

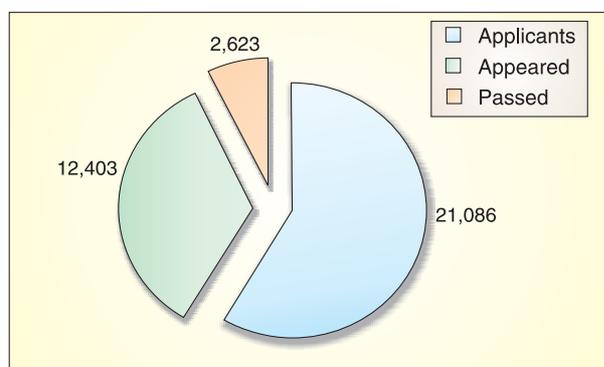
Selection and Assessment of Scientific Resource

The Agricultural Scientists Recruitment Board (ASRB), an independent recruitment body of ICAR, continues its efforts to revitalize the system of selection and assessment. The Board completed recruitment process for 275 direct selection positions. The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) – National Eligibility Test (NET) examination in 38 comprehended disciplines was held in 2009. The board is in the process of introducing on-line examination for ARS/NET preliminary examination. The progress made in the various mandated programmes of the Board is briefly described here.

ARS/NET examination

The ARS/NET examination was conducted by the Board at 33 centres in April 2009. A total of 12,403 (59%) candidates appeared in the examination out of 21,086 candidates who had applied for the same. Only 2,623 candidates cleared NET and therefore the success ratio for NET was 1:5.

The selection of scientist is vacancy based. A total of 952 candidates, who had obtained marks above the cut-off level, were called for ARS interview against 283 advertized vacancies.

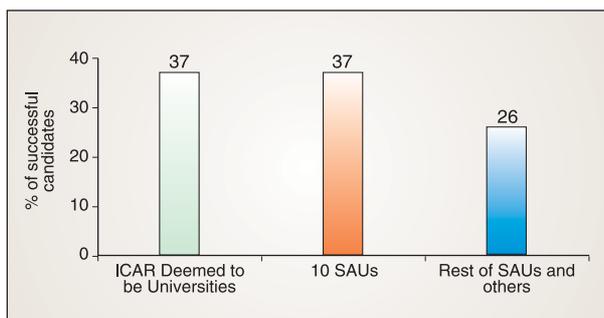


Details of NET Examination 2009

However, only 249 vacancies were filled. No candidate could qualify in Chemical Engineering and Electronics and Instrumentation disciplines.

The Board usually interviews/calls five candidates against each vacancy. But during the current year, the number of candidates who cleared written test was far below the target. In the discipline of Agricultural Physics, the number of vacancies and the number of candidates who cleared the written examination was almost equal, while in the discipline of Agricultural Statistics, it was even less than the number of vacancies. The number of successful female candidates was 50. Based on the analysis of the ARS results, some of the inferences drawn are:

- It appears that agricultural research system has become attractive to female candidates, as their number has increased during 2008-09. Out of 249 selected candidates, 20% were female.
- 12% selected candidates had Ph.D. degree and about the same number had job experience in temporary /permanent positions in other departments.
- Candidates belonging to OBC category outperformed general category, and claimed 28 seats of the general category. Candidates belonging to SC category also performed fairly well and claimed one seat of general category.
- State-wise distribution is skewed, as 87% ARS scientists came from just 10 states (Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, West Bengal, Kerala, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Orissa). The status of Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh had very little representation in the list of successful ARS candidates.
- Ten top state agricultural universities/deemed-



Organization-wise performance in ARS Examination 2007-08

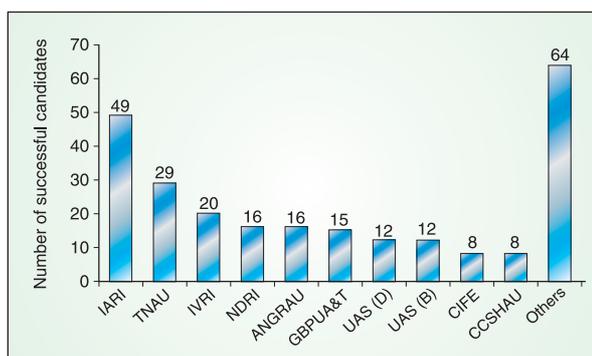
to-be universities contributed 74% of the successful ARS candidates. Of the successful candidates, 47% appeared in ARS examination for the first time.

Limited departmental audit and account examination 2008

Limited departmental competitive examination for Audit and Account personnel was conducted by the Board during November 2008 at 11 centres, in which 195 candidates appeared. Only six candidates cleared the Audit and Account Examination and 114 candidates cleared varying number of papers ranging from 1 to 4. In any future examination, these candidates will not be required to appear in papers they have already cleared.

Direct selection

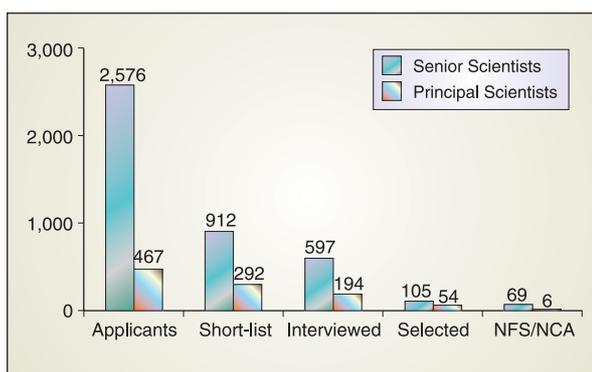
The Board completed the recruitment process for 275 posts during the year, for which more than 3,500 applications were received. After screening, 1,515 candidates were called for interview, but only 1,045 candidates attended the interview. These vacancies included 18 posts in the research management category (RMP), 45 in



Performance of the top 10 SAUs/ICAR deemed-to-be universities in ARS Examination 2007-08

the middle-level cadre (Heads, Joint Director and Project Co-ordinators) and the remaining in the Senior/Principal Scientist categories. The Board made positive recommendations in 201 cases, and for the rest of the posts, no candidate was found suitable.

With an average of 3.8 candidates appearing in the interview per vacant position, the competition was not so tough. But the inter-category distribution of the available candidates was highly skewed.



Recruitment details for positions of principal/senior scientists (NFS, None found suitable; NCA, no candidates available)

Posts for which the Board has completed the recruitment process

Name of post(s)	No. of post (s)	No. of applications	Candidates called for interview	Candidates interviewed	Candidates selected	NFS/NCA*
Deputy Director-General	1	17	13	10	1	0
Assistant Director-General	4	78	30	20	4	0
Director of National Institute	3	86	41	34	3	0
Director	9	129	68	49	8	1
Project Director	2	44	23	17	2	0
Joint Director of National Institute	1	6	5	4	1	0
Joint Director	1	8	5	4	1	0
Head of Division	41	396	253	174	36	5
Project Co-ordinator	3	45	34	22	3	0
Principal Scientist	49	371	232	152	43	6
Senior Scientist	161	2,387	811	559	99	62
Total	275	3,567	1,515	1,045	201	74

*NFS, None found suitable; NCA, no candidate available

Availability of the candidates for the posts of principal scientists was very low, and about 33% of selections were based on 1-2 eligible candidates. It seems there is an acute shortage of candidates in the feeder cadre of Senior Scientist/Associate Professor. In spite of the relaxed qualifications for the post of senior scientists, about 39% positions remained vacant as no suitable candidates were available.

Right to Information Act -2005

During the year, Board received 47 cases, largely relating to the role of ASRB. The information sought concerned disclosures of name of experts, marks secured in the scorecard and interviews, procedures of screening for direct recruitment, and photocopy of application form and marks secured in the ARS/NET examination etc. Out of

47 cases only, four candidate filed appeal with CIC against the ASRB decision. All the cases were disposed off successfully to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Reforms

The Board had constituted a committee to revise the guidelines for assessment of scientists placed in Units of Zonal Co-ordinator and Project Co-ordinator. The proposal for conducting NET/ARS examinations online is under active consideration of the Board.

The qualifications for the post of senior scientists under alternate qualification has been modified. The candidates are now required to have a minimum of two papers with NAAS rating of 6 and above emanating out of post-doctoral research work or in any subsequent regular position. □

