complacency, inflexible culture, and lack of innovation because "in-breeding" can stifle new ideas.

## **2) External Recruitment**

External recruitment refers to the process of filling vacancies in the organisation by hiring new employees from the external labour market, which provides access to new fresh minds, who will potentially introduce innovative ideas from outside the organisation. Recruiters use external sources to find available candidates, such as: job search sites or websites, job fairs, and advertisements. External recruitment is the search for qualified applicants from outside the organisation. Typically, the organisation would seek qualified applicants from the relevant labour market, defined by the skills required for the position and the geographical region where those skills can be found. Depending on the skills supply in the region, technical, managerial, and professional workers, as well as scientists and engineers, may be recruited from a regional labour market. The central government recruits nationally through regional offices for all its professional positions. Scientists, engineers, managers, professionals, and executives are most likely to be sought at the national level. Local agencies use the national labour market when critical skills are in short supply locally.

Public organisations need to develop a recruitment strategy. Decisions need to be made about when and where to look for qualified applicants when action needs to be taken. Government entities need to anticipate their future needs and actively and creatively promote the opportunities available in their organisations. Internships, co-ops, and on-the-job training should be integrated into the recruitment and selection process. The use of e-recruitment has become common nowadays. Internet technology and social networking make information more accessible to job seekers. Public sector organisations and agencies are using information and communication technology (ICT) to post jobs, accept applications and resumes, and screen applicants through tools that assess the type, breadth, and presentation of the information candidates upload on the website.

Advantages of external recruitment include: (1) selecting from more candidates because one can explore a much larger pool of candidates with a wider variety of competencies for the vacant positions; (2) adding fresh perspectives, because bringing in outside employees can add a new perspective to the organisation, giving access to new fresh minds that will potentially introduce innovative ideas from outside the organisation; (3) staying competitive because new employees can bring in ideas and strategies from their previous experience, freshening overall business in today's competitive environment; (4) reducing employee tension, because when hiring for management or other supervisory roles, it may be preferable to hire an outside candidate to reduce tension among current employees; and (5) finding a specialised candidate, because searching outside the organisation can allow for finding a candidate who has more relevant experience and training for the job, ensuring the selection of those candidates who are more experienced, highly skilled, and generally a good fit for the needed positions.

Some of the disadvantages of external recruitment include: (1) external recruitment involves a series of procedures to ensure the right selection of candidates, so attracting potential employees is more difficult, and external recruitment typically costs more than internal recruitment because the HR team spends more time on recruitment efforts, interviews, and paperwork when bringing in new employees; (2) the adjustment or orientation time is longer because outside employees require more training than internal employees on general policies and procedures; and (3) morale problems can develop among employees within the organisation because external recruitment may affect existing employees' morale, especially if they expect to progress within the organisation, as employing an outsider can cause them to feel that they missed an opportunity or are being overlooked.

## **II. Selection**

The selection process refers to the steps involved in choosing someone who has the right qualifications to fill a current or future job opening. In other words, the selection process can be defined as the process of selecting and shortlisting the right candidates with the necessary qualifications and skill set to fill the vacancies in an organisation. The selection process is a series of steps that agencies use to hire the best candidates, so the selection process is expensive. For example, there are the costs of testing candidates and bringing them in for interviews. Nonetheless, the selection process varies from country to country, industry to industry, organisation to organisation.

### **2-1. The Concept of Selection**

Selection is the process of identifying an individual from a pool of job applicants with the requisite qualifications and competencies to fill jobs in the organisation (Farr and Tippins, 2010; Gatewood et al., 2011). In other words, it is the process a recruitment team follows with a job candidate to ascertain all the information they need to decide on selecting who to employ. Selection starts when job applications have been received, so it is the final stage of the recruitment process. It has three stages: (1) selection tests; (2) screening applicants and interviews; and (3) reference checks and employment.

## 2-2. Criteria or Principles Underlying Selection: Patronage vs. Merit

The criteria or principles underlying selection involve determining which sources of information will be used and how those sources will be scored during the selection process. The criteria or principles should be related directly to the job analysis and the job specifications. Selection is a socio-politically sensitive aspect of HR activities. There are several criteria that can be used, separately or in combination, to provide the basis for the decision: electoral popularity, patronage, merit selection, seniority, and representativeness. Among such criteria, patronage and merit selection are the most important issues in HRM, so it is necessary to look at them more closely.

### 1) Patronage

Selection technically starts when job applications have been received. Which of the applicants will be chosen, by what criteria, by what process, and by whom? During the 20th century, merit principles replaced patronage as the most common process but by no means the sole selection criterion. Patronage is the support or privilege that an organisation or individual bestows on another, and it often involves political patronage, the use of state resources to reward individuals for their electoral support. Political patronage refers to a type of favouritism in which a party in power rewards groups or ethnicities for their electoral support using gifts or awarded appointments. Political leaders have at their disposal a great deal of patronage, in the sense that they make decisions on the appointment of officials inside and outside government. However, patronage excesses are relatively rare nowadays.

The Executive has the right to make many appointments, some of which may be lucrative. Patronage tends to have a negative connotation because it assumes that loyalty will be to the patron or person making the selection rather than to the government at large. Some types of political patronage may violate ethics codes, such as when political leaders engage in nepotism (favouritism based on kinship such as employing family members) and cronyism (a practice where an individual in a position of power abuses authority to dispense favours to his/her friends), such as fraudulently awarding non-competitive government contracts to friends or pressuring the public service to employ an unqualified friend. However, political patronage is not always considered corrupt. In the United States, the U.S. Constitution provides the President with the power to appoint individuals to government positions. For example, the President may appoint personal advisers without congressional approval. Similarly, at the state and local levels, elected governors and mayors also retain appointment powers.

#### **Box 6. Two Historical Cases from the UK and the USA**

UK

The **Northcote-Trevelyan Report (1854)**, a document titled “Report on the Organisation of the Permanent Civil Service” prepared by Stafford H. Northcote and Charles E. Trevelyan about the British Civil Service, was published in 1854. This report recommended that entry to the British civil service be solely on merit instead of patronage, to be enforced using examinations. The Northcote–Trevelyan recommended changes, including entry to a civil service by competitive examination, promotion by merit, improved pay and pensions, and the division of the service into administrative, executive, and clerical grades. This report is generally regarded as the founding document of the British Civil Service.

Source: [https://www.civilservant.org.uk/library/1854\\_Northcote\\_Trevelyan\\_Report.pdf](https://www.civilservant.org.uk/library/1854_Northcote_Trevelyan_Report.pdf)

USA

The spoils system was the term coined for the practice of hiring and firing federal workers when presidential administrations changed in the 19th century. The practice began during the administration of US President Andrew Jackson, who took office in March 1829. The term came from a speech by Senator William L. Marcy of New York. While defending the actions of the Andrew Jackson administration in a speech in the U.S. Senate, Marcy famously said, “to the victor belong the spoils”. The spoils system was criticised for decades. Consequently, the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act was promulgated by the US Congress in 1883. The **Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act** (or simply the Pendleton Act) provided that federal government jobs be awarded on the basis of merit instead of political patronage and that government employees be selected through competitive examinations.

Source: <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/pendleton-act>

## 2) Merit

The term merit refers to the quality of being particularly good or worthy, especially so, as to deserve praise or reward. In HRM, merit-based systems emphasise technical qualifications using processes that analyse job competencies and require open competitive application procedures. These systems require “examinations”. Merit selection is the primary philosophy for the civil service systems that dominate non-executive employment. The strengths of merit selection are its fairness to candidates, its availability to scrutiny, and its assurance of minimum competencies and qualifications. It also fits well with the notions of democratic access and accountability.

### **Box 7. Merit System Principles in the USA**

*Merit system principle on recruitment, selection, and advancement:*

Recruitment should be from qualified individuals from appropriate sources in an endeavour to achieve a work force from all segments of society, and selection and advancement should be determined solely “on the basis of relative ability, knowledge, and skills, after fair and open competition which assures that all receive equal opportunity”.

*Merit system principle on equity:*

All employees and applicants for employment should receive fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of personnel management without regard to political affiliation, race, colour, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or handicapping condition, and with proper regard for their privacy and constitutional rights.

In sum, merit system principles include: (1) recruitment, selection, promotion, and reward based on merit; (2) selection and advancement based on relative ability; (3) fair and equitable treatment; (4) equal pay for work of equal value; (5) recruitment of diverse pools of qualified individuals; and (6) protection from partisan politics and arbitrary treatment.

Source: U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (2020: 3–4).

### 2-3. Screening Applicants

Job applications are often the first step in the screening process. Job applicants complete a form asking them to answer a variety of questions. However, the questions must not violate employment discrimination laws. Employment screening techniques and tests must comply with the general principles and technical requirements. For example, the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission et al., 1978) were issued in the USA to help employers make equitable employment decisions in accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.<sup>3</sup> In Korea, the Guidebook for Fair Recruitment was published by the Ministry of Personnel Management (2019). Background questions about age, race, gender, and disability are permitted only when responding is voluntary and the information is required for record-keeping purposes. Equal employment opportunity data should be collected by the HRM office and should not be used to screen out applicants. Most applications usually provide limited space for applicants to provide detailed information about relevant work or educational experience. A supplemental questionnaire can be developed that asks questions related to the specific job to facilitate the screening process.

After individuals apply for a position, the applications need to be screened to identify a list of qualified applicants and eliminate unqualified applicants. Positions typically deluged by applicants use multiple screening procedures to pare down the number of candidates. The first screen is to sort out applicants who do not meet the minimum requirements. The second screen might eliminate applicants who lack the requisite experience or qualifications. For administrative or professional positions, which usually have more stringent education and experience requirements, there are likely to be fewer applicants. To reduce the number of applicants to those who are most qualified, it is important to have pre-established criteria to facilitate the screening.

<sup>3</sup> The Uniform Guidelines (<http://uniformguidelines.com/>) apply to all selection procedures used to make employment decisions, including written tests, interviews, review of experience or education from application forms, résumés, work samples, physical requirements, and evaluations of performance.

Background checks have become common, and not only for public safety and security positions. Employees working with children must undergo a background check by law enforcement agencies to screen out individuals with criminal histories. Senior-level executives often have their backgrounds investigated. Employers are concerned with the reliability of the applicant's behaviour and integrity. The information may contain the applicant's driving record, arrests and convictions, and employment history. The Internet has created informal means, not necessarily sanctioned by a government organisation, to screen applicants. A web search may yield news reports, press releases, newspaper opinions or columns, or even blogs that may disclose personal characteristics of the applicant. Visits to social networking sites have also been used to ascertain if there are pictures or comments made by the applicant that might embarrass the organisation.

## 2-4. Selection Techniques

Different types of positions require different kinds of selection techniques. The selection techniques will depend on the skills, attributes, and knowledge required for the position. The following are some of the selection techniques commonly used in employment settings, as well as alternative approaches:

- **Written examinations** are competitive examinations for the civil service conducted by a central personnel authority (such as the Ministry of Personnel Management or the Civil Service Commission). In the West, civil service examinations consist of candidates' document review and interviews,<sup>4</sup> but in East Asia (China, Japan, Korea), the written examination is still very common and important (US Office of Personnel Management, 2019).
- **Achievement tests** are designed to measure the degree of mastery of specific material and knowledge to assess whether an individual has profited from prior experience and learned specific materials and knowledge. Most of the items in achievement tests assess whether the individual possesses specific knowledge of concepts considered critical for a job. One of the common types of achievement tests is a standardised test, such as the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), required for college entry in the United States. Achievement tests are often contrasted with aptitude tests.
- **Aptitude tests** are ways for employers to assess a candidate's abilities through a variety of different testing formats including, for example, problem-solving, prioritisation, and numerical skills. Such tests are designed to reflect the general and specific capabilities and potential of the individual applicant by measuring verbal, quantitative, nonverbal, and oral skills, or motor functions such as mechanical ability, numerical aptitude, finger dexterity, or perceptual accuracy.<sup>5</sup>
- **The Rating of Experience and Training** is a procedure that quantifies the education, experience, training, and other relevant data that applicants provide on job applications and questionnaires. Ratings of Experience and Training (EandT) are frequently used as screening devices in the selection of employees. The information used for EandT ratings includes previous work and volunteer experience, education or other training, and credentials. EandT ratings are used for a broad spectrum of jobs ranging from entry-level through senior-level full performance job classifications. They are used for the assessment of rudimentary skills needed for very low-level jobs as well as complex dimensions needed to perform high-level professional work. For example, EandT is often used when evaluating candidates for promotion or when selecting candidates with experience for a position.

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<sup>4</sup> In the US, the Administrative Careers with America (ACWA) is a programme that offers competitive, entry-level (GS-5 and GS-7 levels) employment through written examinations and multiple-choice questionnaires in several general occupational areas (US Office of Personnel Management, 2019).

<sup>5</sup> The aptitude test is well developed even in large private companies in Korea: The Global Samsung Aptitude Test (GSAT), the LG Aptitude Test (LGAT), and the Hyundai Motor Aptitude Test (HMAT).

**Box 8. The Public Service Aptitude Test (PSAT) in Korea**

The Public Service Aptitude Test (PSAT) is required in the first round of the Grade-5 and the Grade-7 Open Competitive Examinations. The PSAT is one of the national examinations that evaluates the basic skills and qualifications required for the performance of government jobs. It was first introduced in the foreign affairs examination in 2004 and it became part of the administrative examination in 2005. After that, it was incorporated into various kinds of tests in the Korean civil service.

The PSAT is composed of a linguistic logic area, a data interpretation area, and a situational judgment area. The linguistic logic area serves to measure the abilities of comprehension, expression, reasoning, criticism, and logical thinking. The data interpretation area measures the abilities of organising and understanding numerical data, processing, and applying calculations, and analysing and extracting information. The situation judgment area is a quiz-type problem area that measures the abilities of understanding the situation, reasoning and analysis, problem solving, judgment, and decision-making. The PSAT for the Grade-5 examination consists of 40 questions in each area - a total of 120 questions, while the PSAT for the Grade-7 examination consists of 25 questions in each area - a total of 75 questions.

The PSAT examination questions formulation is usually performed by the Development Committee of the PSAT Examination Questions under the Examination Management Division of the HR Recruitment Bureau of the Ministry of Personnel Management and are stored in the PSAT examination question bank and managed secretly.

*Source: Ministry of Personnel Management (2021a).*

- **Structured oral examinations** are used to evaluate job requirements that are not easily assessed by paper-and-pencil measures, such as interpersonal, oral communication, and supervisory skills. Although the specifics of the examinations may differ, all structured oral examinations share similar components. They are based on a job analysis that captures competencies or the critical KSAVA necessary for the position. The questions (usually predetermined questions) are job-related, and all applicants are asked the same questions. Rating scales are used to evaluate the responses, and the assessors receive training prior to conducting the examination. Structured oral examinations are usually evaluated by a panel of two or three people rather than by a single assessor.
- **Work sample or performance tests** require applicants to demonstrate that they possess the necessary knowledge and skills for successful job performance. Applicants are asked to perform tasks that are representative of actual job activities. For example, when recruiting professors at universities, published research papers in the relevant field are often requested as a work sample or research performance. In addition, professors are required to submit student evaluation records for lectures in their field as evidence of teaching performance. In the case of public relations experts, samples of promotional products are sometimes requested.
- **In-basket (or in-tray) exercises** are written tests designed to simulate administrative tasks. The exercise consists of correspondence designed to be representative of the job's actual tasks. A set of instructions usually states that applicants should imagine that they have been placed in the position and must deal with the memos and other items that have accumulated in their in-basket (or in-tray). A sample of in-basket items might include memos, correspondence, e-mails, directives, requests, reports, forms, messages, minutes, and hand-written notes from management, supervisors, staff members, and other stakeholders. The candidate's task is to review the in-basket items and then act on these varied issues and problems using action forms to record notes, comments, and responses. The in-basket exercise is designed to evaluate the candidates' adaptive thinking, problem analysis, judgment, administrative abilities, planning, organising, delegating, and integrative skills while under pressure in dealing with memos, e-mails, requests, messages, and other notes.
- **Leaderless group discussions** assess attributes such as oral communication, leadership, persuasiveness, adaptability, and tolerance for stress. The leaderless group discussion is a type of assessment centre exercise where groups of applicants meet as a group to discuss an actual job-related problem. The leaderless group discussion evaluates group interaction skills that are known to be critical for success in supervisory/managerial positions by presenting candidate groups with problems that virtually all managers face. Applicants are assembled to work on solving a problem that

### **Box 9. Open Competitive Examinations in Korea**

The Korean Imperial Examinations had a very long history in Imperial Korea. The Korean Imperial Examinations (gwa-geo in Korean) were introduced during the reign of the Goryeo dynasty in 958 and were widely practiced in Imperial Korea until 1894 (Kim, 2012). In fact, it was affected by the imperial examination (keju in Chinese) in Imperial China, which started during the Sui dynasty (Kim, 2017a). Aspects of the imperial examinations still exist for entry into the civil service of contemporary Korea. Accordingly, it is fair to say that the modern civil service examination system for selecting government employees evolved from the country's imperial past. In other words, an open competitive examination as a meritocratic recruitment and selection method for government officials has been a common practice in Korea for approximately one thousand years. As a result, success in the civil service entrance examinations has come to be associated with good government jobs, relatively high social status, and a potential ladder to power in government.

In the Korean civil service, there are two kinds of civil service entrance examinations. First, the open competitive examinations for fresh graduates aim to provide interested applicants, who pass the examinations, the opportunity to hold a government job and fill vacant positions. These examinations do not require a certain level of education and experience of applicants. In other words, anyone who 18 years old or older can take this examination. The examinations are for the recruitment of Grades 5, 7, and 9. In the Korean civil service, Grade 9 is the lowest level, while Grade 1 is the highest level of career civil servants in the general service (Ministry of Personnel Management, 2021a).<sup>\*</sup> Second, the competitive recruitment examinations, "for experienced professionals", aim to recruit candidates who have specific qualifications or work experience for certain positions that cannot be filled through the open competitive examinations. Professionals with certain credentials, work experience, and academic degrees are recruited through this process (Ministry of Personnel Management, 2021a).

There are three levels of open competitive examinations: (1) Grade 5 (fast track); (2) Grade 7 (intermediate level), and (3) Grade 9 (lowest entry level). All these examinations are managed by the HR Recruitment Bureau of the Ministry of Personnel Management.<sup>6</sup>

First, the Grade 5 entrance examination is conducted in three rounds. The first round is based on multiple-choice questions on four subjects: (1) the Public Service Aptitude Test (PSAT); (2) a constitutional law examination; (3) an English examination (scores on an English proficiency test such as TOEIC or TOEFL are used); and (4) a Korean history examination (the Korean History Proficiency Test is used). The second-round examination is based on essay tests on five subjects, with the subjects involved being relative to the field of service for which the applicants have applied. The third-round examination is a background-blind interview conducted for a total of 260 minutes.

Second, the Grade 7 entrance examination is conducted in two stages. The first-round examination covers seven essential subjects based on multiple choice questions, which differ slightly depending on the applicant's field of service. For the administrative service, it consists of the PSAT, English (the English proficiency test scores), Korean history (the history proficiency test score), constitutional law, administrative law, public administration, and economics. The secondary round is a background-blind interview conducted for a total of 150 minutes.

Third, the Grade 9 entrance examination is also conducted in two stages. The first-round examination currently covers five subjects based on multiple choice questions, with the subjects differing slightly depending on the field of service. In the case of administrative service, it consists of the three essential subjects of Korean language, English, and Korean history; two job-related subjects are chosen from administrative law and public administration. The second round is a background-blind interview conducted for a total of 70 minutes.

For the development and management of examination questions, the Examination Management Division of the HR Recruitment Bureau in the Ministry of Personnel Management manages an "examination question bank" by developing examination questions on a regular basis through the Development Committee of the Examination Questions composed of experts in each field. Since many potential examination questions are usually developed and managed secretly, there is little risk of examination questions leaking, and there is no corruption in the examination process.

*\* The Korean civil service hierarchy consists of nine grades.*

*Source: Ministry of Personnel Management (2021a, 2022a); and Kim (2012, 2017a)*

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.mpm.go.kr/english/about/organisationalChart/>

requires cooperation. Assessment centres often use a form of the leaderless group discussion to see who possesses natural leadership ability. As the meeting proceeds, the behaviour of the candidates is observed to see how they interact and what leadership and communications skills each person displays.

• **Competency Assessment Centres** are special selection programmes that rely on performance tests. Competencies are the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviours that contribute to individual and organisational performance. The purpose of a competency assessment centre is to obtain multiple measurements of key job dimensions by using a variety of instruments, such as role-playing exercises, in-baskets (in-tray) exercises, leaderless group discussions, and other exercises. Judgments about each applicant's competencies are made by assessors who are trained in scoring each exercise. The US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) defines a competency as "A measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviours, and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully".<sup>7</sup> A competency assessment is the assessment of someone's capabilities against the requirements of their job. Those requirements are defined in a competency model. Competency assessment centres are frequently used to select managerial-level civil servants who need skills in such areas as vision, leadership, management, governance, and decision-making (Ministry of Personnel Management, 2021c).

#### **Box 10. The Competency Assessment Centre in Korea**

The Ministry of Personnel Administration operates a Competency Assessment Centre in the Gwacheon Campus of the National Human Resources Development Institute (NHI). Competency assessment is conducted in a simulated environment where persons subject to assessment are asked to perform certain roles and behaviours and a group of trained assessors observes and records them and assesses the candidates' competency. The government designates those with sufficient expertise and experience in personnel management and competency assessment as assessors, such as former and incumbent senior civil servants, professors of management and/or psychology, and professionals in human resource management from the private sector. Assessors are required to learn competency analysis and assessment methods and participate in a series of workshops, trainings, and mock assessment sessions to study the design of simulation exercises and use of rating scales before engaging in actual competency assessment and then they are certified as assessors.

The Korean government introduced the Senior Civil Service (SCS) and the competency assessment system on 1 July 2006, to improve the competitiveness in the civil service and ensure performance-based management for the SCS across the government. Later, the government expanded the target of evaluation to include director-level civil servants in order to help new directors develop their competencies and assume new roles successfully.

Competence is an intrinsic characteristic expressed in observable and measurable behaviour that is central to the successful achievement of individual and organisational performance. Competence also refers to the behavioural characteristics of excellent performers. The Ministry of Personnel Management has developed and utilised a competency model for the Senior Civil Service (SCS) and managerial levels that reflects the roles required of managerial-level civil servants.

Candidates are assessed through simulation exercises that are similar to actual work conditions, and a number of assessors evaluate the characteristics of the candidates' competencies and behaviour in a given situation. For candidates of the Senior Civil Service, various assessment methods (i.e., 1:1 role play; 1:2 role play;<sup>8</sup> in-basket exercises; and group discussions) are used to assess each of six competence categories (problem solving, strategic thinking, performance orientation, change management, customer satisfaction, and coordination and integration) in the three dimensions: (thinking, working, and relational dimensions).

Source: Ministry of Personnel Management (2021c: 30-31);  
Competency Assessment Centre (<https://www.nhi.go.kr/cad/index.do>)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/>

<sup>8</sup> 1:1, one candidate-one assessor; 1:2, one candidate-two assessors.



- **Biodata** selection procedures require that applicants complete a questionnaire that asks for biographical information. Biodata is basically details about someone's life, job, and achievements, so questions may include topics such as level of education and/or skills, areas of expertise, work experience, demographic profile, social activities, honours and achievements, and other personal characteristics. Individuals are selected based on whether their answers to the questions are related to job performance.
- **Physical ability tests** are used when a significant level of physical activity is required for performing a job. In the public sector, physical ability tests are used most often in the selection of law enforcement and public safety officers, such as police officers, firefighters, corrections officers, and park and conservation safety officials. Physical ability tests typically ask individuals to perform job-related tasks requiring manual labour or physical skill. These tasks measure physical abilities such as strength, muscular flexibility, and stamina. However, many factors must be taken into consideration when using physical ability tests. Employment selection based on physical abilities can be litigious. Legal challenges have arisen over the years because physical ability tests, especially those involving strength and endurance, tend to screen out a disproportionate number of women and some ethnic minorities.<sup>9</sup>

**Box 11. The National Human Resources Database (NHRDB) in Korea**

The Talent Information and Acquisition Bureau of the Ministry of Personnel Management collects and manages information on talented professionals in order to make referrals of candidates with outstanding knowledge and skills for public office positions. The National Human Resources Database (NHRDB) is a state-operated system that collects and manages information on candidates for public offices to ensure that the selection of individuals for high-ranking positions is based on objective data. Since its establishment in 1999, the NHRDB has contributed to ensuring the fairness and transparency of government appointments by keeping decision-makers informed of important details and the particular expertise of key figures needed for the government.

The NHRDB is home to information about more than 320,000 talented personnel in all social areas, and it provides its assistance in hiring top-class people with specialised talent for major public offices in the Republic of Korea. Central administrative agencies, local governments, and public institutions can receive referrals for candidates from the Ministry of Personnel Management. The NHRDB contains information not only on high-ranking government officials, but also on many professionals from various fields of society, such as academia, business, law, and NGOs. They may also check the information, first-hand, on outstanding potential candidates by browsing through this database, as they are granted access to such information by the Ministry of Personnel Management.

When searching for candidates for presidential appointment positions, it is common to receive information about candidates from various sources, but basic data are also drawn from this HR database. The Personnel Information Management Bureau (PIMU) of the Ministry of Justice is responsible for personnel verification for presidential appointments' candidates, a task performed by the FBI in the United States. The PIMU verifies information of candidates for high-level public office positions on social fields such as crime and academic background, as well as economic fields such as finance and tax payment.

Source: <https://www.mpm.go.kr/english/system/hrDb/hrDb/about/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/other-assessment-methods/physical-ability-tests/>

## 2-5. Interviews

Selection interviews are often the deciding factor in who gets hired for a position, and selection interviewing is an almost universal practice in both the public and private sectors. However, it is worth noting that interviews are a subjective selection tool.<sup>10</sup> It is easy for interviewers to inject their own prejudices into the selection decision. Another problem with interviews is that job-related questions that can differentiate between successful and unsuccessful employees often are not asked. Questions related to the dimensions of the job should be asked. In that regard, interviews are covered by the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection and Placement in the US federal government.<sup>11</sup>

Selection interviews may be placed on a continuum from unstructured to structured. At one end of the continuum, the unstructured interview is where completely unplanned questions are asked spontaneously and responses are not evaluated in any systematic manner. At the other end of the continuum, a highly structured interview uses several elements of structure —mechanisms such as questions based on job analysis and predeveloped rating scales — to create a clear and strong relationship between performance in the interview and performance on the job (US Merit Systems Protection Board, 2003).

**Table 3. Characteristics of Unstructured and Structured Interviews**

<b>Unstructured Interviews</b>	<b>Structured Interviews</b>
Factors evaluated by the interview are implicit and vary across candidates.	Factors evaluated are explicit, based on job analysis, and are the same for each candidate.
Questions are not necessarily job-related.	Questions are job-related.
Questions vary from interview to interview for the same job.	The same questions are asked of all candidates for the same job.
There is no system or guide for evaluating interview results.	There is a predeveloped system for evaluating interview results.
Interviewers may be untrained.	Interviewers have been trained.

Source: US Merit Systems Protection Board (2003: 6).

The US Merit Systems Protection Board (2003: 13–18) recommends the following steps for a structured interview: (1) base questions on a job analysis; (2) ask effective questions; (3) ask each candidate the same questions; (4) use detailed rating scales; (5) train interviewers; (6) use interview panels so that more than one person conducts the interview; (7) take notes; (8) assess candidate responses objectively, use the rating scales, and score candidates using the ratings; and (9) evaluate selection decisions based on subsequent employee performance.

<sup>10</sup> Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan (2004) conducted a survey on the potential discrimination that may occur during the recruitment process. They sent out the same resumes to many job posts, using a name frequently used by African Americans for half of the resumes and a name widely used by white Americans for the other half. The results showed that the white names received 50 percent more call-backs for interviews. Call-backs are also more responsive to resume quality for white-sounding names than for African American ones. This result clearly demonstrates how name-background information that can cause prejudice has an impact on one's judgment (Kim, 2017).

<sup>11</sup> The [US] Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection and Placement (Uniform Guidelines) are a set of principles and standards for employment practices. The Uniform Guidelines were developed jointly by several agencies (the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Department of Labour, the Department of Justice, and the Office of Personnel Management). They provide a framework to help employers make proper use of tests and other selection procedures, meet legal and regulatory requirements, and comply with anti-discrimination laws (<https://www.uniformguidelines.com>).

**Box 12. Background-Blind Interviews in the Korean Government**

All interviews in the Open Competitive Examinations (for new entrants at Grades 5, 7, and 9) are conducted as background-blind interviews. The background-blind interview is literally an interview method in which information related to the background of the candidate, such as the major content of the resume (name of schools, grade point average, place of birth, age, ethnicity, religion, family relationship, etc), is not available to the interviewer(s) (Kim, 2017b).

This is intended to eliminate prejudice or bias about the candidate's background. Blind interviews are conducted to select candidates based on their competencies, thoughts, behaviours, and judgment rather than background information. The interview panel questions and evaluates various factors including job-related knowledge and ability to use it, accuracy and logic of presentation, creativity and potential for development, public service motivation, etc.

Source: Ministry of Personnel Management (2019); Kim (2017b).

In the Korean civil service, there are two kinds of civil service entrance examinations. The first is the open competitive examinations for fresh graduates, which aim to provide interested applicants who pass the examinations with the opportunity to hold a government job and fill vacant positions.<sup>12</sup> The second, the competitive recruitment examinations “for experienced professionals,” is intended to recruit candidates for certain positions that cannot be filled through the open competitive examinations because they demand specific qualifications or work experience.<sup>13</sup> Professionals with certain credentials, work experience, and academic degrees are recruited through this process (Ministry of Personnel Management, 2021a). The interview is a very important part of both examinations that influences the candidates' final success or failure.

**Table 4. Interview Methods and Duration for the Open Competitive Examination**

Category		Grade-5 Exam	Grade-7 Exam	Grade-9 Exam
Total interview time		260 minutes	150 minutes	70 minutes
Face-to-face interview time	Group discussion	90	50	-
	Individual presentation	20	15	10
	Individual interview	60	25	30
Interview preparation time (writing a memo or note)	Group discussion	30	10	-
	Individual presentation	60	30	10
			20	20

Source: Cyber National Examination Centre (<https://www.gosi.kr/front/intv/intvPreview.do>).

## 2-6. Testing and Measurement Issues: Reliability and Validity

Organisations that need to distinguish among a large pool of applicants must develop formal, objective methods of screening and selecting applicants. Test reliability and validity are two technical properties of a test that indicate the quality and usefulness of the test. Validation as used in personnel psychology is the establishment of a clear relationship between a selection procedure and the requirements of successful job performance. Consequently, employers need to be familiar with a number of psychometric concepts that pertain to employment testing.

<sup>12</sup> Legal grounds include Article 28-1 of the State Public Officials Act; Chapter 2, Article 1 of the Decree on the Appointment of Public Officials; and Articles 21–25 of the Decree on Public Officials Appointment Examinations.

<sup>13</sup> Legal grounds include Article 28-2 of the State Public Officials Act; Articles 16–22-2 of the Decree on the Appointment of Public Officials; and Articles 26–30 of the Decree on Public Officials Appointment Examinations.

## 1) Reliability

This concept of *reliability* is concerned with the consistency of measurement. In other words, reliability refers to how dependably or consistently a test measures a characteristic. An examination's reliability can be determined through a number of procedures. There are several types of reliability estimates, each influenced by different sources of measurement error. Basically, reliability refers to the consistency or dependability of a measure. Psychologists consider three types of consistency: over time (test-retest reliability), across items (internal consistency), and across different researchers (inter-rater reliability).

First, *test-retest* reliability holds when individuals taking the test score about the same on the test each time it is administered. If a test is reliable, there should be consistency between two sets of scores for the test taken by the same person at different times. A second kind of reliability is internal consistency, which is the consistency of people's responses across the items on a multiple-item measure. In general, all the items on such measures are supposed to reflect the same underlying construct, so people's scores on those items should be correlated with each other. The *internal consistency measure* is reliable is when each examination item is correlated with every other examination item. A split-half correlation is also considered an internal consistency estimate. *Split-half* reliability is derived by correlating one part of the examination with another part of it. If the examination is measuring an aptitude reliably, it should do so throughout the examination. Third, inter-rater reliability is the extent to which different observers are consistent in their judgments. To the extent that each participant does in fact have some level of social skills that can be detected by an attentive observer, different observers' ratings should be highly correlated with each other.

## 2) Validity

Validity is the most important characteristic of measures used in personnel selection. Validity refers to what characteristic the test measures and how well the test measures that characteristic. Validity and reliability are often confused. Reliability is necessary for a test to be considered valid, but it cannot stand alone; just because a test gives consistent results does not mean that it is really measuring what it is intended to measure. Validity tells us how good a test is for a particular situation, while reliability tells us how trustworthy a score on that test will be. Validity tells us if the characteristic being measured by a test is related to job qualifications and requirements. Job-related skills can be evaluated through various methods such as work samples and job knowledge tests, but there is no simple rule of thumb for which or how many tests to use. Much research has been conducted to compare the results of assessment methods with actual job performance, and such research tells us that different applicant assessment tools vary in their ability to predict how well a job applicant will perform once on the job.

Table 5 shows the validity scores for various applicant assessment tools. The "validity score" refers to the ability of an assessment tool to predict how well an applicant will perform on the job — the closer the score is to +1, the stronger the relationship between the assessment tool results and future job performance.

**Table 5. Validity Scores of Selected Assessment Methods**

Assessment Procedure	Validity Score
Work sample tests	0.54
Structured interviews	0.51
General mental ability tests	0.51
Job knowledge tests	0.48
Training and experience (behavioural consistency model)	0.45
Job try-out procedure	0.44
Unstructured interviews	0.38
Biographical data measures	0.35
Reference checks	0.26
Grade point average	0.20
Years of job experience	0.18
Training and experience (point method)	0.11
Years of education	0.10
Graphology (handwriting analysis)	0.02

Source: US Merit Systems Protection Board (2008: 24).

For instance, the most popular assessment — the structured job interview — can be one of the most predictive assessments if it is conducted in a structured style.<sup>14</sup> A good assessment strategy includes assessments with higher validity than those currently being used, and therefore better predict future job performance. For example, written examinations have proven to be better indicators of how candidates will perform once on the job. However, these types of assessments tend to be more expensive and require a certain level of expertise to develop. They also tend to take more time to administer and often place a greater burden on the applicant to complete. Although there are generally many organisations that require the submission of school transcripts in the recruitment process, as shown in Table 5, the validity of the grade point average is not high. In other words, these are not very predictive of job performance, particularly if there is a time gap between education completion and the entry of/into duty (US Merit Systems Protection Board, 2008: 24).

### III. Promotion

Employee promotion means an advancement that concerns both the responsibilities of the job and its benefits. It involves an increase in salary, status, and employee benefits and it may also require more work, which goes along with general increases in responsibility. Unlike in a lateral move, promoting vertically means influencing both the responsibilities and benefits of an employee as well as their status within the organisation's hierarchy. A promotion is viewed as desirable by employees because of the impact a promotion has on pay, authority, responsibility, and the ability to influence broader organisational decision making. Promotions are very important when maintaining a high level of workplace satisfaction, performance, and retention.

#### 3-1. The Concept of Promotion

The internal appointment of public officials refers to the activities of moving people within a government organisation. Internal appointments can be largely divided into vertical transfers (promotion, demotion), horizontal transfers (transfer, dispatch, concurrent appointment), and other

<sup>14</sup> US Merit Systems Protection Board (2008) research indicates that “unstructured interviews” have a lower predictive value.

transfers (leave of absence, position dismissal, suspension, dismissal). The employee progresses to a better job with increased responsibility, more prestige, and higher status. Promotion is thus the vertical movement of an employee within the organisation.

Compared to a new recruitment externally, promotion of existing employees has the following advantages: (1) it costs less to hire; (2) it can reduce selection errors; and (3) it can stabilise the administrative organisation. On the other hand, if vacancies are filled only by internal promotion, this might lead to organisational stagnation and deterioration in the quality of civil servants.

A promotion is the appointment of an employee to a different classification with a higher salary range. Promotion basically means moving from a lower rank to a higher rank.<sup>15</sup> Promotion generally means an increase in the difficulty and responsibility of the job, usually accompanied by an increase in remuneration. In that respect, it is necessary to distinguish it from the step increase within the same grade, in which only the highest level is raised within the same grade. Promotion is widely known as the most important factor in the morale of public officials due to the nature of the public office, where salaries, the material compensation for their work, tend not to be sufficient in many countries.

### **3-2. Types of Promotion**<sup>16</sup>

The most important need of an organisation in the context of the management of human resources is to retain its human talents over a long period of time. One of the best ways for doing this is to promote those who are promotable, and this process is to be undertaken on a regular basis. According to the nature of promotion, promotion can be divided into general promotion and special promotion.

#### **1) General Promotion**

General promotion is mainly made by the promotion review committee or by undertaking an examination. In the promotion process, the appointment authority prepares a list of candidates for promotion considering work performance, experience, and training completion results. Depending on whether an examination is required, promotion can be distinguished into promotion based on a promotion test and promotion without an examination. Previously, for example, promotion of a candidate on Grade-6 to Grade-5 required the candidate to take a promotion test, but since January 1996, the regulations on promotion have been somewhat relaxed so individuals can be promoted after going through a comprehensive review by the promotion review committee if necessary. If deemed necessary for promotion to positions in Grade-6 or lower, the examination for promotion may be conducted concurrently.<sup>17</sup> In the process of preparing a list of candidates for promotion, promotion shall be made based on two main evaluations: a work performance evaluation and a career or experience evaluation, of which the performance evaluation is the more important (Kim, 2014).

#### **2) Special Promotion**

A special promotion is available where a public official who falls under any of the following cases may receive a special promotion or participate on a priority basis in the examination for general promotion: (1) a person who has been exemplary to other public officials in maintaining fairness in the execution of public services and realising an ethically clean public service organisation free from corruption by diligently discharging his or her duties with integrity and a spirit of service; (2) a person who has made a huge contribution to the development of administration with an outstanding

<sup>15</sup> Article 40 (Promotions) of the [Korean] National Public Officials Act: Any promotion shall be made based on work performance rating, career rating, and other actual proof of ability.

<sup>16</sup> This discussion focuses primarily on the Korean promotion system for the reference of the readers.

<sup>17</sup> Article 40 of the State Public Officials Act.

performance of his or her duties; (3) a person who has achieved remarkable actual results in the operation and development of administration, such as savings of the national budget through innovative proposals or implementations, etc; (4) where a person who has rendered particularly distinguished service during his or her tenure of office goes into honourable retirement; and (5) where a person who has rendered particularly distinguished service during his or her tenure of office dies in the course of public service (Article 40-4 of the State Public Officials Act).<sup>18</sup>

### **3-3. Promotion Review and Minimum Years Required for Promotion**

A minimum number of years of service by grade is required for promotion. For a public official to be promoted, he/she shall hold office in the relevant rank for the period specified for each grade. First, the promotion from Grade-3 to the position of the Senior Civil Service (SCS) —formerly Grades 1 and 2 — is to be screened through a review by the promotion committee considering a candidate’s performance evaluation, competence assessment, career or experience evaluations. Second, the promotion from Grade-4 to Grade-3 is conducted by the promotion review committee considering the performance evaluation, competence assessment, and career or experience evaluation. Third, promotion from Grade-9 to Grade-8; from Grade-8 to Grade-7; from Grade-7 to Grade-6; and from Grade-5 to Grade-4; is conducted by the promotion review committee considering the candidates’ ranking on the list of all candidates for promotion.<sup>19</sup> The list of candidates for promotion must include a sufficient number of candidates who qualify for performance evaluation, competence, career, or experience evaluations (Ministry of Personnel Management, 2022b).

Promotion is a method of recruiting for vacancies that elevates a civil servant lower in a hierarchy to a higher rank or position. As a rule, for general promotion, a candidate must meet the required minimum number of years of service at the existing level. Promotion from Grade-9 to Grade-8 requires at least one year and six months; from Grade-8 to Grade-7, as well as from Grade-7 to Grade-6 requires at least two years; from Grade-6 to Grade-5 requires at least three years and six months; from Grade-5 to Grade-4 requires at least four years; and from Grade-4 to Grade-3 requires at least three years.<sup>20</sup> As shown in Table 6, the minimum number of years required for promotion is set, but the actual number of years required for promotion is much longer than the minimum number of years. Among the promotions by rank, the most time-consuming class is that from Grade-6 to Grade-5 (deputy-director level), which is the most difficult bottleneck.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> More detailed information on special promotion is available in Article 35-2 of the Decree on the Appointment of Public Officials of the Republic of Korea.

<sup>19</sup> Promotion from Grade-6 to Grade-5 is a kind of bottleneck for those who entered via the Grade-7 and Grade-9 entrance examinations. Accordingly, the civil service law and its related decree provide a special procedure for this situation. In consultation with the Minister of Personnel Management, a ministry or agency may select any one of the following methods of promotion to Grade-5: promotion by the promotion review committee; or promotion by an open competitive examination for civil servants to Grade-5.

<sup>20</sup> Article 31 of the Decree on Appointment of Public Officials.

<sup>21</sup> There are 9 grades in the Korean civil service. As described earlier, Grade-9 is the lowest level, and Grade-1 is the highest level for career civil servants. Above Grade-1, there are political appointees such as ministers and vice ministers. In such hierarchy, Grade-5 belongs to the middle of the Korean bureaucracy, which is a position corresponding to the Deputy Director. Generally, in the case of public officials who are coming from lower ranks, they can be promoted relatively easily if they work diligently from Grade-9 to Grade-8, Grade-7, and Grade-6, respectively. However, promotion from Grade-6 to Grade-5 is a fork in the road to the managerial positions, so promotion is not easy. Accordingly, the road from Grade-6 to Grade-5 can be called a bottleneck.

**Table 6. Years Required for Promotion in the General Service**

	<b>Minimum Years Required for Promotion (mandated)</b>	<b>Years Taken for Promotion on Average</b>
Grade 2 to Grade 1	-	2.3
Grade 3 to Grade 2	-	4.3
Grade 4 to Grade 3	3.0	5.3
Grade 5 to Grade 4	4.0	6.8
Grade 6 to Grade 5	3.5	10.6
Grade 7 to Grade 6	2.0	8.5
Grade 8 to Grade 7	2.0	4.0
Grade 9 to Grade 8	1.5	2.3

Source: Article 31 of the Decree on Appointment of Public Officials, Republic of Korea.

### 3-4. Listing of Candidates for Promotion

According to Article 30 of the Regulations on the Performance Evaluation, etc, of Public Officials, when preparing a list of candidates for promotion, a maximum of 100 rating points can be awarded. These points are the aggregate scores assigned for performance evaluation and career or experience evaluation combined. The appointing authority prepares a list of candidates for promotion, with the reflection rates of the points assigned for performance evaluation and career or experience rating set as 80 and 20 per cent, respectively. The head of each agency has a discretionary authority, such that the reflection rate of the points assigned for performance evaluation can be increased up to 95 per cent, which would automatically decrease the reflection rate of the points assigned for career or experience evaluation to 5 per cent. A candidate's total rating points among other candidates in the list of candidates for promotion may be awarded with a maximum of five points added to his/her aggregate score awarded to him or her. In sum, the list of candidates for promotion is determined by the following formula: performance evaluation (80–95 per cent) plus career or experience evaluation (5–20 per cent) plus additional points (up to 5 points). This means that a candidate's performance evaluation is the most critical factor in one's promotion (Kim, 2014).

Prior to promotion, a list of candidates for promotion is drawn up. At this time, how well the candidates for promotion are drawn up based on the performance management system will be the yardstick that can determine a reasonable advancement. The list of candidates for promotion is a list in which the rank of candidates for promotion is recorded according to a certain standard. The list of candidates for promotion is compiled by summing up each evaluation point according to the ratio of work performance evaluation points, career or experience evaluation points, and additional evaluation points (optional).

Thus, the promotion equation is as follows, and shown in Table 7:

*Promotion = performance appraisal (80–95%) + career evaluation (5–20%) + additional points*

**Table 7. Elements of the list of promotion points and the percentage of points awarded**

<b>Listing Factors</b>	<b>Point Dividend Ratio</b>
Performance Appraisal	80–95%
Career Evaluation (Job Experience)	5–20%
Additional Points	5 percentage points or less

Source: Article 30 of the Regulations on the Performance Evaluation, etc, of Public Officials, Republic of Korea.

Regarding the career or experience evaluation, the term career refers to an individual's job or job experience, and experience refers to an individual's professional life and career path. The career



path refers to an individual's specific area of expertise or occupation, as well as to the length of service. In Korea's public service system, career or experience evaluation is the process of evaluating the careers of individual public officials with such criteria as service period. The reason for evaluating a civil servant's career based on the length of service is, first to evaluate how long she/he has accumulated experience in the relevant field for possible promotion; and second, the evaluation results on experience and length of service are necessary elements to determine the level of remuneration (Kim, 2014).

When preparing the list of candidates for promotion, additional points may be granted based on the following criteria: (1) possession of job-related qualifications (job-related private qualifications recognised by the government); (2) experience of working in specific positions (self-audit, grievance handling, personnel exchange between administrative agencies, professional positions in "heavy duty" departments); (3) special area (work experience in remote areas and/or islands and dangerous locations); (4) work innovation or reform introduced during the period subject to the performance evaluation (excellent performers in dealing with people, excellent performers in government tasks and business innovation); and (5) other job characteristics and organisational contributions, etc. In consideration of the above, additional points are voluntarily granted for each category up to a maximum of 5 points across all categories.<sup>22</sup>

The minister under his/her jurisdiction sets and operates the additional point standards autonomously according to the actual situation of the organisation, but, except in special cases, may always ensure that the reflection ratio is not excessively biased for specific types of additional points. Because of this setting, the items, or criteria for granting additional points change, the contents are disclosed to the public officials under their jurisdiction in advance and their opinions are collected.

A list of candidates for promotion is prepared based on the overall points calculated, and the Promotion Review Committee reviews, which selects the successful candidates. Candidates for promotion are screened from top to bottom as they appear on the list. Hence, the results of the performance evaluation largely affect the prospects for promotion. The final points are calculated by adding the work performance evaluation and the career or experience scores, as well as additional points, if any (Ministry of Personnel Management, 2021b: 31).

Therefore, it can be said that the most important factor in preparing the list of candidates for promotion is the result of the performance evaluation, which provides evidence of a meritocratic process in the preparation of the list of candidates for promotion. In the past, when the seniority culture was entrenched, the career or experience evaluation scores weighted more than the job performance evaluation scores, but it can now be confirmed that the situation has been largely reversed.

### **3-5. Demotion**

Demotion refers to moving to a lower rank as opposed to being promoted. If the fixed number of personnel is exceeded because a position is abolished or changed to a lower position during organisational restructuring, changes in the fixed number of personnel, budgetary reductions, etc, or if the person concerned consents thereto, the appointment authority may demote any public official under his or her jurisdiction.<sup>23</sup> Any public official who is demoted by his or her consent may be appointed on a priority basis, taking into consideration his or her career backgrounds, the unique circumstances facing the government organisation concerned in terms of human resources, etc.

<sup>22</sup> Article 27 of the Regulations on the Performance Evaluation, etc of Public Officials.

<sup>23</sup> Article 73-4 of the State Public Officials Act.

Demotion is also a form of disciplinary action against civil servants. Where a public official is subject to demotion as a “disciplinary action,” his or her class shall be lowered by one grade, and he or she shall hold his or her status as a public official, but he or she shall be barred from performing his or her duties for three months and his or her pay shall be reduced by 100 percent during such period.<sup>24</sup>

#### **IV. Diversity Management**

Equal opportunity must be assured in the recruitment and selection process. Equal opportunity refers to the equality of access to jobs, promotions, and other opportunities in corporations, associations, the public sector, and non-profit organisations. The concept of equal employment opportunities is based on laws and regulations within a country that guarantee that no one is discriminated against for any reason in the process of searching for a job. A variety of laws prohibit employment discrimination based on age, gender, race, disability, national origin, pregnancy, and religion.

The US Civil Rights Act of 1964 established that employment decisions based on race, colour, religion, sex, or national origin are discriminatory and illegal. Furthermore, the US Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) law requires an employer to post notices describing the federal laws prohibiting job discrimination based on race, colour, sex, national origin, religion, age, equal pay, disability, and genetic information (US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2020). Equal employment opportunity means freedom from discrimination based on social background such as race, colour, sex, national origin, religion, age, or disability. Affirmative action plans define an employer’s standard for proactively recruiting, hiring, and promoting women, minorities, and disabled individuals. Affirmative action is also deemed a moral and social obligation to remedy historical wrongs and eliminate the present effects of past discrimination and may include numerical measures with the intent of increasing the representation of minorities.

Affirmative action opens doors in the organisation, while managing diversity opens the culture and the system. Diversity management is an evolution beyond affirmative action and its focus is on race and gender. Managing diversity does not replace affirmative action; rather, it builds on the critical foundation laid by workplace equity programmes. Diversity initiatives are goals devised to measure acceptance of minorities by embracing cultural differences within the workplace. The management of diversity expounds upon experience and establishes the business case for diversity that is closely aligned with an employer’s organisational goals. Managing diversity is behavioural, aimed at changing the organisational culture, and developing skills and policies that get the best from everyone.

The Ministry of Personnel Management of the Republic of Korea has an organisation unit in charge of diversity management titled “the Balanced Personnel Division” to promote equal employment opportunities and increase diversity.<sup>25</sup> This division publishes “an annual report on balanced personnel management” showing the legal basis for balanced personnel, a balanced personnel policy including legal tools such as a quota system (gender equality target system: 30 per cent), a balanced personnel system, and detailed personnel statistics of the government workforce in terms of gender equality, disabled people, local talented people. It has been argued, for a long

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<sup>24</sup> (Article 80 of the State Public Officials Act; Ministry of Personnel Management, 2022b).

<sup>25</sup> Article 26-6 (Prohibition of Discrimination) of the [Korean] National Public Officials Act: When appointing a public official under his or her control, the head of a State agency shall not discriminate on the grounds of gender, religion, social status, etc., without reasonable grounds. In addition, Article 35 (Principle of Equality) of the [Korean] National Public Officials Act: Any examination for appointment through open competition shall be open equally to all citizens having equal qualifications, and the date and venue of the examination shall be decided by taking into consideration the convenience of the applicants therefor.

time, that civil servants who majored in science and technology were disadvantaged in personnel management such as promotion, when compared to civil servants, who majored in the humanities and social sciences. Therefore, the Balanced Personnel Division of the Ministry of Personnel Management is monitoring the career development or transfer process of civil servants, who majored in science and technology at universities, so that they are not disadvantaged in HRM (Ministry of Personnel Management, 2021d).

### **Box 13. Diversity Management in the Korean Government**

#### **1. Recruitment Quota for Gender Equality**

In 1996, the Korean Government introduced the “Recruitment Quota for Women Civil Servants” to encourage women to seek jobs in government offices and thereby realise gender equality in the civil service. Under this system, women were proactively recruited until the number of new employees met the annual quota. As women’s participation in the job market grew, the government changed the system to the “Recruitment Quota for Gender Equality” in 2003 by setting quotas for both genders. The revised system set the quotas for both genders at 30 per cent for the open competitive recruitment examinations for Grades 5, 7, and 9. For example, there is a shortage of male teachers in elementary and secondary schools, so more male teachers are needed. In addition, there was a shortage of female civil servants in law enforcement agencies, so there was a need to fill positions with female civil servants. Thus, a gender equality quota became necessary.

#### **2. Recruitment of People with Disabilities**

In 1989, a separate recruitment system for people with disabilities was introduced to provide more government job opportunities to those who had been underrepresented in the civil service. A year later in 1990, a mandatory employment scheme was adopted and employment of people with disabilities became compulsory across all government ministries in 2000. Beginning from 2008, certain competitive examinations for experienced professionals have been open exclusively to people with severe disabilities. These examinations complement the separate recruitment scheme that had mostly hired people with minor disabilities and aim to help those with severe disabilities secure government jobs and become self-reliant.

Applicants with physical disabilities are provided with a wide range of assistance during written examinations and interviews depending on the type and severity of their disability, including test materials in large font or in braille format, wheelchair accessible desks, computers with voice assistance, writing assistance, and extended test times. Under the separate recruitment of people with disabilities scheme, examinations are administered separately for people with disabilities to meet a certain quota hired through open competitive examinations. Every year, the government employs applicants with disabilities at the rate of the “mandatory employment ratio,” which is 3.6 per cent of total employees (as of 2022).

#### **3. Recruitment of Talented People in the Regions**

Seoul is the capital of Korea, and as such it is home to many educational institutions such as universities. However, the number of educational institutions is insufficient in the provinces and the educational environment is relatively inadequate compared to Seoul. Considering this, a system is in place that gives preference to local people with recognised ability. The recruitment system for regional and local talented candidates aims to enhance local representation among civil servants and realise the balanced development of the whole country. A recruitment system based on the recommendation of regional talented candidates has been in place since 2005 as an internship-based programme. Furthermore, recruitment quotas for regional talented candidates were introduced into open competitive examinations, beginning in 2007, enabling graduates of local schools to join the civil service. The recruitment process is on-going until the number of new recruits meets the specified quota under the recruitment quota system for regional candidates. The purpose of this scheme is to increase opportunities for regional candidates to secure government jobs. In 2015, the scheme was introduced as part of the open competitive examinations for Grade-5 and was further incorporated into the open competitive examinations for Grade-7.

#### **4. Separate Recruitment of Low-Income People**

The government introduced a separate recruitment scheme for low-income people to the open competitive recruitment examinations for Grade-9 to support the economic self-reliance of low-income groups and promote social integration. Under this scheme, more than 2 per cent of the planned recruits of Grade-9 are earmarked for low-income individuals. Previously, the scheme was only applicable to social welfare benefits’ recipients under the National Basic Living Security Act. However, from 2012, it also covers those who receive state assistance under the Single Parent Family Support Act.

*Source: Ministry of Personnel Management (2021a, 2021d).*

## V. Final Remarks

Government entities need to attract competent applicants for their existing or future staffing needs. Recruitment is the process of locating qualified candidates for the positions. Recruitment strategies should be planned, in advance of the organisation's needs. For some positions, depending on the qualifications and experience needed, government organisations may prefer to seek applicants from the external labour market. After applicants submit their job applications, the organisation must use job-related criteria to screen the applicants' qualifications for the positions. Those who do not meet the initial criteria are eliminated from consideration. A variety of selection techniques is available for organisations to use, and to help assess applicants' knowledge and skill levels or potential for success. Written examinations, aptitude tests, the rating of experience and training, competency assessment centres, and structured interviews are some of the techniques for screening applicants. Since the selection techniques may vary depending on the history, tradition, and context of each country, it would be difficult to emphasise only one method.

Having said that, an important value to seek and maintain in the recruitment and selection process is fairness. Recruitment and selection should be appropriate and fair for all qualified examinees irrespective of race, religion, gender, or social background. There should be no irregularities in recruitment and selection. In that context, fair procedures are stipulated in the civil service law and various regulations in many countries. The recruitment and selection process should not end with the hiring and promotion of employees. Government organisations should record their recruitment and selection procedures so they can be evaluated. The evaluation should identify the successes and failures at each step in the recruitment process so that modifications can be made if necessary.

In 1978, for example, the U.S. Civil Service Commission, the Department of Labour, the Department of Justice, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission jointly adopted the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures to establish uniform standards for employers for selection procedures and to address the issues of validation, record-keeping requirements, and adverse impact.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the Korean National Public Officials Act and the Decrees on Appointment of Public Officials clearly stipulate fair recruitment and selection procedures. Moreover, the Ministry of Personnel Management published the Guidebook for Fair Recruitment and Selection and distributed it to all government and public agencies in 2019 (Ministry of Personnel Management, 2019).

Public organisations must be vigilant that their recruitment and selection procedures do not violate equal employment opportunity laws. The central personnel authority of each country must have organisational capacities to fairly implement recruitment, selection, promotion, and other HRM practices. In Korea, the Human Resources Recruitment Bureau in the Ministry of Personnel Management has five divisions: Human Resources Policy Division; Open Recruitment Division I; Open Recruitment Division II; Career Recruitment Division; and Examination Management Division.<sup>27</sup> The National Examination Centre (NEC) of the Ministry of Personnel Management develops and scores civil service examination questions. When selecting civil service examination questions from the examination question bank, experts in each field choose and decide the examination questions while staying at the NEC for a few days. They reside in the NEC until the end of the examination period to ensure that no examination questions are leaked.

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<sup>26</sup> In the United States, the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures were published in 1978 to help employers make equitable employment decisions, such as for hiring and selection, retention, and test use, in accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.mpm.go.kr/english/about/organisationalChart/>

Future recruitment, selection, and promotion strategies should be based on the procedures that attract the most qualified applicants and the screening techniques that have been rated as best predictors of successful on-the-job performance. Therefore, recruitment, selection, and promotion should not be separated from but rather managed in close connection with other functions of human resource management. For example, training and development programmes, compensation systems, work schedules, and performance management systems are also important and must be integrated with one another. Accordingly, strategic human resource management (SHRM) is necessary, providing a framework linking HRM and HRD practices to long-term business goals and outcomes (Rees and Smith, 2021). Each country is promoting various innovations for administrative development. Organisational restructuring, fiscal and budget reform, digital transformation using artificial intelligence and ICT, and deregulation are some initiatives being promoted. However, in the field of personnel administration, it is necessary to continuously promote civil service reform (Kim, 2010). The development of the public personnel system takes trial and error and time, and the system cannot be improved overnight. Therefore, continuous improvement is necessary for the development of the public personnel system.

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