

# Abstract of NPA Annual Report FY2021

June 2022

National Personnel Authority

## Major Trends in Personnel Administration in FY2021

### Securing and Developing Human Resources

- Efforts to reach out to candidates such as by increasing opportunities via online events
- Creating a new “Digital” division in recruitment examinations
- Expanding the scope where each ministry can appoint fixed-term employees without the NPA’s prior approval
- Advancing PR campaigns to increase female candidates in public service
- Creating new training courses to improve management capacity for division directors

### Supporting Work-Life Balance through Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Parenting

- In order to encourage male employees’ parenting of their children, NPA submitted its opinion to amend the law to relax limit on the number of times which childcare leave can be taken; and such amendment to the law was enacted
- Creating a new leave for fertility treatment (Childbirth support leave)
- Creating a new leave and improving childcare leave for part-time employees

### Creating a Better Working Environment

- Grasping the situation in ministries where employees are ordered to work overtime exceeding the upper limits of overtime hours during FY2020, and giving necessary instructions to rectify such situations
- Establishing a study group on the working hours system adapting to flexible work styles such as telework
- Preparing for providing service via online of counseling offices for mental health care

### Raising Mandatory Retirement Age and Promoting HRM based on Merit and Performance

- Instituting and amending NPA rules for raising mandatory retirement age in a phased manner
- Amending NPA rules to reflect the result of personnel evaluation more appropriately in appointment and remuneration following the change in the number of grade ranks for personnel evaluation

### Ensuring Proper Remuneration for Public Employees

- Recommending revision of the remuneration level in accordance with the basic principle of balancing working conditions with those in the private sector, and the Amendment on Remuneration Act was enacted following the recommendation
- Conducting survey on retirement allowances in private companies, making comparison between them and those of government employees and reporting the survey results and opinion on retirement allowances

### Efforts related to Personnel Administration in Global Society

- Holding a seminar titled “Diversity and Inclusion – Realizing a Work Style that Maximizes Staff’s Capabilities” inviting an Ambassador and an executive of a private corporation
- Holding an international symposium on the personnel administration of Japan-China-Korea and a joint training program for young/middle-aged officials of the three countries

## Activities of the National Public Employee Ethics Board

### Cultivating Employees’ Ethics Awareness

Creating and distributing training materials, and observing ethics awareness month

### Creating Ethical Organizational Culture

Making the consultation/reporting counters widely known

### Responding Strictly and Promptly to Violation of the Ethics Act and Code

Appropriately implementing investigative and disciplinary procedures regarding violations of the Ethics Act and Code

## Issues on Recruitment Examinations and Initiatives for Securing Human Resources

### Implementation Status of Recruitment Examinations

#### Examination for Comprehensive Service

##### *Applicants*

- Number of applicants is declining as a whole.
- By academic background, “Graduate school” and “Bachelors and college dropouts” are significantly decreasing.
- Applicants in “Liberal Arts” division are steadily increasing.

##### *Successful Candidates*

- Ratio of female successful candidates is about 30 percent.
- Ratio of junior-year successful candidates is rising in “Liberal Arts” division.

##### *Applicants Appointed*

- Percentage of applicants appointed in “Liberal Arts” division is particularly on an upward trend.
- Ratio of applicants with a humanities major is rising among appointees in the clerical field.

#### Examination for General Service (University Graduates)

##### *Applicants*

- Number of applicants is declining as a whole.
- By academic background, “Graduate school” and “Bachelors and college dropouts” are significantly decreasing.

##### *Successful Candidates*

- Ratio of female successful candidates is about 40 percent.

#### Survey of Newly Recruited Comprehensive Service Employees

- About half of them began considering to apply for a national public employee as their career choice by their sophomore year.
- About 20 percent of them are eyeing the possibility of switching career at an earlier stage.
- Ratio of respondents rises to a record high considering that reducing overtime is necessary to secure human resources.

### Change in Attitude of Private Companies and University Students

#### Trend in Private Companies and Students

- Private companies are starting their recruitment activities much earlier.
- The season for students to receive a pre-informal job offer from companies is also getting earlier.

#### Perceptions and Opinions of Universities and Ministries

##### *Universities’ Stakeholders*

- While local governments are reducing the burden for students preparing for recruitment examinations, national government still places a heavier burden on students preparing for its recruitment examinations.
- Students have strong aversion to working long hours and getting transferred.

##### *Ministries’ Stakeholders*

- Many ministries are demanding less burden for students to prepare for recruitment examinations.
- Date should be moved forward for spring exam for comprehensive service.
- Number of successful candidates should be expanded for “Liberal Arts” division which junior-year students can apply for.

### Survey of Students who Have Finished Job Hunting

- Top impressions of national public employees are that “they are doing meaningful work for people” and “their work has a large impact on the country”.
- Highest percentage of respondents raise the heavy burden of study and preparation for recruitment examinations as a reason for not applying for a national public employee position.
  - Anxiety over work environment such as long working hours follows.
- Many of them have received a pre-informal job offer from their first-choice employer other than government ministries prior to the announcement of final passage of recruitment examination for national public employees.

## Recruitment Examinations Review NPA should Address

- As a measure to increase candidates for national public employees, NPA is considering a modality of recruitment examination which is easier for students to challenge.
- For specific measures with regard to recruitment examination review, refer to the following.

### Measures whose Direction to be Indicated during FY2022

- **Moving forward the date of the spring exam for comprehensive service**

Exam date should be moved forward so that interviews of successful candidates by individual ministry, which take place after the announcement of successful candidates for comprehensive-service spring exam, can be conducted during the same period as the start date on which private companies provide students with a pre-informal job offer.

- **Expanding the opportunity for applicants of “Liberal Arts” division**

Exam locations should be increased so that it is easier for applicants to take the examination.

- **Organizing examination divisions so that it is easier for humanities students to take an exam**

Examination divisions should be reviewed so that students with a humanities major can take an examination in their own area of specialty.

- **Extending effective period of passage of exam**

Effective period of passage of recruitment examinations should be extended so that a candidate can take an interview by individual ministry even after they have worked for private companies or attended to a PhD course after passing the recruitment examination.

### Other measures to be Reviewed

- **Creating new examination divisions in the Examination for General Service (University Graduates)**

While keeping in mind the necessity to observe the demonstrated abilities, new exam divisions without a specialized ability test should be created to offer more chances for applicants who are also applying for local governments.

- **Considering a basic ability test which is easier to deal with**

While keeping in mind the basic qualities required for national public employees, a new basic ability test which is easier to address than the current one should be considered.

- **Reducing the burden in the second-stage exam in the comprehensive-service spring exam (clerical field)**

The number of items in the specialized ability test (essay-based test) should be reduced so that applicants can take the examination in their own area of specialty.

- **Considering exam questions corresponding to a digital society**

Exam questions on the field of information science should be considered so that applicants can be assessed in a fairer way regardless of whether they are from a liberal arts course or from a science course

- **Lowering the minimum age to apply for recruitment examination**

The minimum age to apply for recruitment examinations should be lowered so that students can apply for the exam earlier.

- **Reviewing applicant eligibility for the Examination for Comprehensive Service (Graduate Students)**

Applicant eligibility should be reviewed for the Examination for Comprehensive Service (Graduate Students) so that first-year students in master's degree course can apply for the examination.

In order to stop and reverse the declining trend of applicants for recruitment examinations, a work style reform should be pressed forward in the government across-the-board, comprehensive approaches should be taken so that young employees can be motivated and public service can become more attractive workplace to students.