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The certification frustration machine but... there is hope

The certification is the process by which AST colleagues, regardless of their academic background, have the possibility to be certified and in the end to integrate the AD function group. It is a real and noble ‘social promotion’ tool for which we should obviously be thanking our employers. Indeed, the programme is interinstitutional. However, and similar to internal competitions, the way it is implemented in the Commission is generating not only a lot of expectations but also frustrations. However, it seems there is also light at the end of the tunnel +

‘The [certification procedure](#) allows officials who are members of the Assistant function group (AST 5 at least) to be appointed to an administrator (AD) post’

The process can be simplified in three steps:

- The first step is to select the most qualified people who could participate to the certification training programme and is divided into two sub-steps. First you need to apply at your DG level. Then, if you are selected by your DG, you will be further filtered at Commission wide level during a selection interview. For most DGs and Services, the DG sub-step also implies a selection interview and sometimes a written test.
- The second step is to follow the excellent quality course programme and thereafter succeed in the quite tough examination set. After that you are certified.
- The third and last is to get an AD post and formally become an AD.

The main filtering and therefore most important source of frustration is obviously the first step. It is in the hands of the DGs and services as they all have their own approaches and biases. In most DGs/services, they make a call to all eligible AST’s. At Commission-wide substep, candidates will have to go through a 15-minute interview, during which they have to do their best to convince the panel of their potential. It is an extremely stressful and difficult exercise. It is a bit like an internal competition, anyone can apply (within the grade limitation provided for) but very few are chosen (more than 100 ASTs per year in the 2000’s down to around 50 per year in the 2010’s). Some colleagues repeat their applications from year to year whereas others never apply by lack of trust in their own DG/Service selection process. Hopefully, some AST colleagues can benefit from Senior Assistant posts.

The second step generates much less frustration in comparison. One needs to succeed the examinations; this is part of the game.

The third step, even if it concerns very few colleagues, is the most interesting. Indeed, in line with the whole process, the Institution somehow ‘earmarks’ some posts for the certified to become AD and ‘distribute’

them to the various DGs/services. However, according to our information, first there are not enough of these earmarked posts and their quantity diminishes over time to an extent that does not permit to cover for the numerous certified colleagues. More interestingly, some of these earmarked posts are used for non-certified colleagues, handed back to or taken back by DG HR or, for transardenese DGs, transferred to or used exclusively in Brussels. It is like being at the door with the key but not being able to get inside because the door is closed and there is no lock. Brussels is the locker shop after all!

However, the first step, which implies one or two interviews, can be prepared. We are offering mock interviews to our affiliates, and we hold an unparalleled success rate in that respect. Maybe that is why DG HR also recently started to provide that service to candidates for certification. FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED!

USFL always on deck!

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