

MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL OFFICE

**GLOSSARY OF
ORGANISATIONAL
AND
MANAGEMENT TERMS**

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CONTENTS

1	Preface.....	1
2	Glossary A to Z	2
A.....		3
B.....		5
C.....		6
D.....		9
E.....		10
F.....		11
G.....		12
H.....		13
I.....		14
J.....		15
L.....		16
M.....		17
N.....		18
O.....		19
P.....		21
Q.....		26
R.....		27
S.....		30
T.....		33
U.....		34
V.....		35
W.....		36

1 PREFACE

The need for a Glossary of Organisational Terms in the Public Service has long been felt amongst public officers in that there existed the need to have some framework which would streamline Public Service Terminology, the more so with the fast pace of Public Service Reform and the imminent introduction of the Public Administration Act. In this way one ensures that whenever these terms are used, they are used in their right context and in a consistent manner.

This glossary has been produced with the primary aim of providing Senior Managers in the Public Service with a reference point for organisational terms which are frequently used in the Public Service. The glossary will also prove useful to those new recruits who are just entering the Public Service and are continuously meeting with terminology which is new to them.

The glossary is restricted to those Management terms which are used exclusively in the Public Service or to those Management terms which in the Public Service, carry their own special conditions and imply different connotations.

As the Public Service is a dynamic organisation which is constantly changing, this glossary will be continuously updated with new terms.

2 GLOSSARY A TO Z

A

TERM	MEANING
Accountability	The responsibility placed on an officer or group of officers within a team making them answerable for their own, or others' actions, conduct, performance, timely delivery, etc.
Admonishment	A penalty awarded to an officer by his supervisory officer for minor misconduct, breach of discipline or of unsatisfactory work after being given the opportunity to exculpate himself. An admonishment is retained by the supervisory officer and cancelled at the expiration of six months from the date the admonishment is administered (see article 18 of the PSC Disciplinary Regulations 1999)
Allowance	Financial remuneration paid in addition to basic salary for expenses such as travel, rent, subsistence or for the performance of higher or dangerous duties, special functions or qualifications. (See paragraph 2.4. of the Public Service Management Code [PSMC] and report entitled <i>Guidelines and Parameters on Allowances payable to Public Officers</i>)
Analogous	A term invariably used in tandem with 'grades' and means all those grades which are on a salary scale having the same salary maximum as the scale of the post to which they are being compared.

TERM	MEANING
Appointment	An appointment to a public office, including an appointment on promotion, is made by the Prime Minister acting on the recommendation of the Public Service Commission unless an <i>ad hoc</i> Instrument of Delegation is issued.
Appraisal	An evaluation of an officer's performance generally made at the close of year following pre-set targets either by means of a Performance Agreement or the Performance Management Programme (see also Performance Management).
Assimilation	The way in which jobs and individual job holders are transposed from grades to a new grade in a new or an existing grading structure.

B

TERM	MEANING
Backdating of appointment	The Prime Minister may backdate an appointment for justifiable reasons. It is the practice however to refer requests for backdating to the PSC for its advice.
Benchmark	A standard, a measure or a point of reference set for comparison purposes to gauge outcomes, results, performance, or delivery of service.
Best practices	Typically refers to the practices of a Ministry / Department that enables it to constantly aspire for and achieve superior organisational performance results.
Better Regulation Unit	A Unit set up in the Office of the Principal Permanent Secretary to monitor regulatory developments and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy. The Better Regulation Unit is meant to influence the 'modus operandi' of organisations in the Public Service and the wider public sector.
Bonus - performance	A Performance Bonus is a financial reward, generally based on a percentage of the annual salary, in recognition of results which exceed pre-set expectations associated with the position.
Business plan	A document that summarises the operational and financial objectives of an organisation and contains detailed plans and budgets showing how the objectives set are to be realised.

C

TERM	MEANING
Career path	The route through which an officer may progress from grade to grade in departmental, Ministerial or Service-wide occupational fields ranked from lowest to highest in the hierarchal class grade structure.
Change management	The deliberate effort of an organisation to anticipate change and to manage its introduction, implementation, and consequences. A Change Management Committee chaired by the Principal Permanent Secretary meets regularly to ensure that change initiatives are implemented in a coordinated manner.
Channels of representation	The correct levels of authority through which representations from public officers regarding conditions of service, promotions etc., should be addressed.
Class	Officers belonging to the same profession/trade or skill base and grouped within one grade structure e.g. (Medical doctors belong to the Medical Class).
Classification	Grouping of a homogeneous set of officers in a Ministry / Department or service-wide, into class or category of employees, based on duties, skills and responsibilities.

Collective agreement	An agreement entered into between the Government and the employees' representatives concerning employment conditions, such as rates of pay, hours of work, and the rights and obligations of the parties to the agreement. Normally the agreement is for a definite period. (See also Sectoral Agreement)
Collective bargaining	The process whereby interested parties generally the Government as the employer and the Trade Union representing employees, agree upon courses of action, bargain for collective advantage and / or attempt to draft outcomes which serve their material interest and leads to dispute resolution as the case may be.
Commutated pension	An option granted to public officers who joined the Public Service prior to 16 January 1979, to be paid on retirement, a reduced Treasury pension and a gratuity (lump sum) in lieu of a full Treasury pension.
Competencies	Competencies are general descriptions of the behaviour or actions needed to perform successfully within a particular work context (eg job, group of jobs, function, etc). Their correct application drives both employee and corporate performance.
Complement	Allocation of specific posts within an organisation structure of a Ministry / Division / department as approved by the Management and Personnel Office from an organisational standpoint, subject to budgetary constraints - staff complementing is distinct from staff actually in post.

TERM	MEANING
Conciliation	Settlement of a dispute through discussion rather than formal hearings and/or a trial. Sometimes called mediation (see paragraph 5.2 (b) of the Collective Agreement for Public Service Employees effective 1/1/05).
Cost of living adjustment (COLA)	An annual adjustment in salaries to offset a change in purchasing power.

D

TERM	MEANING
Decentralisation	The transfer of tasks from the central authorities to line ministries/departments.
Delegation	Entrusting authority to officials allowing them to act and make certain decisions for the Minister or other higher authorities.
Departmental grade	A substantive appointment associated with a particular Ministry / department and its sphere of activities / responsibilities.
Deployment	Public Officers are deployed to Public Sector entities signifying the migration of public officers beyond the Public Service with a specific task or function. Inherent rights within the service are retained on grounds of public policy.
Detailing	Public Officers may be assigned with Public Sector Entities with no less favourable conditions on the approval of the Prime Minister, in terms of the legislation setting up the Entity. Detailing orders usually signify the migration of public officers with a function and may be revoked by the Prime Minister as a result of demand-driven exigencies within the Public Service. Inherent rights are retained on grounds of public policy (e.g. reckonable service).

E

TERM	MEANING
Entitlement	The benefits and rights pertaining to a public officer which emanate from the Public Service Management Code, to which he has a right.
Eligibility requirement	Those requisites which an applicant has to possess with regard to grade, qualification or experience, when one is applying for a post or position within the Public Service.
Entry salary	The starting salary at which new appointees start the job or enter the pay structure. Starting salary of public officers who are promoted in the normal course ⁽¹⁾ from one grade to another or who progress from one scale to another, should not be less than the third step of the new scale.
External calls	Calls for applications which are published in the Government Gazette for the notice of the general public. These calls appear on the Department of Information web-site (doi.gov.mt) and the Public Service Recruitment portal (https://recruitment.gov.mt).
Extra-duty pay	Extra remuneration received by shift workers in respect of the extra hours they are allowed to work above forty hours.

⁽¹⁾A promotion in the normal course is defined as an appointment to a new grade with a separate and distinct salary scale and a higher maximum salary, provided such appointment is not made as a result of success in any competition open to persons outside the public service.

F

TERM	MEANING
Filling of posts/positions	The selection procedure of appointing individuals to the vacant posts/positions within the public service. Selection may be done through an internal call which is issued through an MPO Circular and is addressed only to public officers, or external calls which are published in the Government Gazette which are open to the public in general.

G

TERM	MEANING
Gender Equality Initiative	A plan whose main aim is to promote equality between men and women by striving to provide them with equal conditions, so as to realise their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development and benefit from the results.
Gender mainstreaming	The integration of a gender perspective into all Government policies and programmes, so that, before any decisions are taken, a separate analysis is made of the effects on women and men respectively.
General service grade	A substantive grade in an Administrative, Executive or Clerical capacity which can pertain to any Government/Department - polar opposite to a departmental grade found in a particular department.
Grade	A group of public officers who possess the same rank and more or less perform the same duties and carry the same responsibilities in a classification structure.
Grading structure	A sequence of grades to which a pay scale is attached.

H

TERM	MEANING
HRIMS	Human Resource Information Management System. It is the human resource system for Government. It is written in Foxpro by MITTS and is in use in most HR branches of the public service.

I

TERM	MEANING
Increment	A regular annual increase in salary, on a scale of pay. Officers will receive their next increment on one of the four incremental dates listed below. Appointments between: 16 th November to 15 th February – 1 st January 16 th February to 15 th May – 1 st April 16 th May to 15 th August – 1 st July 16 th August to 15 th November – 1 st October
Industrial dispute	A term referring to any disagreement in industrial relations, mainly between employers and employees' representatives.
Industrial relations	A broad term that covers and refers to relations between unions and management, unions themselves, unions and government.
Interdiction	The suspension of an officer from his duties which is approved by the Prime Minister, acting on the recommendation of the PSC due to criminal or disciplinary proceedings. During interdiction an officer is paid half his salary.
Internal circulars	Specific instructions issued throughout the Public Service by the Principal Permanent Secretary or Director General (MPO) to Permanent Secretaries/Heads of Department/Heads of Public Entities; these instructions may be issued intra - Ministry or within a Department of Government by the Permanent Secretary or Head of Department to staff.

J

TERM	MEANING
Job classification	The determination of the value of each job in relation to other jobs in the workplace, based on the material and content of the job and such factors as education, skill, experience and responsibility. Often used for the purpose of arriving at a system of salary differentials between jobs or classes of jobs.
Job description	A written summary of tasks, duties, and responsibilities of a job.
Job design	Consideration of the content, functions, and relationships of jobs directed toward the accomplishment of organizational purposes and satisfaction of the personal needs of individual job holders.
Job enrichment	The attempt to make jobs more rewarding and less monotonous for the individual worker.
Job evaluation	A systematic process for establishing the relative value/worth of jobs within an organisation (or internal relativity).
Job specification	The minimum skills, education, and experience necessary for an individual to perform a job.

L

TERM	MEANING
Line department	An institution within the Public Service with a specific role and function which is run by a Head of Department.
Line function	Any function that is vital and contributes directly toward the accomplishment of the major organisational objectives of a Line Department.

M

TERM	MEANING
MEDC	Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport
Mentoring	A developmental approach through which employees develop their career potential through ongoing periodic dialogue and supervision by more experienced employees.
Merit	A determination of job performance and employee potential for development.
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MFEI	Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment
MGOZ	Ministry for Gozo
Middle-management	All those public officers belonging to Category 'B' within the public service structure – that is, scales 6 to 10 from 20 salary scales, 6 being the highest and 10 being the lowest.
MITC	Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications
MJHA	Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs
MRRA	Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs
MSOC	Ministry for Social Policy

N

Term	Meaning
Negotiation	The process of discussion with a view to reach agreement to mutual satisfaction.

O

Term	Meaning
On grounds of public policy	Counts as service in the grade for the purposes of promotion or progression. Officers on grounds of public policy will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • return to their substantive grade held immediately before the officer was granted leave on grounds of public policy; • retain all rights and privileges applicable to their public office and those arising from the respective Classification Agreement; • have their period of unpaid leave on grounds of public policy reckonable for pension purposes (this applies to pensionable officers under the Pensions Ordinance); • have their social security rights, acquired under the Social Security Act (Cap 318), safeguarded in line with the provisions of Council Regulation (EC) No 1408/71.
Officers on light duties	Public officers who cannot perform the full range of their normal duties, owing to some impairment which may be physical or psychological or both who are placed on tasks and duties which require less strain and carry less responsibility.

On-loan arrangement	An arrangement whereby public officers may be sent temporarily to Public Sector Entities with the approval of the MPO. In such instances, the public officers are still considered to be on the books of the parent department which department would still be responsible for the remuneration, subject that the officers are accountable to the Entity for the performance of their duties. Inherent rights are retained on grounds of public policy. The entity re-imburses the parent department for the remuneration packages.
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister

P

Term	Meaning
Part-time employees	An employee whose normal hours of work calculated on a weekly basis or an average over a period of employment of up to one year, are less than the normal hours of work of a comparable full-time worker.
Pay scale	Remuneration for a post which generally consists of periodic increases in amounts until a maximum amount is reached. There are 20 pay scales in the public service, 1 being the highest and 20 being the lowest.
Pensionable emoluments	Benefits which count for pension purposes namely, the salary and other pensionable allowances.
Pensionable office	An office which has been declared as such by the President of Malta by a notification in the Government Gazette.
Pensionable officer	An officer who joined the Public Service prior to 15 January 1979 and who occupies a pensionable office.
Person of trust	An employee in the Public Service who occupies a position (as distinct from substantive appointment in a post) regulated by a contractual agreement of a definite duration which may end at any time subject to a notice period. Persons of Trust exercise a non-executive role and their engagement is not subject to the scrutiny of the Public Service Commission in terms of Constitutional provisions.

Term	Meaning
Personal file	File containing information and records relating to a specific public officer.
PMP (Performance Management Programme)	A performance evaluation system assesses the performance of employees against approved output and quality standards. The system is based on the development of agreed targets between individuals and their immediate supervisors to produce a jointly agreed workplan. It also provides employees with an opportunity to receive feedback regarding their performance on an interim basis, over the period for which it is valid, normally one year.
Position	A scheme of employment; its main objective being the performance of specific assigned tasks. A position is created ad hoc to address specific exigencies of the Public Sector with the endorsement of the MPO and is regulated by a contractual agreement - as distinct from a substantive appointment in a grade. If the position is filled through the Public Service Commission, the incumbent is considered a Public Officer even though possibly not holding a substantive grade.
Post	A post is associated with, and is a function of, a grade (a substantive appointment regulated by a Classification Agreement / Document). The "Financial Estimates" issued annually by the Ministry of Finance indicates the number of posts filled in each grade as on 1st September of the previous calendar year.

Term	Meaning
Probationary period	<p>A prescribed time period of one-year duration, unless otherwise specified in a call for applications, during which performance in a post (as distinct from position) is monitored and at the end of which the appointment is either confirmed or terminated. Officers availing themselves of special unpaid leave and / or who work on reduced hours during the probationary period would be required to (a) compensate for any special UNPAID LEAVE by working under probation the corresponding number of days utilised as unpaid leave and/or compensate for work on reduced hours by working under probation the corresponding number of days in proportion to their working schedule. A probationary period is to be considered as having commenced on the Prime Minister's approval of the new appointment or the date upon which new duties were actually assumed by the appointee, whichever is the later.</p> <p>Where a Head of Department considers that the probationary appointment should be extended or that a probationary appointment should be terminated, the procedure set out in Regulation 19 of the Public Service Commission Regulations 1960 are to be followed.</p>
Professional grade	A substantive appointment dependent on specific eligibility requisites namely an award of warrant and/or professional qualifications.

Term	Meaning
Progression	Career development within a grade generally implying a move to a higher salary scale. Progressions are not granted automatically. Public officers will merit a progression to a higher scale if they demonstrate competence, commitment and efficiency in their work. Officers who are undisciplined or lack concern for standards in their work, or who are prone to late coming, malingering, leaving the office without authorisation or resorting to unjustified sick leave, should not be allowed to progress to a higher scale as a matter of principle.
Promotion	An appointment to an office of higher status or emoluments. Promotions are regulated in accordance with Classification Agreements and are given to qualified officers serving in the Public Service, either after a number of years service or through a Selection process whereby account is taken of qualifications, experience and merit.
PSC (Public Service Commission)	The Public Service Commission is an autonomous organ set up in terms of Constitutional provisions, to scrutinize and control the Public Administration and is empowered to advise and make recommendations to the Prime Minister on this matter - Articles 92 (4) and 110 of the Constitution.
Public Administration	The act of carrying out Government policy; the collective term for all those groups and bodies carrying out Government policy which include its Ministries and Departments, the agencies, government entities, Government Commissions or Boards.

Term	Meaning
Public officer	The holder of any public office or a person appointed to act in any such office. The appointment of a public officer in a substantive post or contractual position is endorsed by the Public Service Commission.

Q

Term	Meaning
Quality service charter	A written statement by the Department, Agency or Unit which guarantees good customer service. It is usually captured in a leaflet or booklet but may also be communicated in different ways such as panels in the reception area. A charter normally consists of (i) a guide to the services provided; (ii) a statement of rights and responsibilities of the customers; (iii) the standards of service the entity is aiming to achieve; (iv) a formal complaints procedure.

R

Term	Meaning
Re-employment	Public officers may be re-employed after resignation in cases of: (i) acute public service interest; (ii) grave humanitarian reasons or (iii) serious medical conditions that led the individual concerned to tender his/her resignation without having been boarded out. A re-employment panel will consider all cases for re-employment. Re-employed officers will be placed in their former grade, on the minimum of the lowest scale of the grade and at the bottom of the seniority list of the grade. Previous service with government will be lost.
Reckonable service	Service which is reckonable for pension purposes. It includes periods of duty, any periods of absence on leave with full or half pay, any periods of absence on leave without pay on grounds of public policy and any periods of leave following dismissal which is subsequently declared as invalid.
Re-deployment	The transfer of public officers and/or public sector employees either from the core Public Service to the wider Public Sector or from one Entity to another following a selection process. (i) A public officer who has been redeployed will retain his / her substantive appointment and salary with the Malta Public Service or the public sector in question as applicable, to which s/he will revert on the termination of the contract. (ii) have his/her contract suspended for the duration of the deployment to the entity, should the selected candidate be currently on a definite contract, (iii)

Term	Meaning
	retains all seniority and promotion rights enjoyed in the Public Service or the public sector organization.
Reduced hours scheme	Full-time public officers who have been serving for at least 1 year may be allowed to work on a reduced timetable which may vary between 20 and 35 hours in order to look after children under twelve years of age, to care for dependent parents, children or spouses or for medical or serious humanitarian and family reasons.
Re-instatement	Ex-Public Officers who were medically boarded out may be re-instated in the grade they held on retirement from the public service. When applying for re-instatement, ex-public officers should attach a medical certificate stating that they are fit to resume duties. This statement has to be confirmed by a government medical board. On re-instatement, officers will be placed in their former grade, in the same salary point they were in on retirement and previous service with government counts for progression and promotion purposes. However, they are placed at the bottom of the seniority list of their grade. Public officers who, on retirement, were members of a disciplined force will not be placed in their former grade but they shall have the nomenclature of their previous grade changed to an 'officer in scale', which scale shall be equivalent to the scale of their previous grade.
Resignation	Public officers on a substantive appointment who wish to resign are not bound by a notice period, unlike those public officers who are engaged on contract.

Term	Meaning
Retirement	Public Officers may retire from the Public Service on attaining the age of sixty (60) years. They are, however, given the option to retain their employment up to the age of sixty-one (61). Public officers who are found medically unfit prior to age 60 may be retired on medical grounds.

S

Term	Meaning
Salary	Fixed regular payment in return for work carried out, usually paid out every four weeks on the basis of 13 equal installments of the annual salary. Payment of salaries is made by direct credit.
Salary relativities	A ladder of predetermined pay levels defining ratios between the upper and lower ranges of a Public Service salary structure.
Salary scale	Remuneration for a post which generally consists of periodic increases in amounts until a maximum amount is reached.
Secondment	The temporary transfer of an official from the Public Service to the Public Sector or vice-versa in another position or employment. Secondments require Prime Minister's approval. Secondments to Private Secretariats of Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries follow the usual approved parameters.
Sectoral agreement	An agreement between the employer and the representatives of the employees in a particular class concerning conditions, mostly on career progression and entry requirements and other specific conditions, in a particular class.
Security of tenure	A permanent status is granted to an employee usually after completion of a probationary period which covers his fixed employment.

Term	Meaning
Seniority	Ranking with respect to length of service in a particular grade.
Service in the grade	Service in the grade means service performed in a particular grade in a substantive capacity. Public officers who were medically boarded out and are re-instated in the service, will have the years of service prior to their being boarded out reckonable for progression from one salary scale to a higher scale as long as this is within the same grade. Years of service prior to re-instatement will not however be considered as valid to satisfy the number of years required for eligibility to promotion from one grade to a higher grade. Public officers who rejoin the service after having previously resigned or had their employment terminated will not have their previous service reckonable for progression to higher salary scales or for eligibility for promotion to higher grades. These employees are considered as new appointees.
Shift workers	Employees whose work time-table rotates round the clock, rather than the normal standard working day.
SNE (seconded national expert)	A person who is typically seconded from the civil services of EU Member States to the Commission/Council.
Stand by at home allowance	The allowance paid to officers who are required to be on stand-by at home outside normal hours of work. Actual work performed during periods when an officer is stand-by at home is remunerated at overtime rates.

Term	Meaning
Subsistence allowance	The Board and Lodging expenses which are incurred by Public Officers proceeding on official business to Malta and Gozo shall be allowed at established rates. Rates of subsistence are paid for (i) Breakfast (ii) Lunch (iii) Bed and Breakfast (iv) Half-Board and (v) Full Board. Different rates are applicable for 'low' 'mid' and 'high' season. All claims for re-imburement of expenses incurred must be supported by receipted bills. Standard daily rates of subsistence allowance, calculated to cover complete periods of 24 hours, are fixed for countries to which public officers may be sent for duty visits. They are designed to meet the cost of accommodation at good but not luxury class hotels, three meals a day, plus service charges, taxis and transport. Incidental expenses are considered to be offset by home savings. Standard rates of subsistence allowance ensure that officers know their entitlements in advance and are spared the trouble of keeping detailed accounts of their expenditure. The standard daily rates of subsistence allowances are to be found in circulars issued from time to time by MPO.
Substantive grade	A substantive grade is a grade which is found in the Classification Agreement and for which officers appointed to this grade are not engaged on contract. All the substantive grades are found in the Financial Estimates.
Summary written warning	A written warning is awarded by a Head of Department to an officer under his charge for minor misconduct, breach of discipline or unsatisfactory work, after the officer is allowed the opportunity to exculpate himself. The summary warning is kept in the personal file of the officer but it is cancelled after 12 months.

T

Term	Meaning
Terms and conditions of service	Statement of arrangements surrounding employment conditions, such as leave, hours, etc.

U

Terms	Meaning
Uncommuted pension	An option granted to Public Officers who joined the Public Service prior to 15 January 1979, to be paid on retirement a full Treasury pension in lieu of a reduced Treasury pension and a gratuity (lump sum).
Upper management	Public officers belonging to Category 'A' positions with the Public Service structure i.e. Scales 1 to 5. Scale 1 is the highest and Scale 5 being the lowest. These comprise Headship contractual positions (from Scale 4 upwards) and Assistant Directors (Scale 5).

V

Term	Meaning
Vacancy	Unoccupied post or position within the Public Service which may be filled either internally ie through an MPO Circular which is open only to public officers or externally through the government gazette which is open to the general public. The Public Service Commission is empowered by the Public Service Commission Regulations to determine the form of advertisement to be issued in cases where applications for vacancies for posts are to be invited by advertisement.
Verification of sick leave	Heads of Ministries/Departments can enter into a contract with private doctors, on an individual or group basis, with a view to conducting house visits as and when necessary if this is considered expedient for the better management of their organisation. Sick leave should be verified in suspected cases of abuse and when such leave is excessive or regular.

W

Term	Meaning
Written warning as a penalty	A written warning is awarded by a Head of Department to an officer under his charge as a punishment for the first minor offence committed by the officer, following an investigation by a Disciplinary Board. The written warning is kept in the personal file of the officer but it lapses after 12 months if no other offence is committed within that period.

Note: Words indicating the masculine include the feminine.