

THE TRAINING OF CIVIL SERVANTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

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Introduction

1. This paper is about the training of civil servant - that is, officials who work for central government departments - in the United Kingdom. It concentrates on training which takes place after recruitment to the Service, and does not describe the role of the education system in preparing young people for careers in government. Neither does it describe the facilities available in the United Kingdom for potential recruits to obtain relevant specialised academic or professional qualifications before entering the Civil Service, although this is an important part of the development of many civil servants, particularly scientists, engineers and accountants.

2. In the United Kingdom, "civil servants" are the direct civilian employees of central government, and the term does not include employees of local government, teachers, university staff, the police, the staff of National Health Service or those in nationalised industries such as the railways, the Post Office or telecommunications. Most central government departments are concerned with an aspect of the affairs of all parts of the United Kingdom, ie England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but the last named has its own "civil service" which is in charge of the delivery of certain local services. This paper is not concerned with the training of members of that Service, although there are strong similarities to the trends described here, and close working contacts are maintained.

3. The UK Civil Service constitutes 2.3% of the working population. It numbers about 600,000, of whom well over 100,000 are industrials working, for example, in Ministry of Defence factories or the Royal Mint. The non-industrial Civil Service - the group which are most commonly thought of as "civil servants" - amounts to about half a million. These include various specialist and professional groups - eg scientists, engineers, computer specialists, medical advisers, Inspectors of Schools, accountants, economists and statisticians. They

also include a large group (known as the "Administration Group"), which carries out a wide range of administrative tasks, including the collection of revenue and the distribution of payments to those requiring financial support.

4. The top seven grades in the Civil Service are common to all occupational groups, and are known as "The Open Structure". Below this level, the various specialist and professional hierarchies have different grade titles, but those in the Administration Group are set out in the chart attached at Appendix A. There are no longer rigid horizontal or vertical divisions in the UK Civil Service. There is a continuous promotion ladder from the lowest to the highest levels, with no barriers based, for instance, on educational background or method of entry. Some years ago, there was a distinction between the "administrative class" (a small number who had entered the Service with a good honors degree) and the larger "executive class", but this is no longer the case.

5. Most non-industrial civil servants are employed in clerical grades; many of these work in local offices of the Department of Health and Social Security, or in local job centres or such staff, and many leave to work in other sectors of the economy. Despite this, the Civil Service is usually managed on the basis that it is a "career for life" for its employees, and it is unusual (although not unknown) for recruits to enter the Service in mid-career at any of the top six grades.

6. Civil servants are employees of a particular government department (eg the Ministry of Defence, the Department of Education and Science or the Home Office) and most spend all of their career in that one department. Indeed, many — even at quite senior grades — have very little contact with the central department which is concerned with policy on management and personnel issues, ie the Management and Personnel Office of the Cabinet Office. Each department is to a considerable extent independent, and it is best to think of them as a loose federation of organizations, although they are bound by some common features and all civil servants share common terms of employment, and have their pay determined centrally. The amount of similarity between departments should not be exaggerated: the work done by civil servants is very diverse, and a clerk in a local social security office, for example, may feel that he or she has very little in common with, say, a person who designs warships for the Ministry of Defence.

Training: General Picture

7. In 1983/84 (the latest year for which complete statistics are available), the UK Civil Service spent £185 million on training. About half of that amount represents the salary costs of students' absences from their normal posts to attend training courses; the rest is the direct cost of providing the training required, or of procuring it from elsewhere. The total spent on training is around 4.7% of total salary costs, which is about the same proportion as other "good employers" in the UK. But this is not a reason for complacency: some recent well-publicised reports have been highly critical about the amount of training undertaken by British industry, and the Civil Service also has sought increase the quantity and relevance of its training in certain categories, as is described later in this paper.

8. In 1983-84, 1.4 million trainee days were provided, in a total of 24,000 courses. Of these:

- 80% were vocational (ie directly job-related), an example being the instruction of civil servants who administer Value Added Tax in the detailed regulations governing that tax;
- 8% were induction, ie instial training for recruits about their department and its work;
- 12% were more general management or development training.

300,000 out of 500,000 non-industrial civil servants had some training in that year. Most of this took the form of short, intensive courses: the average course length was 4.5 days.

9. A very large proportion of Civil Service training - 75% - is provided by individual departments for their own staff. 20% is bought by departments from outside providers, such as universities or business schools; the remaining 5% is provided by the Civil Service College. More is said about that College later in this paper, but it is worth noting at this point that, although it provides a small fraction of Civil Service training, it has a very important role in the development of more senior staff, and in opportunities which enables civil servants to learn together with colleagues from other departments.

Training Within Departments

10. Government departments vary considerably in size, and the larger of them, such as the Ministry of Defence and the Department of the Environment - have several training centres. In addition, all departments have programmes of induction training for newly-recruited

staff. Some have also developed self-instruction material and other training packages to enable their staff to cope with new policy directives or changes in regulations. Appendix B gives details of some of the wide range of courses provided for civilian staff - particularly middle managers - in the Ministry of Defence, the largest UK government department. Some of the training centres within a large department such as this are comparable in size and scope with many outside institutions offering management training. And the courses described in Appendix B are by no means all of the training opportunities available within the Ministry of Defence: there is, for example, a quite separate school of finance training, operated in conjunction with the Royal Army Pay Corps, which provides intensive courses of professional training for accountants, in addition to more general finance training for general managers.

11. Smaller departments do not, of course, have resources to match those of the Ministry of Defence, or of HM Customs and Excise which has some of the most sophisticated training equipment in the country. Smaller departments have to share training resources, and rely more heavily on the Civil Service College, although that College also has an important role to play for staff in large departments.

12. A policy division ("Training Division") within the Management and Personnel Office of the Cabinet Office has a central policy and co-ordination role for training throughout the Civil Service. Its small number of staff include a network of "training liaison officers", who are specially selected from departments for their training experience and knowledge, and who help to disseminate best training practice throughout the Service and to promote high standards and cost-effective management of training. The function of Training Division is very much an advisory one - it does not have the power to authorise or veto expenditure by individual government departments on training.

The Civil Service College

13. It has already been stated that individual government departments provide by far the largest part of that training which their staff receive. There is, however, a central training institution - the Civil Service College - which was founded in 1969 as a part of what was then called the "Civil Service Department". The College aims to improve the work performance of civil servants and to develop their potential to fill other and more senior posts in the Service by providing that training in management, policy and administrative studies which is best

provided centrally within the Civil Service. College students come from a wide range of grades and backgrounds in the Civil Service (the College also welcomes students from other parts of the public sector and from private industry to many of its courses), but the main emphasis is on those expected to go further in their careers and those who are already in senior posts. College training is concerned not only to convey information and to teach skills but also to provide opportunities for civil servants to exchange ideas and experiences to mutual benefit with colleagues from other departments, other organizations and other countries.

14. This general description of the College's function can be spelled out in greater detail by listing eight supporting aims:

- i. To provide high quality, relevant training in subjects which are needed across all or most departments;
- ii. To provide training to promote the initiatives of the central departments for improving Civil Service management;
- iii. To provide specialist training which cannot be adequately obtained elsewhere and to improve understanding and co-operation amongst administrators and specialist and professional groups in the Civil Service;
- iv. To maintain the relevance of College training and improve Civil Service effectiveness and efficiency by providing advisory and consultancy services to departments on training matters and by conducting research projects;
- v. To promote better understanding within the Civil Service of the work of colleagues in the public and private sectors and in other developed countries;
- vi. To provide a senior forum for the inter-departmental and wider discussion of current policy on management issues;
- vii. To provide training for departmental trainers and to support the work of Cabinet Office (MOP) Training Division in promoting modern training methods;
- viii. To make maximum cost-effective use of the College's resources and to ensure that expenditure is covered by charge for College services.

15. The College is divided into four "Directorates", which are broadly similar to departments in universities or colleges. These are as follows:

- i. "Financial Management, Economics and Statistics": including training in accountancy and internal audit; economics; statistics and operational research.

ii. "Management Studies": including training in management; personnel management; industrial relations; and training for departmental trainers.

iii. "Policy and Administration Studies": including training in public administration; social policy; European reciprocal training (ie training for civil servants from other European countries in exchange for similar training opportunities in Europe for British Civil servants); initial training for the "Fast-Stream", ie the small number of honours graduates who enter the Service through a special open competition.

iv. "Systems": including training in information technology; computer systems; organization and methods.

16. The College organization is headed by the College Principal (at Grade 3 - Under Secretary). He is supported by the Directors of the four teaching Directorates listed above, a College Secretary, who is responsible for administration and finance, and a Policy Planning Manager who assists with planning and marketing. These officials make up the "College Management Group". In addition, the College is answerable to a College Advisory Council, chaired by the Head of the Home Civil Service, and consisting of senior civil servants (including several Permanent Secretaries) and distinguished people with experience of training work in the private sector and other organizations. The College has two centres: a non-residential centre in central London, and a residential centre (250 beds) at Sunningdale, near Ascot in Berkshire (about an hour's journey by car or rail from London). Some courses are also run in other parts of Britain, either on departments' premises or in hired accommodation.

17. The College is one of the largest providers of short courses in Europe. In the financial year 1984/85, there were 1,200 courses (350 different titles); 4,700 course days; and 78,000 student days. The average course length was just under four days. The number of courses, students and student days have increased in each of the last four years; the number of students and courses were all-time records in 1984/85. This high output has been achieved with fewer staff.

18. The staff of the College total 208, of which over 90 are teaching staff. Most of these are career civil servants who come to the College on loan from their home departments, after special selection, for 3 to 5 years. Others, however, come on contract from universities, polytechnics or industry.

19. Departments are not "tied" to the College in any way: they are free to look elsewhere for training, and the College is subject to the discipline of requiring to persuade "customer" departments that its courses offer good value for money. This "customer-contractor" relationship is given added point by the fact that fees are charged to departments for attendance by civil servants on College courses. From April 1986 the College will have to meet almost all its expenditure by charges to Departments, although certain of the European reciprocal courses will continue to be funded centrally as they are part of an international obligation.

20. As will be seen from the sections which follow, recent years have seen added emphasis in the UK Civil Service on the training of more senior staff. This has made a considerable impact on the role of the College, as senior civil servants usually benefit more from the inter-departmental approach which the College provides. At the same time, however, departments' training budgets are not increasing, and every effort has to be made to ensure that the money which is spent on training is well spent. The College develops and maintains a large number of networks of contacts in government departments to obtain feedback on the effectiveness and perceived quality of courses. This contact with customers is given the highest priority, and requires a lot of time and effort on the part of the College. In addition, considerable resources are devoted to the evaluation of College courses, including follow-up events and extended questionnaires to course members.

RECENT MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

21. Since the early 1980s, a great deal of activity has taken place in the UK Civil Service directed towards improving the development of future senior managers. This was not a totally new development - it had been prefigured in part by the recommendations of the Fulton Committee in the 1960s - but it has had a high profile, mainly because of the political emphasis based on the Conservative Government on increasing efficiency and effectiveness in the Civil Service, as in other parts of the public sector. A report ("Civil Service Management Development in the 1980s") was published in 1983, and this acknowledged the need for greater "professionalism" and specialisation, for more and better-planned training, for more deliberate management of careers, and for more movement in and out of the Service.

22. The implementation of the thinking in that Report has included

three important management development initiatives:

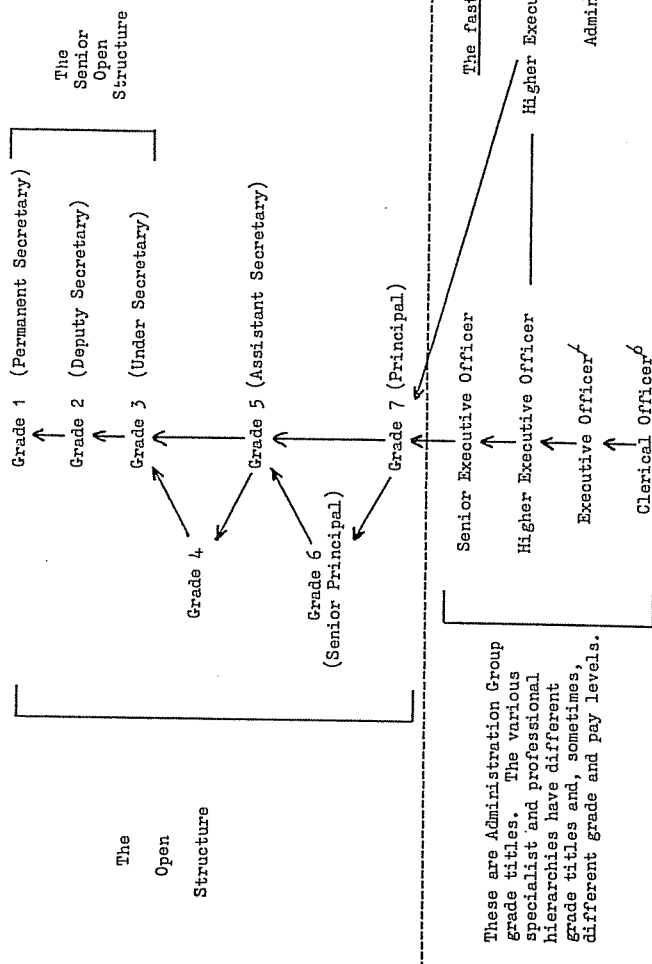
- i. Identification and development of internal talent ("Management Development Programmes"): These are separate programmes in individual departments to identify staff at junior and middle management levels with the potential to rise to the key grade of Principal. The precise method by which these staff are identified and developed will vary from department to department, but formal assessment centres will sometimes be used, and all the programmes will result in much better integration of useful and relevant job experience with developmental training.
- ii. The Senior Management Development Programme: This is aimed at middle and senior managers (at Grades 4-7 - see Appendix A) and has the dual aim of improving performance in the grades concerned and of preparing managers better for top management in the future. Like the more junior "Management Development Programmes", it is an integrated management development programme comprising job experience and training. It involves the use of a "Personal Development Plan" by individuals and their managers to identify the knowledge, abilities and skills which they need; and a more structured approach to their subsequent development, through relevant experience, project work, and formal training. Details about the Senior Management Development Programme are given in Appendix C. The Programme requires participants to undertake an average of five days' developmental training each year, which for most concerned will be an increase in the amount of training they currently receive.
- iii. Top Management Programme: This is in many ways the most remarkable recent development in training in the UK Civil Service. It is a new six-week intensive management development programme for all civil servants who are promoted to Grade 3 (Under Secretary), with the first four weeks shared with equal numbers of top managers from other sectors of the economy. Appendix D describes the objectives and the approach of the programme, which has attracted a lot of attention throughout the United Kingdom since its introduction in January 1985. Private industry has responded well to invitations to send participants, and feedback from government departments has been equally positive.

Conclusion

23. In summary, the training of UK civil servants is a vast operation of which the major burden falls on individual departments. In recent years, however, the profile of training has increased considerably and in particular, the three new management development initiatives have resulted in much more emphasis on training for senior civil servants than ever before. These developments are taking place at a time of

economic stringency, with Government Ministers keen to reduce Civil Service numbers and to subject public servants to the rigours of commercial competition as much as possible. This means that while training has a higher profile, it must be cost-effective and delivered at the right time in the trainee's career, if it is to be a worthwhile investment on the part of a department. The trend since 1980 has been towards shorter, sharper, more intensive, more visibly relevant training courses; and all indications are that this trend will continue.

A Simplified Diagram Showing Grades in the UK Civil Service



*fast-stream high quality graduate entry

recruitment is done centrally by the Civil Service Commission for these and specialist equivalent grades.

recruitment is delegated to individual departments for these and equivalent or lower grades.

Note Only about 50 or 60 a year are now recruited as Administration Trainees. Between 3,000 and 4,000 enter through the Open Competition for Executive Officers. Almost ten times that number in total join the Civil Service each year. The great majority of members of the Open Structure do not therefore enter as fast-stream Administration Trainees.

SUMMARY OF CM (TRAINING) COURSES SHOWING LEVELS OF ELIGIBILITY

Course Title	Clerical Assist- ant level	Clerical Officer level	Execu- tive Officer level	Higher Execu- tive Offi- cer level	Senior Execu- tive Offi- cer level	Princi- pal level	Senior Princi- pal and Above
CIVILIAN TRAINING CENTRE							
Typist Induction							
Clerical Assistant Induction	X						
Junior Specialist Induction	X	X					
Clerical Officer/Executive Officer Induction		X	X				
Superintendent of Typists							
Support to Management		X					
Senior Support to Management		X					
Introduction to Management Modules:							
ITM - Practical Management of Resources			X				
ITM - Practical Management of People			X				
ITM - Britain's Defence			X				
ITM - Committees & Meetings			X				
ITM - Industrial Relations			X				
ITM - Interviewing			X				
ITM - Management Decision Making			X				
ITM - Organising Words and Numbers			X				
Effective Speaking Course			X	X	X	X	X
Development of Part-Time Tutors			X	X	X	X	
Industrial Staff Supervision Course			X				
MANAGEMENT STUDIES CENTRE							
Senior Management Conference						X	
Management Appreciation Conference				X	X		
Middle Management Conference				X	X	X	
Management of Human Resources				X	X	X	
People & Organisation Development				X	X	X	
Stress Management Workshop				X	X	X	X
Management of Defence Seminar				X	X		
Personnel Management				X	X	X	
Industrial Relations				X	X	X	
Consultation and Negotiating Skills				X	X	X	
Employment Law (1) - For CPMA's			X	X	X	X	X
Employment Law (2) - For Line Managers			X	X	X	X	X
Management Coaching				X	X	X	
Personnel Selection			X	X	X	X	X
Promotion Board Members				X	X	X	X
Staff Reporting			X	X	X	X	
Job Appraisal Reviews				X	X	X	

SENIOR MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - A CIVIL SERVICE PROGRAMME FOR SENIOR STAFF

Introduction

The Senior Management Development Programme (SMDP) is a major new initiative in the development of senior staff in the Civil Service. The SMDP is not a training course, but an integrated approach to development (through experience and training) for civil servants in the range of grades from Principal to Grade 4, including specialist equivalents.

It links in closely with the Top Management Programme - a six-week programme of management education and development for civil servants on promotion to Grade 3 (Under Secretary) which was introduced at the beginning of 1985.

The development of senior staff below Grade 3 was considered in the Training for Senior Management Study undertaken by the Cabinet Office (MPO).

A Planned Approach

The SMDP is a planned approach to development (including experience and training) in which participants with their managers assess the kinds of experience and training which the participants should have over the next year to develop the kinds of knowledge and skills which are required, and make a "development plan" for the year ahead. Later, they review the participant's progress and make a new plan. To help them do this, participants are provided with all the necessary information in a specially designed ring binder, including a "Personal Development Plan" - working pages for them to use in planning, implementing and reviewing their development. Cabinet Office (MPO) has produced model pages introducing participants to the SMDP and a model Personal Development Plan. Departments have discretion to adapt these to meet their particular needs.

"Competencies"

The "Training for Senior Management Study" recommended that a list of competencies should be researched and drawn up centrally. This list would denote broad areas of knowledge and skill which were important for senior civil servants to develop, and could be used by participants for reference when drawing up their development plans. Cabinet Office (MPO) researched the competencies in a number of ways related to the two broad aims of the SMDP:

- i. "Better preparation for future top managers": a survey of staff currently in Grades 2 and 3 (Deputy Secretary and Under Secretary) was undertaken in preparation for the Top Management Programme, and its Director also consulted extensively with top managers inside and outside the Civil Service about the objectives of the Programme. Its findings were of direct relevance to this as part of the SMDP.
- ii. "Greater effectiveness in current grades": late 1984, Cabinet Office (MPO) carried out a survey of 500 staff in the SMDP grades - around a 15% sample of those who would be eligible for the Programme in the first year - to determine the perceptions of staff themselves about the importance and difficulty of aspects of their current jobs and the kinds of knowledge that were needed. (A summary of the findings of this survey is at Annex B2.) The information from the SMDP survey was supplemented by a top management view of the needs of staff in all occupational groups in the SMDP grades, which was obtained through a series of structured interviews with top Civil Service managers.

Common themes which emerged from these different sources were classified as "central competencies", with a "core" list representing those areas which were found to be important for most staff in most departments. A second list ("important competencies") contained items which were important for many staff, though less relevant to some. The Personal Development Plan contains both lists, with sub-headings under each item denoting aspects which were particularly emphasised in the research. The broad headings are:

Core competencies

Management of resources/organizations
Management of staff
Knowledge/understanding of the context of your work
Managing your own work
Information technology
More specialised knowledge/expertise

Important competencies

Representational/presentational skills
Written/administrative skills
Policy management
Economics
Accounting and finance
Quantitative skills/statistics
Law
Industrial relations

Departments are free to adapt the lists to reflect their own needs and priorities.

Training Target

Although the development plans drawn up by participants with their managers will cover various types of experience as well as training, there is a "target" for SMDP participants of 5 days' training a year related to the competencies. This may consist of formal training courses or other types of learning opportunity such as action-centred learning, open learning, private study or the use of computer-based packages.

Eligibility

There are 22,000 civil servants in the grades covered by the SMDP. To enable the Programme to get off the ground, Cabinet Office (MPO) has defined a minimum group who must be invited to participate in the first year, with departments having discretion to widen (but not to narrow) the age ranges, and to include other groups or individuals. The minimum group for 1985-86 are:

- staff at Principal (and equivalent) level aged 35 and under;
- staff in Grades 4, 5 and 6 (and equivalent levels) aged 42 and below.

Some departments have decided to operate on a wider basis. Staff in all occupational specialisms are included from the outset. It is intended to expand the Programme progressively in forthcoming years by raising the minimum age-ceilings.

Conclusion

Participants in the SMDP will include some of the most talented people in the Civil Service. The key to the effectiveness of the Programme will be harnessing their initiative in planning and following through their own development. Hence, those eligible will be invited to participate and will be able to opt in or out. Those who opt in will be expected to seize the initiative in using the structures of the SMDP to develop their talents to the full.

TOP MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME**INTRODUCTION**

1. The Government has decided to establish a new management development programme which will bring together top managers with the highest potential from all sectors of the economy. They will review the major changes likely to affect their organisations and the best practices of top management in coping with change and uncertainty. They will work together on major problems and issues of concern to all of them and seek practical and robust solutions.

OBJECTIVES

2. These are to improve the ability of the participants to:

- understand as far as is possible the nature, extent and significance of the fundamental changes taking place in the economic, international, industrial, technological, physical and social environments;
- formulate strategies to meet the challenge of these changes and cope with the uncertainties surrounding them, given scarce resources;
- seek increased value for money and year-on-year improvements in productivity and efficiency of service to customers, by setting clear objectives and managing organisations and resources positively;
- lead and motivate people to carry out tasks efficiently, imaginatively and with commitment;
- understand one another's attitudes, priorities and approaches to major problems and issues.

PARTICIPANTS

3. There will be three Programmes in 1985 and four in a full year. Each Programme will cater for 24 participants selected from the best people entering top management positions, with potential to reach the top of their organisations and aged about 35-45, in roughly equal numbers from the commercial and public sectors, ie from:

- the private sector of industry and commerce, in smaller as well as large organisations, the nationalised industries and the professions; and
- the Civil Service, the Diplomatic Service, local government and other public sector organisations such as the BBC, Atomic Energy Authority and possibly in future the National Health Service, the Armed Forces, the Police and the Trades Unions.

All 24 participants will attend the four-week mixed phase. The civil servants will undertake a further two-week phase immediately afterwards; for them the six-week Programme will be mandatory at about the point of promotion to Grade 3 (Under Secretary).

CONTENT

Mixed Phase

4. The mixed phase will be divided into four parts:-

(a) The major changes in the environment (25%):

to achieve the first objective, examination, necessarily selective, of the most important current and future changes in the economic, international, industrial, technological, social and physical environments within which organisations, including governments, have to operate; and of the uncertainties surrounding future changes. The criterion for deciding what to include in this category will be the extent to which major changes in the environment are occurring, are likely to occur, or ought to occur but may not because of institutional impediments;

(b) the challenge of top management (30-35%):

to achieve the second, third and fourth objectives, examination of the role of the top manager in strategy formulation and implementation, marketing, and in the efficient management of finance and people, in times of radical change and scarcity of resources;

(c) problem solving (30%):

to consolidate the learning process and strengthen mutual understanding, major real and topical problems of direct concern to all the participants will be prepared and documented beforehand, solutions sought through analytical work in mixed syndicates and presented to experts at the highest level for criticism and discussion. There will be a strong emphasis on producing practical solutions designed for implementation by top management action;

(d) seminar discussions (12%):

to broaden and deepen understanding, major issues will be discussed by panels of distinguished experts, both academic and practising and often with radically different views, and debated afterwards by the participants and their guests.

Each part will be complementary to the others and overlap will be avoided. Together they will form a coherent whole.

The Civil Service Phase

5. The Civil Servants phase will be divided into four parts:-

(a) Top Management in the Civil Service (40%):

examination of the major changes facing the Civil Service over the next 5-10 years and of the management and leadership roles of the top civil servant. This will include examination, necessarily selective, of the role of top civil servants in the management of people and financial resources; of the strategic issues surrounding the introduction of information technology systems; and of the impact of trends in administrative law;

(b) optional courses (35%):

participants will be able to choose from a range of options - short intensive courses aimed at improving important skills (eg. negotiating, presentation) or deepening their knowledge of particular subjects of importance to their jobs (eg. policy analysis, options appraisal);

(c) problem solving (15%):

to consolidate the learning process and to deepen understanding of some of the lessons emerging from the mixed programme, a major topical problem of concern to participants will be tackled in syndicate groups. The method will be similar to the mixed phase with an emphasis on producing practical solutions designed for implementation by top management action;

(d) seminar discussions (10%):

major issues of concern to the Civil Service will be discussed before dinner by a panel of distinguished experts, both academic and practising, and debated after dinner by the participants and their guests.

METHODS

6. The Programme will be rigorous and demanding but informal and varied. There will be a strong emphasis on active participation by Programme members. Where tuition is necessary for understanding it will be of the highest quality (of both content and presentation) and aimed at drawing the maximum out of the participants themselves, through syndicate work, debate and argument. The tutors will be complemented by practitioners from both the public and private sectors.

7. A vital part of the Programme will be the syndicate work on the live problems. Each problem will be defined and analysed by a knowledgeable "author" who will, with other experts, assess the solutions proposed by the syndicates.

EVALUATION

8. It is important to assess the quality of the Programme; the extent to which it meets its objectives and the effect on individual participants and on the subsequent value added to their organisations. To this end the Programme will be carefully evaluated by:-

(a) questioning the participants formally and informally during the Programme and six months afterwards;

(b) selective interviewing of Personnel Directors, Principal Establishment Officers and line managers to find out what practical improvements it has made to a participant's performance and potential;

(c) ultimately, the market, at least as far as the commercial sector is concerned.

But its relevance and usefulness is at least as much a function of the commitment of top management to it as of its quality and content.