



30 December 2019

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## Administrative instruction

### Official forms management

The Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, pursuant to section 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin [ST/SGB/2009/4](#) and for the purpose of updating the policy for the management of official forms in hard copy and electronic format, promulgates the following:

#### Section 1

##### General provision

The purpose of the present administrative instruction is to clarify procedures relating to official forms and to ensure greater efficiency through the enhanced utilization of forms in hard copy and electronic format.

#### Section 2

##### Definitions

2.1. An official form is a paper or electronic document containing fixed text requesting specific information to be completed. It is a standardized tool for gathering, recording, processing and storing information. For the purpose of the present administrative instruction, the definition excludes letterheads and other stationery and their electronic equivalents.

2.2. Official forms management comprises the following:

(a) *Official forms analysis*. This involves challenging the need for each form and for each element in the form, determining the retention period, validity period and end use of each form, analysing the underlying procedures with a view to achieving simplification, determining the best sequence in which the required information can be recorded with a minimum of errors and facilitating the handling of the information at all user points. It also involves the regular review of existing forms in order to eliminate forms that may no longer be necessary, to improve and update forms in the light of changing requirements and to avoid duplication;

(b) *Official forms control*. This consists of authorizing the reproduction or distribution of only those forms that are determined to be necessary after analysis. It involves the assignment of an identifying symbol and the maintenance of a forms control file on each form, which serves as a record of all relevant transactions, for example, initial printing and reprinting when relevant, details of the submission of the form for incorporation into Umoja, Inspira or any other enterprise resource management system, electronic distribution, revisions, level of usage and cancellation. It also involves the maintenance of a forms catalogue listing all authorized forms;



(c) *Official forms design.* This involves organizing the actual content of a form once the analysis and control stages have been completed, preparing the basic layout and specifications and drafting the necessary instructions on how to complete the form;

(d) *Official forms selection of mode of distribution.* This involves determining the method of reproduction and distribution (e.g., internal or external printing, incorporation into Umoja, Inspira or any other enterprise resource management system, electronic version only), depending on the technical specifications, the intended users, volume and reproduction costs;

(e) *Official forms creation.* This involves preparing the master copy for the printer or sending the form for incorporation into Umoja, Inspira or any other enterprise resource management system or for electronic distribution in accordance with paragraph 2.2 (d ) above;

(f) *Official forms supply and distribution.* For hard copy forms, this involves arranging for adequate supplies and maintenance of forms at appropriate locations. For electronic forms, this involves ensuring the availability of correct, updated forms and the amendment or removal of forms that are obsolete, incomplete or inaccurate.

### **Section 3**

#### **Responsibilities of Secretariat entities**

3.1. Official forms are critical to the implementation of the policies and practices contained in administrative issuances and are an integral part of the Organization's policy framework. The Office of Human Resources shall have the principal responsibility for the management of official forms. It shall maintain the official forms catalogue, provide guidance to entities' forms liaison officers in matters of official forms management relating to their respective entity and consult with them on potential improvements, inform main user locations through the forms liaison officer when a form or a particular version of a form is declared obsolete and authorize the destruction of stocks or removal of electronic versions. It shall participate, with the responsible services, in other decisions relating to official forms reproduction, supply and distribution and, if required, shall organize appropriate training courses for staff interested in official forms management.

#### *Forms liaison officers in Secretariat entities*

3.2. Each entity that generates official forms shall designate a forms liaison officer to ensure the implementation of official forms management at the entity level. The basic responsibilities of the forms liaison officer shall include:

(a) Exercising first-line control on all requests for official forms, requests for revision and replenishment of official forms, and authorizing their submission to the Office of Human Resources;

(b) Maintaining a file for official forms originating in their entity;

(c) Ensuring that commonly used official forms meet the requirements of all entities, including organizational units away from Headquarters;

(d) Cancelling obsolete official forms promptly;

(e) Participating in official forms improvement projects;

(f) Bringing to the attention of the Office of Human Resources deficiencies in current official forms;

(g) Promoting cost-consciousness;

(h) Providing guidelines to officials in their entity for the control of unofficial forms that may be necessary for one-time local use, keeping a record of all such forms and ensuring that they are cancelled when their purpose has been accomplished.

#### **Section 4**

##### **Procedures for requesting assistance with regard to official forms**

When a new official form or a major revision of an existing official form is needed, the requesting official shall send a draft of the requested form to the Office of Human Resources, through the forms liaison officer of their entity. Upon completion of its review and approval process, the Office of Human Resources shall authorize the preparation of the final, official version and its translation, if required. Official forms should be made available in English and French at a minimum.

#### **Section 5**

##### **Final provisions**

5.1 The present instruction shall enter into force on the date of its issuance.

5.2 Administrative instruction [ST/AI/261](#) of 12 December 1978, entitled “Forms management”, is hereby abolished.

(Signed) Catherine **Pollard**  
Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy,  
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