



10 July 2020

Administrative instruction

Competitive examinations for recruitment against or placement in language positions at the P-2 or P-3 level

The Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy Policy and Compliance, pursuant to section 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin [ST/SGB/2009/4](#) on procedures for the promulgation of administrative issuances, promulgates the following:

Section 1 Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purpose of the present instruction:

(a) *Competitive examination for recruitment against or placement in language positions*: competitive examinations held to establish a roster of qualified candidates to fill language positions at the P-2 and P-3 levels in accordance with staff rule 4.16 (b) (i);

(b) *Internal candidates*: serving 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) or staff rule 4.16 (competitive recruitment examination);

(c) *Language positions*: positions requiring specific language skills in the Professional category in conference-servicing areas (i.e., interpreters, translators, translators/précis-writers, revisers, editors, verbatim reporters, copy preparers/proofreaders/production editors, translation support officers, terminologists, computational linguists);

(d) *Specialized board of examiners*: in accordance with staff rule 4.16, a specialized board of examiners is established for each competitive examination. Specialized boards shall normally be composed of staff members of the Secretariat. However, staff members of the specialized agencies or outside experts may also serve on such specialized board, provided that they shall only contribute to recommendations made by such board and shall not be party to designation required to be made by the board. Each specialized board will also have a non-voting ex officio member representing the official with the delegated authority and a chair elected by the members of the specialized board;

(e) *Roster of qualified candidates for language positions*: a pool of candidates who were successful in a competitive examination for recruitment against or



placement in language positions, as assessed and recommended by a specialized board of examiners and approved by the official with the delegated authority.

Section 2

General provisions

2.1 Recruitment against or placement in language positions at the P-2 and P-3 levels shall be exclusively done through competitive examination.

2.2 The present instruction establishes the conditions under which candidates may take competitive examinations for recruitment against or placement in language positions and the special terms and conditions of placement or recruitment of candidates successful in such examinations.

2.3 Competitive examinations for recruitment against or placement in language positions may be held from time to time in accordance with the needs of the Organization. Specific arrangements for such examinations shall be announced through global announcements.

2.4 The announcements will include the mandatory basic eligibility criteria and may establish additional desirable eligibility criteria to be used to shortlist candidates for further consideration should a large number of applications be received.

2.5 The competitive examinations for recruitment against or placement in language positions are open to all individuals who are not more than 56 years of age on 31 December of the year in which the application period for the examination starts.

Section 3

Applications

3.1 Candidates shall apply to take a competitive examination for recruitment against or placement in language positions in accordance with the instructions provided in the relevant announcement and during the application process. Candidates shall be responsible and held personally accountable for the accuracy and completeness of the information that they provide. Inaccurate and incomplete applications will not be considered.

Section 4

Pre-screening and assessment

4.1 Every application shall be subject to review by the specialized board of examiners in order to determine eligibility as set out in the announcement. All staff members and eligible external candidates shall be notified of the decision of the specialized board of examiners regarding their application.

4.2 On the basis of the overall results of the examination, which may include written tests, interpreting skills assessments, a competency-based interview and/or other appropriate evaluation mechanisms, the specialized board of examiners shall recommend, to the official with the delegated authority, the names of candidates who qualify for inclusion in the roster. The specialized board of examiners shall not release individual scores or results to the candidates.

Section 5

Conditions applicable to all candidates successful in a competitive examination for recruitment against or placement in language positions at the P-2 and P-3 levels

5.1 Successful candidates shall be placed on a roster of qualified candidates for language positions. They shall be selected from the roster as vacancies occur, taking into account:

- (a) The needs of service;
- (b) The combination of languages and skills offered by individual candidates.

5.2 After recruitment against or placement in a Professional language position, candidates successful in a competitive examination for recruitment against or placement in language positions are expected to serve for at least five years in language positions, provided that they successfully complete their probationary or trial period, as appropriate, in accordance with sections 6.3, 6.4, 7.3 and 7.4 of the present instruction, before they may be assigned to, or selected for, a position other than a language position. During that period, they may be reassigned to language positions at other duty stations according to the needs of the Organization.

5.3 Candidates who are successful in more than one competitive examination for recruitment against or placement in language positions are placed in all relevant rosters. When selected from a roster, they will cease to be in the roster from which they have been selected. However, they will remain part of all other rosters from which they have not yet been selected.

5.4 Selected candidates will be required to respond to the offer within seven calendar days of the receipt of the written offer of appointment. Should a successful candidate (a) decline an offer twice after receiving the selection notification, including confirmation of interest, or (b) decline a position after having accepted the offer, the candidate will be removed from the corresponding roster of qualified candidates for language positions.

Section 6

Conditions applicable to external candidates who are successful in a competitive examination for recruitment against a language position

6.1 Successful external candidates shall normally be recruited at the P-2 level. However, candidates who fully meet the educational qualifications and years of relevant professional experience required for the P-3 language position concerned may be appointed at the P-3 level.

6.2 Upon recruitment, external candidates shall be offered a fixed-term appointment for a duration of two years, which will be regarded as a probationary period.

6.3 In accordance with paragraph 23 of section II of General Assembly resolution [63/250](#) and staff rule 4.14 (b), staff members recruited upon the successful completion of a competitive examination, pursuant to staff rule 4.16, shall be granted a continuing appointment after two years on a fixed-term appointment, subject to satisfactory service.

6.4 If a staff member's performance¹ is not satisfactory, a decision shall be made either to extend the probationary period on a fixed-term appointment for one year or to separate the staff member from service. The performance of staff members whose probationary period is extended for one year shall be reviewed towards the end of that period. If their performance is certified as being satisfactory, they shall be offered a continuing appointment. If not, they shall be separated from service.

6.5 Staff members initially appointed at the P-2 level who are granted a continuing appointment shall be promoted to the P-3 level on the P-3 language position concerned.

¹ In accordance with administrative instruction [ST/AI/2010/5](#) on the Performance Management and Development System and subsequent iterations.

Section 7**Conditions applicable to internal candidates who are successful in a competitive examination for placement in language positions**

7.1 Successful internal candidates shall be assigned for a trial period of two years, during which the releasing entity shall block the post of the staff member and grant a lien against that post. Staff members below the P-2 level shall be granted special post allowance to the P-2 level as of the date of commencement of the probationary period. Staff members at the P-2 and P-3 levels shall be assigned at their respective levels.

7.2 If the fixed-term appointment of an internal candidate is due to expire before the end of the trial period, the appointment shall be extended to allow for the completion of the trial period.

7.3 Staff members with a special post allowance to the P-2 level or already at the P-2 level who complete the trial period successfully and are recommended for promotion shall be promoted to the P-3 level on the P-3 language position concerned. Staff members already at the P-3 level who complete the trial period successfully shall be confirmed in their functions at the P-3 level. Staff members holding a fixed-term appointment who complete the trial period successfully shall be granted a continuing appointment.

7.4 If a staff member's performance cannot be certified as being fully satisfactory upon completion of the two-year trial period, a decision shall be made either to extend the trial period for a further period of one year or to discontinue the trial period. The performance of a staff member whose trial period is extended for one year shall be reviewed towards the end of that period. If the performance is certified as being fully satisfactory, the provisions of section 7.3 above shall apply. If not, the staff member's trial period shall be discontinued.

7.5 A decision to extend or to discontinue the trial period shall be made by the receiving entity.

7.6 Staff members whose trial period is discontinued shall be reassigned to the post against which they hold the lien in their releasing entity. The special post allowance, if any, shall be discontinued and the staff members shall revert to their regular salary level. The time during which they were at a higher salary level shall be credited as service for the purpose of determining the next salary increment at the regular level.

Section 8**Final provisions**

8.1 The present administrative instruction shall enter into force on the date of its issuance. It supersedes administrative instructions [ST/AI/1998/7](#) and [ST/AI/1998/7/Amend.1](#), entitled "Competitive examinations for recruitment or placement in positions requiring specific language skills in the Professional category", and [ST/AI/2000/1](#) and [ST/AI/2003/1](#), entitled "Special conditions for recruitment or placement of candidates successful in a competitive examination for posts requiring special language skills", which are hereby abolished.

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