

Merit-based recruitment and selection –i.e. positions open to all candidates with required qualifications, and with safeguard mechanisms in place against arbitrariness during the hiring process – are critical to guarantee an adequate delivery of public services. When merit becomes systemic, administrations are more likely to achieve better results. While there are several ways to promote merit in different HRM processes, doing so during recruitment and selection is essential because it is the safest way of systematically hiring people with skills and competencies consistent with the positions to be filled.

In 66% of LAC countries, competitive examination is used. In some of them (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica), recruitment and selection are managed centrally by the HRM governing body, and in others (Brazil, Mexico, Peru and also in Chile), it is delegated to the ministries/agencies. This practice is most common in the OECD (only 22% of OECD countries manage recruitment and selection centrally including Belgium, France, Israel and Spain). In El Salvador, Jamaica and Uruguay, candidates apply directly to a specific post.

In LAC countries, merit-based recruitment at the entry-level is mainly guaranteed through publishing all vacancies (100% of respondent countries), structured interviews (83%) and standardized exams (83%). Only Colombia, Jamaica and Mexico reported using assessment center methodologies (27%), and Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Mexico reported using private sector firms (45%). OECD countries, meanwhile, also tend to publish all vacancies (86%) and use standardized exams (69%) and structured interviews (64%) as their main recruitment practices. Assessment center methodologies are more widespread than in LAC though (44%), but the use of private sector firms is less common (28%). Recruitment practices have been gaining more importance in the last few years, to attract and promote applications from more and better candidates. In 66% of the countries, most or all vacancies are open to external recruitment. Additionally, 73% reported that recruitment was included in the HRM strategic planning (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, Uruguay). Among OECD countries, 72% include recruitment as part of strategic planning.

Finally, while the previous analysis focused on permanent civil servants, there are other groups of employees in the central public administration with different HRM rules. Some LAC countries tend to have a relatively high share of non-permanent staff. For example, in Chile they represent 57% of the civil service, in Peru 40% and in Argentina 34%. In OECD countries, in Israel and Slovenia non-permanent staff represent a higher share of public employment compared to permanent civil servants (in most OECD countries they do not exceed 10%). This

data signals the importance for governments to focus on the effective implementation of merit-based rules for recruitment and selection of non-permanent staff as well.

Methodology and definitions

LAC data refer to 2018 and were collected through the 2018 IDB-OED Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management. The survey was completed by 11 LAC countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay). Data for OECD countries are for 36 respondent countries, refer to 2016 and were collected through the 2016 Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management. Respondents were predominately senior officials from ministries/agencies with responsibilities for public employment/management of the civil service. Their main focus was HRM practice and institutions in central public administration at the federal/national government level.

Civil servants are considered those public employees covered under a specific public legal framework or other specific provisions. For the purposes of this survey, it is assumed that civil servants are the dominant public employee profile.

Further reading

- Iacoviello, M. and L. Strazza (2014), “Diagnostic of the Civil Service in Latin America”, in J.C. Cortázar, M. Lafuente and M. Sanginés (eds), *Serving Citizens: A Decade of Civil Service Reforms in Latin America (2004-2013)*, Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, DC. <https://publications.iadb.org/en/serving-citizens-decade-civil-service-reforms-latin-america-2004-13>
- OECD (2016), *Engaging Public Employees for a High-Performing Civil Service*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264267190-en>.

Figure notes

- 6.5. Through law 1960 of 2019 Colombia reformed the public employment regime allowing the participation of career civil servants in closed employment competitions for promotion. The new law also allows horizontal mobility on the basis of performance evaluation results and skills development.
- 6.6. (Merit-based recruitment at the entry level, 2018), 6.7 (Recruitment linked to strategic human resource planning, 2018), 6.8 (Distribution of employees according to contract duration, 2018) can be found online in Annex F.

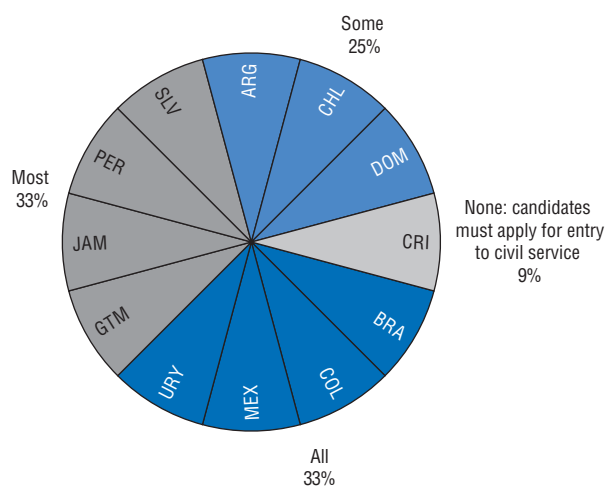
6.4. Type of recruitment process for civil service, 2018

Country	Type of application			Institution that manages the competitive entrance examination	
	Competitive entrance examination	Direct application to a specific post	Depending on the post	Centrally	Delegated to each ministry/ organization
Argentina	●	○	○	●	○
Brazil	●	○	○	○	●
Chile	●	●	●	●	●
Colombia	●	○	○	●	○
Costa Rica	●	●	○	●	○
Dominican Republic	●	○	○	○	●
El Salvador	○	●	○	○	○
Guatemala	○	○	●	○	○
Jamaica	○	●	○	○	○
Mexico	●	○	○	○	●
Peru	●	○	○	○	●
Uruguay	○	●	○	○	○
LAC total					
● Yes	8	5	2	4	5
○ No	4	7	10	8	7
OECD total					
● Yes	21	15	9	13	13
○ No	15	21	27	23	23

Source: OECD/IDB (2018) Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management in Central/Federal Governments of Latin American and Caribbean Countries, OECD (2016) Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management.

StatLink  <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934092246>

6.5. Proportion of vacancies that are published and open to external recruitment, 2018



StatLink  <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934092265>



From:

Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2020

Access the complete publication at:

<https://doi.org/10.1787/13130fbb-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2020), "Recruitment and selection", in *Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2020*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9001c2ad-en>

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