



ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINE AG/2011/3

1 November 2011

Staff Selection System

I. Background and purpose

1.1 This administrative guideline for the establishment of the UNFCCC Staff Selection System has been developed on the basis of the principles outlined in Article 101.3 of the Charter of the United Nations and Article IV of UN Staff Regulations.

1.2 The purpose of the UNFCCC Staff Selection System is to ensure that the secretariat obtains staff with the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.

II. Definitions

2.1 The following definitions apply for the purposes of this administrative guideline and of the related administrative guideline on Review Bodies (AG/2007/5 Amend. 1):

2.1.1 *Generic evaluation criteria*: objective criteria established on the basis of a generic post description and, after approval by the Review Board, used for the evaluation of candidates for a particular position. Evaluation criteria are derived from job requirements identified in the post description, core competencies (behaviour, skills and attributes necessary for the successful performance of the functions of the post), educational requirements, work experience and language skills.

2.1.2 *Specific evaluation criteria*: objective criteria established on the basis of the specific functions and job requirements identified in the post description and, after approval by the Review Board, used for the evaluation of candidates for a particular position.

2.1.3 *Generic post description*: classified standard post description applied to a group of jobs with similar major characteristics in terms of duties, responsibilities, education, work experience, technical skills and essential core competencies. It forms the basis for the generic evaluation criteria.



2.1.4 *Internal candidates*: serving UNFCCC staff members holding an appointment under the Staff Rules, other than a temporary appointment, who have been recruited after a competitive process under staff rule 4.15 (review by a central review body). Staff members of the separately administered United Nations funds and programmes, as well as Junior Professional Officers are not considered internal candidates.

2.1.5 *Internal rostered candidates*: internal candidates, as defined in 2.1.4 above, who have been approved by the Executive Secretary to be included in the roster following a regular recruitment process.

2.1.6 *Interview Panel*: a panel normally comprised of at least three members, with two being subject matter experts at the same or higher level of the post, at least one being female and one being from outside of the work unit where the post is located. For a D-2 level post the panel should normally be comprised of at least three members, with two being from outside the Programme, and at least one female. Normally, panel members should represent diverse nationalities. Panel members shall be free of any interest in the recruitment process that would constitute a conflict of interest.

2.1.7 *External candidates*: All candidates, excluding internal candidates, but including staff currently serving under a temporary appointment, interns and consultants.

2.1.8 *External rostered candidates*: external candidates as defined in 2.1.7 above, who has been approved by the Executive Secretary to be included in the roster following a regular recruitment process.

2.1.9 *Hiring manager*: the official responsible for the filling of a vacant position. The hiring manager is accountable to his/her head of programme to ensure the delivery of mandated activities by effectively and efficiently managing staff and resources placed under his or her supervision.

2.1.10 *Lateral move*: A move to a different post at the same level. The new post may be in the same or different programme of the secretariat. Within the same programme, a lateral move will normally involve a change of supervisor. When the supervisor remains the same, a lateral move will involve a substantial change of responsibilities.

2.1.11 *Roster*: list of candidates who have previously been endorsed by a review body for a particular vacancy but not selected for it, and who have indicated an interest in being considered for selection for a future vacancy with similar functions at the same level. Candidates may be placed on a roster for posts at levels up to and including P-4 and remain on the roster for a period of one year.

2.1.12 *Review Board*: joint advisory body established under the UNFCCC secretariat administrative guideline on Review Bodies (AG/2007/5) or any amendments thereto.

2.1.13 *Spouse*: a partner in a legally recognized marriage or contracted domestic partnership as defined by the laws of the country of the staff member's nationality.

2.1.14 *Vacant post*: a post (approved for one year or longer) that is not blocked for the return of a staff member on mission assignment, special leave, secondment, temporary assignment or loan.

2.1.15 *UNFCCC post*: A post established by the Conference of the Parties or the Executive Secretary and funded from resources directly managed by the secretariat.

III. General provisions

3.1 This administrative guideline sets out the procedures applicable to the staff selection process and governs the recruitment, placement, promotion and mobility of staff.



3.2 All staff are encouraged to move to new functions throughout their careers. To facilitate and regulate these movements staff members and external candidates are notified of immediate and anticipated vacancies, subject to the provisions of para 5.1 of this guideline.

3.3 Pursuant to the administrative guideline on Review Bodies (AG/2007/5), paragraphs 4.5 to 4.7, selection decisions are made by the Executive Secretary upon receipt of advice from the Review Board that the evaluation criteria have been properly applied and that the applicable procedures have been followed.

3.4 The Executive Secretary has the authority to transfer staff members to vacant posts at the same level.

3.5 The Executive Secretary has the authority to appoint internal and external candidates at one level below the level of the advertised post, in consultation with the candidate concerned.

3.6 The UNFCCC secretariat is committed to pursue the achievement of gender and geographic balance for all posts in the Professional (P) and the Managerial (D) categories. In particular, the secretariat aims to achieve the goal of a 50/50 gender distribution as set by the United Nations General Assembly. These objectives shall be an integral part of the recruitment process when considering and selecting external and internal candidates (see paragraph 5.14).

3.7 Mindful of United Nations Staff Regulation 4.4, the secretariat recognizes that, without prejudice to the recruitment of new talent at all levels, due consideration shall be given, to the greatest possible extent, to qualifications, relevant experience and institutional knowledge of persons already in the service of the secretariat when filling vacant positions. Where an internal and an external candidate are deemed to be equally qualified for a post, preference shall be given to the internal candidate.

IV. Applicability

4.1 The system shall apply to staff members and external candidates applying for posts with duration of appointment of one year or longer. The process leading to appointment or promotion to the D-level shall be governed by the provisions of this guideline, except that the functions normally discharged by the Review Board shall be discharged by an ad-hoc group convened by the Executive Secretary.

V. Procedures

Vacancy announcements

5.1 Posts approved to be filled for one year or longer shall be advertised in a vacancy announcement except in cases falling under the provisions of para 3.4, para 5.22, and paras 6.1 and 6.2 of this guideline.

5.2 Vacancy announcements shall be published electronically. They will be placed on the UNFCCC intranet and on the UNFCCC web site. Staff will be informed of current vacancies by e-mail.

5.3 The head of the requesting programme and hiring manager shall be responsible for requesting the announcement of immediate or anticipated vacancies, with the assistance of



the head of the Administrative Services programme. Vacancies shall normally be announced as quickly as possible. Taking into account considerations relating to work programme implementation, post management and budgetary constraints, the Executive Secretary may decide to delay the announcement of a vacancy, following advice from the head of Administrative Services. The vacancy announcement shall state the classified¹ functions of the post and the qualifications, skills and competencies required. Each vacancy announcement shall indicate the date of posting and specify a deadline by which all applications must be received.

5.4 The hiring manager prepares the vacancy announcement in cooperation with the Human Resources Unit (HRU), based on the classified Job Description and Recruitment Profile forms. If the generic evaluation criteria previously approved by the review board do not apply to the post, the hiring manager shall prepare, in cooperation with the HRU, for review and approval by the Review Board, the specific evaluation criteria to be used for evaluating the candidates.

5.5 Vacancies shall be announced both internally and externally at the same time with a deadline of 30 calendar days. The deadline of the vacancy may be extended up to a maximum of 45 days if the head of programme, taking into account the views of the head of the Administrative Services programme, wishes to increase the number of candidates.

For posts up to and including the P-3 level, applications of eligible internal candidates, including internal roster candidates, shall be considered after 14 calendar days. Staff members are encouraged to submit their applications within the 14 calendar days from the date of its posting to ensure early consideration. Internal candidates considered as not eligible will be given written justification from the HRU on the reasons for such decision.

External candidates and external roster candidates will only be considered upon determination by the head of the requesting programme that no suitable internal candidate who applied within 14 calendar days from the date of the posting of the vacancy announcement has been selected for the vacancy. In such case, internal candidates should be informed about the reason(s) of non-selection and given feedback on interview and final selection by the respective head of programme or hiring manager.

Internal applications submitted beyond 14 calendar days after the posting of the vacancy announcement will be considered by the hiring manager together with external applications after the close of the deadline of the vacancy announcement. Internal candidates who applied within 14 calendar days from the posting of the vacancy announcement and considered thereafter but not selected may be reconsidered at the 30-day mark.

For vacancies at the level of P-4 and above, internal candidates, including internal roster candidates, will be considered together with external candidates after the deadline indicated in the vacancy announcement. Internal candidates for posts at P-4 level, including internal roster candidates, may be considered within 14 days from the posting of the vacancy announcement, upon prior approval by the Executive Secretary of a request by the head of the recruiting programme.

Eligibility requirements

Internal candidates

5.6 UNFCCC staff members are eligible to apply for any position advertised provided that

¹ In accordance with Note for Clarification on Job Classification of 1 July 2010



(a) they fulfil the eligibility requirements of the post as provided in the annex to this guideline;

(b) at the time the vacancy announcement is issued, they have served in their current post for a minimum period of one year. Lateral transfer at the initiative of the organization does not interrupt accumulation of one-year tenure in the post.

External candidates

5.7 External candidates may be considered for any vacancy if they apply by the deadline indicated in the vacancy announcement and fulfil the eligibility requirements of the post in question. This provision is, however, subject to the following restrictions or conditions:

- (a) Fellows and professional officers seconded by governments may not apply within six months of the conclusion of their current assignment with the secretariat. Bilaterally funded junior professional staff of the secretariat and other United Nations organizations may only apply upon completion of their assignment;
- (b) Spouses (as defined in paragraph 2.1) of serving staff members at D-1 level and above are not eligible to be considered for any appointments or for employment as contractors or consultants. Where spouses of serving staff members at P-5 level and below are considered for employment, the following conditions apply:
 - (i) He/she may not be considered for temporary appointments under staff rule 4.12, individual contractor or consultant contracts, or as daily staff (with the exception of engagements as daily staff during conferences held in the Bonn region);
 - (ii) He/she is fully qualified for the fixed-term post for which he or she is being considered;
 - (iii) He/she has not been given any preference by virtue of the relationship to the staff member;
 - (iv) He/she will not be assigned to serve in a post which is in a direct line of authority to or administered by the staff member to whom he or she is related; and
 - v) Spouses will be disqualified from participating in any process which reaches or reviews an administrative decision affecting the status or entitlements of the staff member who is his or her spouse.

(c) An external candidate who at the time of the application serves on a temporary appointment will be considered for a post at a level higher than his/her current grade only after one year of continuous service.

(d) As of the posting date of a vacancy announcement, the minimum age to be eligible for consideration for a position is 18, with a mandatory retirement age of 60 years for staff members who joined the UN Pension Scheme prior to 1 January 1990 and 62 years for staff members who joined the UN Pension Scheme from 1 January 1990 onwards. Persons who would reach the applicable retirement age prior to completing the full period of an initial fixed-term contract of eighteen months will normally not be considered for employment.

5.8 Candidates must submit a completed United Nations Personal History form (P-11). Wherever possible, applications should be submitted electronically.



- 5.9 Candidates may apply for several vacancies for which they feel qualified.
- 5.10 Together with the application, internal candidates shall submit a copy of their last completed performance appraisal report.
- 5.11 Applications shall be submitted to the HRU, as indicated in the vacancy announcement.
- 5.12 The HRU shall determine eligible candidates and enter respective information in the electronic recruitment system (E-P11). Upon finalization of this process, the head of the requesting programme or/and hiring manager will be given access to a complete record of all applications for the Vacancy Announcement in the E-P11 system for further revision of eligible candidates. Access to the names and other relevant documentation of candidates from the roster for posts in similar functions and at the same level as the post under recruitment will also be provided to the hiring manager.

Consideration and selection

5.13 The hiring manager shall evaluate eligible candidates and roster candidates transmitted by the Human Resources Unit for consideration and decide on the short list for further assessment. In doing so, he or she shall give fullest consideration to internal candidates. Interviews are required for all short-listed candidates. Interviews shall be conducted by a panel, as defined in paragraph 2.1 above, convened by the hiring manager and approved by the HRU. The HRU shall advise on other necessary assessment tools, such as tests, presentations, and/or other evaluation mechanisms to ensure a comprehensive assessment of all technical, generic or specific evaluation criteria indicated in the Recruitment Profile form.

5.14 The head of programme shall recommend a candidate for approval by the Executive Secretary based on a reasoned and documented record of the evaluation of the proposed candidate against the applicable evaluation criteria prepared by the hiring manager.

When considering suitable internal candidates, preference may be given to candidates who have served in two or more posts at the same level before applying for a higher-level post.

In making the recommendation, the head of programme shall demonstrate that he or she has made every effort to identify candidates whose selection would contribute to achieving the secretariat goal of a balanced geographical and gender distribution. In particular, preference shall be given to women in the cases when equally well-qualified male and female candidates are considered.

The head of programme may, where appropriate, also provide a list of other suitable candidates in ranked order together with their evaluations.

5.15 The head of programme's recommendation shall be supported by the recommendation of the Review Board.

5.16 Should the candidate selected by the head of programme be an eligible roster candidate who is suitable for the vacancy, the Executive Secretary may appoint the candidate without reference to the Review Board as provided in paragraph 5.21.

Review Board

5.17 Except as provided for in paragraph 5.16 above, the Review Board shall review the proposal made by the head of programme for filling a vacancy, in accordance with the administrative guideline on Review Bodies (AG/2007/5 Amend. 1).



Decision

5.18 Except in instances covered by paragraph 5.16 above, the selection of a suitable candidate shall be made by the Executive Secretary upon receipt of the advice by the Review Board or the ad hoc group referred to in paragraph 4.1 above. The advice of the review body shall be given due consideration.

5.19 The Executive Secretary shall select the candidate he or she considers to be best suited for the functions of the post, giving full consideration to candidates already in the service of the secretariat. In selecting the most suitable candidates, he/she shall take into account the secretariat's goal of geographical and gender balance, as set out in paragraph 3.5 above.

5.20 Candidates included in a list endorsed by the Review Board, other than the candidate selected for the specific position, for posts at levels up to and including P-4, shall be placed on a roster of candidates pre-approved for posts with similar functions and at the same level following approval by the Executive Secretary. The placement shall be valid for one year after the first day of the month following the selection by the Executive Secretary of the most suitable candidate for the post.

5.21 Subject to the provisions of paragraph 5.13 above, candidates included on the roster may be recommended to the Executive Secretary by the head of programme for a subsequent vacancy, without reference to a Review Board. However, if the short list for the vacancy in question contains other non-rostered internal candidates, the Executive Secretary shall select the most suitable candidate only upon receipt of the advice by the Review Board. In such cases, interviews for both rostered and non-rostered internal candidates should be conducted to ensure transparency.

5.22 If a selected candidate fails to take up the post, or vacates it within one year, and if other candidates have been recommended for the roster in connection with the particular vacancy, the Executive Secretary may, upon recommendation of the head of programme concerned, select a roster candidate without advertising the post or decide to advertise the post.

Notification and implementation of the decision

5.23 The HRU shall inform the selected candidate of the decision by the Executive Secretary. It shall also inform candidates placed on the roster that such placement will be valid for one year and advise them that they may be offered a similar post at the same level with a similar job description if such a post becomes available. All candidates who have been interviewed shall be informed in writing of the results of their application. Other candidates shall be advised of the outcome of the process through posting of the status of the recruitment process for the given post on the UNFCCC web site.

5.24 When an encumbered post has been reclassified to a higher level and a candidate other than the incumbent is selected, the decision shall only be implemented after three months, during which period every effort should be made to identify a suitable position in the secretariat for the incumbent.

5.25 Staff members who are selected for another post shall normally be released no later than one month after the date of the decision.



5.26 When the selection entails promotion to a higher level, the earliest possible date on which such promotion may become effective shall be the first day of the month following the decision, subject to the post in question being unencumbered.

VI. Placement authority outside the normal process

6.1 The Executive Secretary shall have the authority to place staff members in a suitable position in the following cases:

- (a) Incumbents of posts reclassified to a higher level for which a candidate other than the incumbent has been selected;
- (b) Staff who return from mission assignment after more than two years;
- (c) Staff affected by the abolition of posts or funding cutbacks, in accordance with staff rule 9.6 (e).

6.2 After determining the availability of a suitable position in consultation with the head of the programme concerned, the head of the Administrative Services programme and the staff member concerned, the Executive Secretary shall decide on the placement.

6.3 The Executive Secretary may accept staff members from other United Nations organizations on a non-reimbursable loan basis outside the UNFCCC selection system; such staff shall not be assigned against UNFCCC posts.

6.4 Professional officers from governments may, upon approval by the Executive Secretary, be placed in the secretariat as experts for a period of 12 months, with a possibility of an extension for a further 12 months, under a non-reimbursable loan agreement. Such staff shall not be assigned against UNFCCC posts.

VII. Transitional measures

7.1 Candidates for vacancies that have been advertised before the entry into force of these administrative guidelines shall be considered under the system in place at the time the position was advertised.

VIII. Final provisions

8.1 This administrative guideline and its annex shall enter into force on 1 November 2011.

8.2 Administrative Guideline AG/2007/1/Amend.1 of 25 June 2007 is hereby abolished.



Annex I

Eligibility requirements for posts at the UNFCCC secretariat

The following eligibility requirements apply to all fixed-term appointments regardless of the duration of contract. The table below shows the minimum requirements for placement at specific levels, in terms of academic qualifications and relevant work experience.

1. Relevant work experience

Any type of experience that would contribute to professional competencies/skills and that would prepare the candidate to perform the functions of the post (e.g., field of work, the knowledge of a particular issue covered by the job, publications related to the job, conferences attended related to the job and similar considerations) shall be considered relevant.

Relevant part-time work will be pro-rated in accordance with the percentage of full time (40 hours per week) worked.

Where a candidate has undertaken a relevant traineeship or apprenticeship (or practical experience), up to 50% of this time can be credited towards relevant work experience.

For transition from G to P posts, experience in the office support function is considered relevant if it is gained at least at G-5 level and experience satisfies the above definition. Experience should be documented through the work plans, performance appraisals, as well as through other available evidence and certified by the HRU. In case a G staff member applying to P position (up to P2) has previous relevant experience at professional level, it can be combined with experience in the office support function, which will be credited at 50% of the length of such experience (e.g., two years in office support function is equivalent to one year at professional level).

2. Educational Qualifications

A university degree from an accredited (officially recognized by the respective Government) university or educational institution is required for all posts at the professional level and higher. Candidates who apply for posts will be screened to ascertain that they meet the educational qualifications relevant to the post for which they have applied. Candidates who do not meet the relevant educational requirements will be considered ineligible.

The UNESCO “World Guide to Higher Education” will be used as a guide in determining the level of degrees in individual countries and their equivalence to a BA, MA, or PhD, as relevant. Information obtained from other reference material such as embassies and the educational institution concerned may also be used.

A combination of relevant academic qualifications and additional experience indicated in the table below may be accepted in lieu of the advanced degree.



Level	Minimum years of relevant experience	Minimum academic requirements	Additional years of relevant experience to replace lack of advanced degree.
P-1	-	BA or equivalent degree	N/A
P-2	3 at professional level or 6 in an office supporting function	BA or equivalent degree	N/A
P-3	5 at professional level	BA or equivalent degree	N/A
P-4	7 at professional level	MA or equivalent degree	3 at professional level
P-5	10 at professional level	MA or equivalent degree	5 at professional level
D-1	12 at professional level	MA or equivalent degree	9 at professional level
D-2	15 at professional level	PhD or equivalent degree	>9 at professional level
G-2	-	Completion of secondary education	
G-3	3	Completion of secondary education	
G-4	4	Completion of secondary education	
G-5	5	Completion of secondary education	
G-6	7	Completion of secondary education	