

United Nations Development Programme



Junior Professional Officer Programme

-

Recruitment Guidelines

**Bureau of Management
Office of Human Resources
Staff Administrative Services
JPO Service Centre
December 2010**

Introduction

1. The UNDP Junior Professional Officer (JPO) and Special Assistant to the RC (SARC) Recruitment and Selection Guidelines are part of the UNDP JPO Programme Policies and Practice Framework and fall within the scope of the UNDP Recruitment and Selection Framework and related policies.
2. As such, the JPO/SARC Recruitment and Selection Guidelines reflect the contractual reform mandated by the General Assembly in December 2008, and are based on the amended UN Staff Regulations and the new Staff Rules with effect 1 July 2009.
3. The JPO/SARC Recruitment and Selection Guidelines govern the recruitment of SARCs and JPOs managed by UNDP¹ in accordance with the Agreements between Donors and UNDP on the JPO/SARC Programme.
4. The Guidelines are intended to ensure compliance with the UNDP Recruitment and Selection policies and to provide a framework for Compliance Review Board (CRB) reviews of JPO/SARC appointments.

Recruitment and Selection Policies and Procedures for JPO/SARC posts

5. The recruitment of JPOs/SARCs is governed by the UNDP JPO Programme Policy and Practice Framework. The specific procedures and processes of the recruitment in the UNDP JPO Programme Policy and Practice Framework are reflected in the Agreements between UNDP and the Donor, funding the respective JPO/SARC position. The following three categories of JPO/SARC recruitment apply:
 - Category 1: Recruitment and selection process fully managed by OHR/JPOSC
 - Category 2: Recruitment and selection process jointly managed by OHR/JPOSC and the donor
 - Category 3: Recruitment and selection process fully managed by the donor
6. For category 3 JPO/SARC recruitment, UNDP is not or only partially involved in the recruitment and selection process, and as such, the JPO/SARC Recruitment and Selection Guidelines do not apply to this category. The Agreement between the Donor and UNDP specify the arrangements which apply to this category. While JPOs/SARCs, recruited within category 3, are appointed on Fixed-Term Appointments (FTA), their appointments are not reviewed by the CRB, and as a result they will have the status of “external – level 4” candidates.
7. Category 1 and 2 JPO/SARC recruitments include the following three basic elements:
 - Vacancy announcement against approved JPO/SARC Terms of Reference;

¹ Including UNDP and affiliated funds and programmes of UNV, UNCDF and UNDOCO

- Competitive, job-specific assessment of skills and competencies as well as competitive assessment of corporate values and ethics;
 - A thorough verification of relevant qualifications and credentials.
8. For category 1 and 2 JPO/SARC recruitment, the JPO/SARC Recruitment and Selection Guidelines will apply, and JPO/SARC appointments will be reviewed by the CRB. If endorsed by the CRB the JPO/SARC will be appointed on a FTA² and have the status of “internal – level 1” candidates in accordance with Staff Rules 4.15.
 9. JPOs/SARCs with status as “internal-level 1” may apply for internally and externally advertised posts in UNDP after having served 15 months³ in their post. JPOs/SARCs with status as “external-level 4” may apply to externally advertised posts in UNDP after having served 15 months in their post.

Conditions for Selection

10. In filling a vacant JPO/SARC post, priority will be given to the qualifications, demonstrated competencies, and performance including relevant experience of the candidates in relation to the stated criteria of the post. Only candidates meeting the pre-defined requirements for a post as per the job description and the vacancy announcement can be selected.

Vacant JPO/SARC Posts

11. No selection process shall commence without a valid JPO/SARC term-of-reference approved by the receiving duty station/hiring unit, the donor and the OHR/SAS/JPOSC. The Terms of Reference must describe the functions, competencies, impact and requirements of the JPO/SARC post, including academic qualifications, relevant work experience, and language requirements. Hyperlink to [standard JPO TOR](#).

Applications for the Post

12. All persons who apply for a vacant JPO/SARC post, in addition to submitting an application and resume, must complete a UNDP [Personal History Form \(P11\)](#). The UNDP P-11 provides relevant information on a candidate’s personal and professional background, academic

² As per the the JPO Programme and Policy Framework and UNDP Agreements with the donors on the JPO Programme, JPOs/SARCs are appointed on FTAs in accordance with the UN Staff Regulations and Rules. The specific conditions governing the JPO/SARC assignment are agreed upon in the Agreements between UNDP and the respective donor. In accordance with these Agreements and the UNDP JPO Programme and Policy Framework JPOs/SARCs have different entitlements (travel and relocation grant). In addition, the duration of the JPO/SARC assignment is based on the funding allocated by the donor (2-4 years assignment), and the assignment may be extended for a maximum of 12 months fully funded by UNDP.

³ JPOs/SARCs are required to have 15 months minimum time in post prior to being considered for any external and/or internal vacancies with the Organization. This minimum time in post is based on a standard 24 months JPO/SARC assignment and is required to ensure that the JPO/SARC has undertaken at least one RCA process.

record, work history, prior UN experience, residence status, languages, nationality, family relationships, and other matters that are essential to making an informed selection decision.

13. The UNDP P-11 is the authoritative source for critical information on a candidate for verification and serves as the basis for detailed reference-checking. Therefore, only those persons who have submitted a completed and updated UNDP P-11, certifying that the information contained therein is fully accurate, may be given further consideration for the post.

Vacancy Management and Announcement

14. The early stages of the recruitment of JPOs/SARCs is centralized at Headquarters and carried out by the OHR/JPOSC in partnership with the donor and in accordance with the UNDP JPO Programme and Policies Framework, which is also reflected in the agreements between the Donor and UNDP on the JPO Programme.
15. The OHR/SAS/JPOSC in cooperation with the donor and in accordance with the Agreement between the Donor and UNDP on the JPO/SARC Programme will prepare the vacancy announcement.
16. The vacancy announcement for the JPO/SARC post must state all the competencies and other corporate requirements for the position in conformity with the JPO/SARC Terms of Reference. It may also indicate qualifications that are desirable for the position. Only those qualifications (required or desirable) that are indicated in the vacancy announcement may be used to assess candidates' suitability for the JPO/SARC post.
17. All JPO/SARC vacancies will be posted on the donor website and the OHR/SAS/JPOSC website. The vacancy announcement may also be posted using other appropriate means for identifying potential candidates (job portals, newspapers and other publications etc.). The JPO/SARC vacancy announcement will normally be posted for a minimum of two weeks.

Receipt and Review of Applications

18. Candidates shall apply through submission of an application electronically via the OHR/SAS/JPOSC website, including a completed, updated and signed P-11 form.
19. No candidate shall be given further consideration for the post without having first submitted a completed P11 as part of the application for the position. The information provided in the P11 allows verifying whether certain requirements are met (see UNDP Policies on [Academic Qualifications and Relevant Professional Experience](#) and [Family Relations](#)).

20. UNDP is under no obligation to consider late or incomplete applications, or to confirm receipt of an application. Where there is a business case imperative, OHR/SAS/JPOSC may elect to accept late applications to a vacancy.
21. The closing date for applications may be extended, following a preliminary review of applications if the OHR/SAS/JPOSC and the donor find that the quality or quantity of the candidates is not sufficient to conduct a competitive selection process.

Reviewing Candidates

22. Only those qualifications specified in the vacancy announcement and JPO/SARC Terms of Reference may be used in the review of applications and screening of candidates for the post. The reasons for accepting or rejecting an application during the screening process must be documented at each stage of the selection process.
23. Long-listing process: The long-listing of candidates involves an initial screening of applications. The screening will be undertaken against minimum corporate requirements, including eligibility, academic qualifications, years of relevant work experience, language fluencies etc.
24. No candidate will be given further consideration, if the person does not meet all the requirements for the position (e.g. academic, experience; languages; etc) as specified in the vacancy announcement. Please see UNDP's policy on academic qualifications which articulates specific criteria for verifying academic qualifications.
25. Short-listing process: Following the long-listing process, the remaining candidates are reviewed for short-listing. To arrive at a short-list of candidates, a closer desk review of a candidate's professional and managerial background is undertaken against the requirements of the post, giving additional weight to those candidates who possess one or more of the desirable variables for the post, as specified in the vacancy announcement.
26. The short-listing process also involves additional fact-finding. A telephone screening may be used to test language fluencies and to clarify issues raised in the job application, including the P.11, and possibly any potential issues related to residency requirements applicable in the duty station. The additional information or assessment results obtained from a telephone screening must be fully documented.
27. Long-listing and short-listing procedures must be followed and documented. Such supporting documentation will be reviewed by the CRB, as required for compliance.
28. A short-list of JPO/SARC candidates should consist of a minimum of two and (generally) a maximum of four candidates.

29. The short-list of candidates will include a minimum of one and preferably two or more qualified women from the pool of applications. The reasons for not short-listing women candidates for these posts must be fully documented.
30. If, at any time during the long or short-listing processes, where there appears to be fewer than three candidates who meet all the requirements of the post, it may be decided to re-advertise the position, or proceed with the selection process. In the event that only one suitable candidate has been identified, the position will be re-advertised.

Assessment of short-listed candidates

31. All short-listed candidates will undergo the same selection process and by the same means, whenever practicable.
32. The OHR/SAS/JPOSC in consultation and cooperation with the donor will use a range of assessment tools and techniques to evaluate short-listed candidates. Such tools and techniques shall include but are not limited to, technical testing, interviews or an assessment of work samples; reference checks; competency-based panel interviews.
33. The JPO/SARC assessment will include two stages :
 - Competency-based interview by the OHR/SAS/JPOSC, normally undertaken jointly with the donor
 - Assessment by the receiving duty station
34. The OHR/SAS/JPOSC may also decide to use a technical assessment to assess a short-listed candidate's technical competencies, if considered necessary. The technical assessment may be in the form of :
 - a. technical interview;
 - b. on-line written test; or
 - c. technical test administered by the OHR/SAS/JPOSC with input from the receiving duty station
 - d. work samples
35. Competency-Based Interview: Every short-listed candidate for a JPO/SARC post will be invited to participate in a panel interview.
36. The OHR/SAS/JPOSC will conduct the competency-based interviews. UNDP will make the final selection of the candidate in accordance with the Agreement between the Donor and UNDP on the JPO Programme.
37. The competency-based interview panel will include minimum three members (the OHR/SAS/JPOSC staff member who holds the portfolio, and two UNDP staff members, including where possible one representative from the receiving duty station, P3 and above).

A donor representative may participate as an observer in the competency-based interview panel.

38. Face-to-face interviews are the preferred option, however, video conferencing and phone interviews may also be undertaken. All modalities may be applied in the same interview.
39. The OHR/SAS/JPOSC will identify up to five competencies from the vacancy announcement that are the most essential to success in the post for assessment at the interview. The interview panel will also conduct an assessment of corporate values and ethics.
40. When evaluating a candidate, the panel should consider only the information provided to them at the interview.
41. The panel will rate a candidate on each of the competencies being assessed, assigning a score for each rating, to arrive at an overall score of the candidate for the interview. The panel will also assign one of three recommendations for each candidate including; recommended, recommended with reservations or not recommended and rank candidates in order of suitability for a position. The scoring of each candidate will be reflected in the panel's [interview report](#) which will also detail the reservations, if any, noted by the panel.
42. Candidates who are recommended with reservations must still meet the stated qualifications for the position. The reservations may relate to objective perceptions by the panel as to various aspects of the candidates overall fit and anticipated performance but not in terms of a deficit of the qualifications listed in the vacancy. Only those candidates who, in the view of the interview panel, possess the minimum competencies required for the post and meet UNDP's ethical standards, may be given further consideration.

Assessment by the Receiving Duty Station

43. If the receiving duty station did not participate in the competency-based interview panel, the receiving duty station approves/endorses the proposed candidate(s) by undertaking a desk review or a phone interview. The endorsement of the proposed candidate by the receiving duty station is submitted in writing to the CRB as a supporting document to the recruitment and selection process.

Reference Checks and Verification of Qualifications

44. No JPO/SARC recruitment and selection process is complete without proper and thorough verification of critical information, including academic qualifications, languages, nationality, prior UN employment, family relations within the UN common system and detailed reference checks. The Personal History Form (P-11) provides a useful source of candidate information on these matters that requires verification and, in particular, on the candidate's employment history for purposes of reference-checking.

45. Reference checks will be conducted for the recommended candidate after completion of the interview. Reference checks from a current employer will be conducted only after the OHR/SAS/JPOSC has consulted with the candidate and obtained permission prior to contacting that employer for the purpose of conducting a reference check.
46. References should be obtained from minimum three referees among the referees listed in the P-11, including one former supervisor of the candidate as listed in the P-11.
47. Conducting the reference check by telephone is often the fastest way to obtain a reference, and may yield important information that might not otherwise be obtained through a more formal, written process. Reference checks by phone should follow a consistent format of questions, with questions and answers documented in detail. View [sample format for reference checks](#).

Selection of a candidate

48. When selecting a candidate for the post, the OHR/SAS/JPOSC and the receiving duty station shall take into account the results from all the assessment methods used to evaluate the short-listed candidates, including the technical assessment/interview; competency-based panel interview; reference checks and performance reports.
49. In the event that a fully qualified candidate cannot be found following a competitive selection process, the OHR/SAS/JPOSC or the donor may re-advertise the position with the view of attracting additional applications.

Specific Arrangements for Category 2 JPO/SARC Recruitments

50. For category 2 JPO/SARC recruitments, the donor will be responsible for managing the recruitment process and for ensuring that the standards of the JPO/SARC Recruitment and Selection Framework are applied throughout the JPO/SARC recruitment process. Specifically, the donor will be responsible for the following processes:
 - a. Preparing the vacancy announcement in accordance with the Agreement between the Donor and UNDP on the JPO/SARC Programme. The vacancy announcement will be posted on the donor website and using other appropriate means for identifying potential candidates (job portals, newspapers and other publications etc.). The JPO/SARC vacancy announcement will normally be posted for a minimum of two weeks.
 - b. Receiving applications from candidates, including a completed, updated and signed P-11 form

- c. Managing the long-listing and short-listing process in accordance with the JPO/SARC Recruitment and Selection Framework.
 - d. Checking referencing of recommended candidates.
51. When sharing the short-listed candidates with UNDP, the donor will include a [signed check list](#) confirming that all requirements as outlined in the JPO Recruitment and Selection Guidelines have been met in the recruitment process.

Accountability

52. The OHR/SAS/JPOSC will ensure throughout the recruitment and selection process for JPO categories 1 and 2 that the specific strategy decided upon for filling the post has been followed and any deviations noted.
53. The OHR/SAS/JPOSC will ensure that all individuals who contributed to the recruitment and selection process (interview panel members, candidate referees, etc.) are fully briefed on the JPO/SARC Programme and the respective post, including its functions and requirements, and their respective roles in the process.
54. The OHR/SAS/JPOSC will ensure that there is a proper and thorough verification of critical information used in the selection process, and that the entire process is properly documented.

Compliance Review Board

55. A Compliance Review Board (CRB) has been established to review all initial appointments and promotion decisions of international Fixed-Term Appointment staff.
56. The TOR for the UNDP CRB governs the CRB process for JPO/SARC FTA appointments where the recruitment process is compliant with the UNDP JPO/SARC Recruitment Framework (category 1 and 2 JPO/SARC recruitments). However, the scope and specific arrangements, which apply to the CRB process for JPO/SARC FTA appointments, are outlined below.
57. When reviewing JPO/SARC appointments, the CRB pays due consideration to the UNDP JPO Programme Policy and Practice Framework, the JPO/SARC Recruitment and Selection Guidelines, and the related Agreement between UNDP and the respective donor on the JPO/SARC Programme, which sets out the legal framework for the recruitment and appointment of JPOs/SARCs funded by the respective donor country.
58. Specifically, the CRB reviews the following aspects to validate whether due process has been followed in the JPO/SARC recruitment and selection as outlined in the established framework and guidelines while assessing their suitability to be included as “internal - level 1” candidates as per [UNDP Recruitment and Selection Framework](#):

- Duration of the advertisement and pertinence of the vacancy announcement
- Short listing of candidates based on the qualifications as listed in the vacancy announcement (copy of advertisement managed by the OHR/SAS/JPOSC or the donor)
- Corporate consideration to gender parity
- Consideration given to qualification, demonstrated competences and performance of the candidates in relation to the stated criteria of the position (signed interview report, signed Personal History Form, copies of qualifications)
- Review of the outcomes of the comprehensive assessment of the suitability of a candidate
- Evidence of reference checking, including the consideration to the past experience (input from min. 3 referees)

59. The OHR/SAS/JPOSC acts as the secretariat/ex-officio and is accountable for submission of JPO/SARC initial appointments to the CRB.

60. The OHR/SAS/JPOSC submits the documentation related to the JPO/SARC recruitment and selection process using a specific form and provides the requested information on the preferred candidate for selection. The OHR/SAS/JPOSC may also propose one or more additional candidate(s) who are found suitable for the advertised position, in the event they wish the CRB to review such additional candidate(s) for future similar positions.

61. The CRB may result in one of the following outcomes:

- Recommendation to endorse one, several or all the proposed candidates. Once appointed, the final selected candidate is considered “internal - level 1” staff member,
- Request for further information from the OHR/SAS/JPOSC.