

CIVIL SERVICE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT: HISTORICAL ASPECTS AND CHALLENGES³¹

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Surenchimeg Dulamsuren
Rector, NAOG

Abstract: This paper outlines the century-long history of Mongolia's civil service training institution, the National Academy of Governance (NAOG), which plays a crucial role in meeting the contemporary needs of training and developing human resources within the civil service sector. The institution's history is divided into three phases:

- **The Foundation Period (1924-1962):** This phase includes the establishment of the civil service training institution, beginning with the Party's temporary school and its subsequent evolution.
- **The Formation of a System for Training of the Government and State Leaders (1963-1994):** During this phase, the system for training state leaders was developed, with the institution playing a vital role.
- **The Modern Period (1994-Present):** The period during which the institution matured into a modern civil service training academy.

As the National Academy of Governance reflects on its century-long history and enters a new era, it faces new challenges similar to those that were encountered and overcome in the past. The Academy's 100-year history is not only a testament to its resilience but also to its continuous contribution to the nation's interests, regardless of the political system or the form of social structure. This history is integral part of civil servant training and development in Mongolia.

Keywords: Civil servant, civil servant training and development, civil service training institution

Introduction

The century-long history of training and developing civil servants in Mongolia is inextricably intertwined with the history of the civil service training institution, which has evolved from the Party's temporary school established in 1924 to the present-day of the National Academy of Governance (NAOG). Despite undergoing 12 major and minor transformations and changes in name, the institution has consistently fulfilled its role in training, preparing, and requalifying human resources for the Mongolian government.

This paper briefly examines the training and development of civil servants in Mongolia through the three phases of the Academy's development and identifies the challenges facing the civil service training at the beginning of the new century.

³¹ Translated by Ariuntuya Myagmar

One. The foundation period of the Civil Service Training Institution (1924-1962)

This period encompasses the establishment and early development of the civil service training institution. It was found as the Party's Temporary School, which was soon renamed as the Central School of the Party. The institution underwent several name changes during this period, evolving into the Central School of the Party and State, the School of New Forces of the Party, the Party's Higher School, and eventually the Institute of the Economy.

The Party's Temporary School (PTS) was established in 1924, with the purpose of training and preparing over 60 members, gathered from provinces and "shavi"/regions/, for one and a half months special training to support in local governance, after which they were assigned to all corners of Mongolia to assist the government" (as recorded in the "Congress/Ikh Khural of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party/MPRP", 1979). The phrase "assisting the government" in this context implies that the purpose of the school was to train personnel who would help establish and stabilize the public administration of that time. The Temporary School has operated for one year, and due to the growing scope of its activities and the societal need for such training, it was expanded and renamed as the "Central School of the Party" in the following year. Classroom training lasted for 15 days, and practical work continued for 15 days, indicating that the training program was relatively short, lasting for about one month.

The Central School of the Party (CSP) was officially inaugurated on April 28, 1925, with the full participation of not only party officials but also the highest government leaders of the time. The school was housed in the "Khaistai Urgoo," that served as the summer palace of Mongolia's last king, located between the Tuul and Dund Rivers. This location is the same site where the current National Academy of Governance stands, and some buildings of the king's original palace remained and still exist today. Since that time, the Academy has continued to exist and expand in this location. Initially, the CSP offered a one-year program, which was gradually extended to three years starting from its' second year, 1926. This period marked the beginning of a shift towards longer-term training, not only meeting the immediate needs of the party and administrative services but also providing extended education. The training of civil servants had to be conducted alongside basic literacy and general education programs because not only the public administration, but the nation was wholly suffering from an acute shortage of skilled human resources. To address this great need and demand, the education sector and training programs were rapidly expanding.

In 1934, the Central School of the Party was reorganized and renamed as the "**Central School of the Party and State.**" At that time, the concept of "Party" encompassed both governmental and administrative affairs, and until this point, the training of civil servants had been conducted under the name of the Party's school. However, with the renaming as the Central School of the Party and State, new economic sectors began to emerge in Mongolia. Consequently, the Cooperative institute and the People's institute were merged with the school.

The institution thus began providing two main types of training: training for the party and state leaders, and training for economic enterprises. Additionally, the third type of training, focused on the general education, including literacy and the general education continued to be offered. Starting from 1937, the number of students admitted annually increased to 100, with 20 of these students being prepared for the next level of training at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in Moscow. During its seven years of operation from 1934 to 1941, the Central School of the Party and State graduated 282 students.

On July 24, 1941, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) issued Decree No. 37, which reorganized the Central School of the Party and State into the **"Higher School of the New Forces of the Party" (HSNFP)**. The main requirements for this change, like previous reorganizations, was a severe shortage of skilled personnel across all sectors of society, not just within the party and government. To address this issue, the school offered 3- and 6-month preparatory courses to help candidates who did not meet the admission requirements. In the first intake in 1941, 60 students were enrolled, and by the first graduation in 1943, 41 students had completed their studies.

Even with this special preparatory training, it was still deemed insufficient. Therefore from 1947, the duration of the preparatory courses was extended to two years. In 1949, three teaching methodology committees were established, with each committee responsible for different subjects. The school was also reorganized into a departmental structure. From this period onwards, the school began to annually publish collections of lecture notes and books prepared by the faculty. In 1952, the school's Academic Council was established, laying the foundation for research activities.

On June 21, 1954, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) issued a Resolution reorganizing **the Higher School of New Forces of the Party (HSNFP)** into the **"Party's Higher School (PHS)."** As it was now a higher education institution, the duration of the training program was extended to four years, with new entrants required to complete a four-year program, and the duration of the preparatory courses was set to one year. However, due to the large demand for managerial personnel, the Central Committee decided in 1955 to reduce the duration of the main course back to three years. The primary reason for this reorganization was the growing need for higher level managerial staff driven by economic growth.

In addition, starting in 1955, the school offered 3- and 6-month courses to train agricultural managers and cooperative leaders. Between 1955 and 1960, 897 people completed these courses, while around 300 students graduated from the main training program each year.

Following a decision by the Central Committee of the Party, the principle of combining theory with practice was implemented. This involved organizing theoretical conferences on specific economic issues, requiring faculty members to visit and familiarize themselves with the work and life in agricultural cooperatives and state farms, and assigning them to work on specific research

topics within the agricultural sector. From this period onwards, faculty members of the PHS were dispatched to the Soviet Union for study at the Party's Higher School and a graduate school of the Academy of State and Social Research, where they could earn candidate (equivalent to a Ph.D.) and doctoral degrees. The council for awarding academic degrees and titles was also established in collaboration with the Institute of Party History.

Although the PHS was granted the status of a higher education institution, due to the political and educational conditions at the time, it became difficult to consider graduates of the PHS as having received a higher education. Therefore, in 1959, the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) decided to dissolve the Party School and establish the "Higher School of Economics" (HSE) in its place. The Faculty of Economics from the National University of Mongolia (NUM) was transferred to this new school, and the economics curriculum, which previously trained general economists, was restructured to offer education in seven specialized fields, with corresponding professional departments established.

The training to improve the education and qualifications of the Party and State personnel was organized as a one-year permanent course under the Higher School of Economics. In this way, the HSE was established, and from the 1960-1961 academic year, it admitted 225 new students, along with students transferred from the second, third, and fourth years of the NUM, starting classes with a total of 460 students. However, the HSE was dissolved three years later, before its first cohort could graduate, and the Party's Higher School was reestablished.

Two. The period when the system for training state and government officials was established (1963-1994)

This period covers the restoration and stable operation of the Party's Higher School and its reorganization at the beginning of the transition as the School of Political Science and the Academy of Social Research.

In 1963, when the Higher School of Economics was dissolved and again integrated into the NUM, the Party's Higher School named after D. Sukhbaatar, was re-established under the Central Committee of the MPRP. The school operated steadily for about 30 years until 1990. It can be assumed that the training of political leaders or leading politicians primarily began in 1963. Gradually, the role of the PHS in providing general and professional education diminished, transitioning to the NUM in 1975 with the establishment of a faculty for upgrading the qualifications of managerial staff or training managers for state enterprises. Consequently, the professional educational responsibilities primarily shifted away from PHS. From this time, the PHS began evolving into a genuine party and state training school.

The practice of imparting higher political education to personnels with higher education degrees continued until 1990. The term "higher political education" can currently be understood as a variant of the concept of state governance. Between 1980 and 1990, while the PHS was training middle and lower-tier

political leaders or managers, the training of top-tier leaders was primarily provided in academies of the Soviet Union. By the end of the 1990 academic year, the activities of the Party's Higher School (PHS) had terminated, and its assets and property were transferred to the state, creating for the first time in history a condition where the state was the founder of this school.

Under the 64th Resolution of 1990 of the Presidium of the People's Great Assembly/Ikh Khural of the Mongolian People's Republic, the School of Political Science under the People's Ikh Khural was established, with the defined roles of training and preparing state officials, enhancing their professional skills, and conducting research in political and social sciences. However, the "School of Political Science" existed for only one academic year before it was dissolved, and its functions were absorbed by the Academy of State and Social Research under the State Lover/Baga Khural.

By the 44th Resolution of 1991 of the State Baga Khural, the **Academy of State and Social Research (ASSR)** was established with the mission "to learn and study the Mongolian tradition of governance under the new circumstances of the political system and market relations of the MPR, and to enhance the scientific justification and effectiveness of state policy and operations." The ASSR lasted for about three years and primarily focused on continuing the educational programs that started earlier, without initiating any new training programs, and concentrated on research activities.

In summary, the second period of training state officials, which lasted for 30 years, marks a fundamental change in training leadership personnel. The establishment and organization of schools and departments, along with the state becoming the founder, indicate that by the end of this period, due to societal changes, our training institution for state officials had evolved into a democratic state training and research institute, fulfilling a comprehensive system for preparing state and national administrative officials.

Three. The modern period of civil servant training institutions (from 1994 to the present)

This section will consider the current state of training and development of state officials, with the integration of three institutions—the Academy of State and Social Research, the Institute of Management Development, and the Centre for the Study of State Policy and Social Issues—into the Institute of State Administration and Management Development, which was transformed into the Academy of Governance. This reflects the ongoing evolution of the training institutions for state officials up to today.

In 1992, following the revision of the Constitution of Mongolia, the State's Higher Institution known as the State Baga Khural was dissolved, and the **Academy of State and Social Research (ASSR)** was re-founded under the jurisdiction of the State Ikh Khural. Subsequently, in 1994, the State Ikh Khural transferred the responsibility for reorganizing ASSR to the government's jurisdiction. By the government decision, three organizations— Academy of State and Social Research, the Institute for Management Development under

the state and the government, and the Centre for the Study of State Policy and Social Issues—were merged into the “Institute of State Administration and Management Development” (ISAMD) by the government’s 19th Resolution in 1994. In March of the same year, the Government’s 52nd Resolution approved its’ regulations, structure, staffing, and funding. According to these regulations, the ISAMD was designated as the government training and research institution with the primary mission of training and retraining civil servants and business managers upon the requests of the State Ikh Khural, the President, the Government, the General Council of the Judiciary, and the other relevant organizations. It was also tasked with conducting pivotal research and urgent studies on important issues of state policy and management. A significant change occurred in 1996 when the government transformed ISAMD into an executive agency of the government, giving a status of a structural unit of the government institution. A major part of the training since 1994 has involved not only training of state officials but also offering degree programs such as a bachelor’s in public administration, master’s degrees in business and education, and social management, as well as doctoral degrees in public administration. These master and doctoral training programs are still ongoing.

The institute has also managed training programs specializing in state, business, and social administration.

In 1999, the Mongolian Government renamed the Institute of State Administration and Management Development to the “Academy of Governance” without fundamentally changing the organization’s mission or operations. However, in 2012, the government removed the agency status of the Academy, transitioning it out of the government structure and placing it under the supervision of the Civil Service Council of Mongolia while maintaining its original duties. Some adjustments were made within its mandate regarding the training activities.

By the Government Resolution No. 44 of 2012, the mandate of the Academy was defined as providing professional and methodological advice to state and administrative organizations, training and retraining state officials, conducting research and study to improve human resource management in the civil service, and organizing relevant training. This redefined the Academy’s role in more actively supporting the implementation of state policy and improving the capabilities within the civil service. In other words, the Academy has ceased providing training and bachelor’s degree programs in social management and has not accepted new enrolments in these programs. Additionally, it stopped offering training in business administration from 2017 onwards.

At the threshold of the new millennium, based on the actual needs of the present, the significance and purpose of the Academy of Governance are clearly defined in Article 64.3 of the Mongolian Law on Civil Service as “the government-affiliated civil service training institution responsible for training and retraining of state officials, conducting research and study in human resource management of the civil service, and providing professional and methodological advice to policymakers.” This framework encompasses all categories of civil service (political, administrative, special, and service

sectors), meaning that the concept of training for civil servants is not limited only to those in core governmental positions but also includes those in public management and political officials. This broad definition ensures that a comprehensive approach is taken towards the development and capability enhancement of all types of civil servants. Currently, out of the total of 226,469 civil servants, approximately 30 percent are in core governmental positions, which legally have the opportunity for training and development. These are mainly decision-making roles within government organizations, including those directly delivering government decisions to the public. However, there is no legal basis to train political officials working in public service roles to interact directly with citizens.

While the capacity and resources to train all civil servants are limited, proper organization and management allows for the training of approximately 40,000 individuals who work at the leadership levels of public service. Evidence of this is that in 2023, the Academy trained 76,582 civil servants through online courses and 19,794 through long-term, medium-term, and short-term classroom-based training sessions. Thus, the training of civil servants is not limited to the Management Academy alone. The education and development of civil servants extends beyond the internal programs of the academy, indicating a broader framework for capacity building within the civil service sector. In other words, we need to consider the training of civil servants not just within the confines of individual organizations but in a broader context.

To this end, we are trying to integrate the operations of organizations capable of training civil servants nationwide, expand the training options available to government agencies and enhance the quality and outcomes of the training provided, by linking these efforts to the human resources support system of the Civil Service Council of Mongolia (CSCM). This approach benefits not only government organizations, but also provides opportunities for growth for non-governmental organizations involved in such training. More precise opportunities can be identified by consolidating information about where and what training is conducted by various organizations and effectively showcasing their outcomes. This system is being developed to connect training outcomes with the government's human resources evaluation system, allowing units and officials responsible for civil service development under the Government Administration to be familiar with the specific results of everyone. This method aims to ensure that all aspects of government training are accounted for and evaluated effectively, enhancing the overall quality and impact of civil service training programs. We are implementing this system within the public-private partnership framework without incurring any costs to the government. To make this a reality, we obviously need to enhance and develop the internal capabilities of the Academy in all aspects.

The Academy of Governance has been fulfilling its fundamental duty to train and develop civil servants at any time, and especially the last 30 years are the years since we have been working diligently to modernize the training system for state officials in step with the development of humanity.

Four. Challenges in civil servant training at the beginning of the new century

1. *Content and scope of training (technology and educational dependencies):*

Integrating all these aspects, it becomes clear that the century-long history of civil servant training implemented by the Academy of Governance cannot be adequately explained solely through educational theory. This is because the activities and roles are always broader and more diverse, containing unique characteristics that go beyond the usual scope and duties of educational institutions, making it insufficient to evaluate and define them strictly within the internal logic of educational institution development.

Therefore, the history, current reality, and future trends of the Academy can be considered based on the concept of the “race between education and technology” proposed by Goldin and Katz. The core idea of this theory is that education and technology have evolved in strong interdependence; however, the relationship is not unidirectional. Instead, there are periods when one advances ahead of the other, leading to a situation where they alternately lead and follow in a kind of “race.”

This competition between education and technology is further influenced by other societal factors, particularly by the industrial revolution, which shapes demand and supply dynamics. The development of both education and technology is driven forward by societal and, specifically, industrial factors. However, not at the same pace Industrialization itself, as well as the sectors of society based on it, generate a significant demand for new technologies and techniques. With the advent of the digital revolution following the industrial revolution, technological development has begun to outpace education. It seems there is a tendency to lead by a considerable margin. According to scientific forecasts (for the next 20-30 years), technology is expected to continue leading soon. Education seems to be lagging! Looking at the history from 1924 to the present, the interplay between education and technology, conditioned by the industrial revolution, was evident in the past. However, for the present and near future, this interplay appears to be shaped by the digital revolution, highlighting a distinct dynamic in the race between education and technology.

2. *The methods and forms of training (transition from upskilling to reskilling):*

In recent educational theory, two closely related concepts are widely used: “skill-based” training and “the new normal,” which focuses more on technology-oriented training. Internationally, the emphasis is shifting from merely enhancing existing skills (upskilling) to teaching new skills altogether (reskilling), which is becoming increasingly important. Interestingly, training in public administration has inherently been “skill-based,” and this remains true today. Therefore, focusing the future development of the Academy on the intersection of “skill-based” training and “new skills, technology-oriented” training represents one of the most critical challenges at the beginning of the new century. The most concrete example of this approach will be seen in the instructors and staff working within the state’s training institutions themselves.

3. Digitalization: It is becoming impossible to conduct training activities without digitalization. One of the defining features of our era is the clear emergence of digitalization. Thus, it's evident that staying outside the ongoing global digital or cyber revolution is no longer an option. In this context, in 2020 the Academy of Governance evaluated its information technology conditions, developed a roadmap for development, and has been collaboratively implementing it. There is also a growing need to accelerate and intensify the development of this work. Additionally, unlike traditional higher educational institutions that often operate in a relatively academic and independent manner, the training activities at the Academy are directly targeted towards meeting the immediate and future needs of public administration development, making it essential to integrate closely with technological advancements.

4. Faculty Resources and Supply: A persistent issue that has continued from the past to the present in institutions providing training for public administrators is the problem of human resources or faculty. Today, there is a global shortage of teachers, and our country is also experiencing this shortage. Generally, individuals working in universities and higher education institutions are required to have at least a master's degree. However, especially in our country, there is a crucial shortage of faculty members with a doctoral degree in modern public administration science to work in civil service training institutions. Therefore, the possibility of recruiting faculty members with a doctoral degree in public administration has become almost non-existent, forcing a deviation from the long-standing policy of "the academy only hires faculty with doctoral degrees." This is an academic requirement. On the other hand, training in public administration is not merely academic education like that provided in universities and colleges, which focuses solely on scientific knowledge and education. Instead, it is a type of training that offers civil servants with practical knowledge and skills that can be directly applied to their work. Therefore, a faculty member at the Academy should not only be knowledgeable in scientific subjects but also experienced in applying this knowledge practically and skilled in the relevant competencies. In other words, faculty at institutions of public administration training (not only our Academy but any such institution) are expected to be experts capable of advising and resolving complex issues and challenges within state operations and government organizations. This is a key distinction that sets our Academy apart from conventional higher education institutions. Analogous to natural and technical sciences, a professor or scholar is expected not only to make scientific discoveries but also to transform these discoveries into practical applications, much like an engineer does with scientific innovations. Therefore, the first step as we move into the next century is to develop a system that prepares such educators, which is essential for advancing our capabilities in civil service training.

Anyone can be a good teacher but being a "human" and a "role model," exemplifying the content they teach, is considered the most "critical" criterion for a faculty member at the Academy. This is evident both from the

old pages of history and from today's reality. In discussing this, I remember the faculty member who says: "My subject is not about what does it mean to be a 'human'". However, since there is no action without human involvement, the lecturer themselves must embody behaviour and reflect an image of a real civil servant who provides public service. For instance, if the topic is about legal content, the instructor must demonstrate through his/her own action how the laws are practically implemented. If the topic involves content on communication, the instructor is like a real example of how to communicate with others effectively.

Conclusion

For the National Academy of Governance to function as a civil service training institution, it has taken on multiple responsibilities that go beyond merely teaching literacy and providing education or professional training in specific fields. It has successfully adapted to and implemented many duties as required by contemporary demands, effectively transitioning those roles to appropriate entities. While Mongolia of 1924 and post-1990 Mongolia is separated by about 70 years, they share several common characteristics despite their historical differences. A primary issue faced by Mongolia after 1990 was similar to the challenge of post-1924: establishing an entirely new society. This is a rare phenomenon and exceptional in the history of any nation or state.

In our Constitution, we have declared our paramount goal: "to develop a humane, civil democratic society in our homeland." This mission underscores the continuous effort to shape a society that aligns with democratic values and human rights, reflecting the ongoing evolution of Mongolia's societal and governance structures. Compared to the period after 1924, the current era did not face challenges in teaching literacy or providing basic education. However, it was still not possible to directly engage in the work of training civil servants. At the very least, there were no human resources trained in modern Public Administration to conduct civil service training. Therefore, the priority became preparing teachers and importing and localizing the field of Public Administration as a scientific discipline in Mongolia. In order to implement this function, the Academy was inevitably tasked with conducting both undergraduate and master's programs.

Additionally, like the early 20th century, the responsibility of training human resources in economic management was placed on the shoulders of the Academy. At a time when there were no other public or private institutions offering business management training, the training of business administration professionals was not merely an internal issue for private entrepreneurs but an inseparable part of building and developing the national economy. Therefore, the government had no choice but to take on this task. The government could not simply support the emerging private property-based economy with policies alone and leave it at that. As a result, the Academy continued to take responsibility for the training of economic management personnel, repeating the historical events of the early 20th century. However, just like before 1990, the Academy's involvement in business administration and social management

training is often criticized as interfering in other areas. On the contrary, through this process, the NAOG not only introduced and developed the sciences of business and other management disciplines in Mongolia, but also laid the foundation for other similar training institutions to stand on their own. At the same time, almost all foreign projects aimed at developing the sciences of public and business administration in Mongolia were first implemented at the Academy of Governance.

The founding body of the NAOG has always been a higher government organization throughout its history and continues to be so. For a certain period, from 1996 to 2012, it operated with the status of an executive agency under the government, fulfilling dual roles as both an educational institution and a public administration entity, which was no coincidence. The 100-year history of the Academy as an institution for civil service training can be seen as a history of unwavering service to the national interest, regardless of the political system or social structure. It is an inseparable part of the history of training and developing Mongolia's civil servants.

References

- The Constitution of Mongolia (1992)
- Law on Civil Service (2017)
- Resolution No. 64 of the Presidium of the People's Great Khural of the Mongolian People's Republic (1990). Ulaanbaatar
- Lkhagva, T. (2009). Academy of Management: A Brief History. Ulaanbaatar
- Resolution No. 37 of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (1941). Ulaanbaatar
- Resolution of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (1944). Ulaanbaatar
- Resolution No. 32 of the Government of Mongolia (2002). Ulaanbaatar
- The First University (1974). Ulaanbaatar
- Academy of Management (2014). Memories and Recollections. Ulaanbaatar
- Regulations of the Academy of Management (2018). Ulaanbaatar
- Resolution No. 44 of the State Baga Khural (1991). Ulaanbaatar