

Appraisal system for civil servants stays

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PUTRAJAYA: The government's competency level appraisal system for civil servants, known as the Penilaian Tahap Kecekapan (PTK), will remain despite Cuepacs' demand that it be abolished.

The system, according to Public Service Department corporate communications head Hasniah Rashid, had been accommodating and flexible in that civil servants need not sit for the tests in order to obtain promotion.

Hasniah said under the system, several mechanisms were used to increase the chances of civil servants, especially those in the lower-ranking and support category, for promotion.

"The PTK concept is simple. There must be an assessment of whatever you do. The mechanisms come in different forms and it is up to the heads of departments or agencies to decide which one, be it in the form of examination, observation or course.

"They can decide on which instrument to be used to evaluate the attitude, skills and knowledge of their staff.

"Professional development definitely comes in the form of an examination but for drivers, gardeners, hospital attendants or workers with Standard Six qualifications, for instance, they can always be observed by the respective heads of department for upgrading purposes.

"Interviews can be held, without them having to take the tests.

"Heads of department can also opt for them to attend evaluated courses. It is all up to them to decide what is best for their staff. We, in the PSD, do not have any say in this."

Cuepacs president Omar Osman had called the PTK a failure and said Cuepacs' did not want any more assessment based on tests.

Omar also alleged that studies done by Cuepacs showed that the objectives of the tests were not met

and they were irrelevant to some workers.

"Some of the workers have only Standard Six or Form Two qualifications. How are they to pass the test? We don't want tests. We are the implementers, not the thinkers," Omar said, adding that the PTK should be replaced with courses to promote life-long learning.

He was also quoted as saying that it would be embarrassing for someone with 30 years of service to fail the test despite having practical experience and cause loss of confidence for the senior workers.

The abolishment of the PTK and the increase of the civil servants' retirement age from 56 to 60 years were among the demands made by the civil service union.

Cuepacs is also asking for fully paid maternity leave to be extended to cover seven children instead of the current five, first-class maternity wards regardless of posi-

tion and for maternity leave to be increased from 60 to 84 days.

Hasniah said Omar knew the PSD's stance on PTK. "He knows our position well, having discussed this with us many times.

"When the New Remuneration Scheme was introduced years ago, Cuepacs made such a big noise, saying that only apple polishers in the civil service would get to be promoted. That was the reason why the PTK was introduced.

"The PTK is an objective assessment method to gauge the work of civil servants, their attitudes, skills and knowledge. It should be looked at in a wider context. We hope Cuepacs will be more practical in its demands."

She also said that PTK's mechanisms would be reviewed from time to time to accommodate particularly long-serving civil servants.

"The PSD will always look into enhancing the system for the benefit of all civil servants."