



Secretariat

18 December 2023

Administrative instruction

Staff Selection System

The Secretary-General, for the purpose of clarifying and consolidating into one document the existing policies and practices relating to the selection of staff in the International Seabed Authority, pursuant to Staff Regulations 2.1 and 4.4 and with due regard to the need for economy and efficiency, promulgates the following:

Section 1 Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of the present administrative instruction:

- (a) *Appointment and Promotion Board ("APB")*: the body established under staff rule 4.12 which is to ensure that candidates have been evaluated on the basis of approved evaluation criteria and that the applicable procedures have been followed in the process of appointing, selecting, and promoting staff up to and including the D-1 level.
- (b) *Assessment*: the substantive process of evaluating applicants to determine whether they meet all, most, some, or none of the requirements of the job opening under recruitment.
- (c) *Documented record*: a record consisting of written, printed, or electronic material that provides information or evidence. The record must be reasoned and objectively justifiable.
- (d) *Evaluation criteria*: criteria used for the evaluation of applicants for a particular job opening. Evaluation criteria must be objective and related to the functions of the individually classified job description and must reflect the key competencies that will be assessed.
- (e) *Hiring manager*: the official responsible for the filling of a vacancy.
- (f) *Internal applicants*: serving staff members holding an appointment under the Staff Rules, other than an initial appointment for less than one year, who have been recruited after a competitive process under staff rule 4.12. Senior Professional Officers and Junior Professional Officers are not considered internal applicants.
- (g) *Interview panel*: a panel normally comprising at least three members to be determined by the hiring manager, with two being subject matter experts at the same or higher level of the job opening, at least one being a woman and one being from

outside the work unit where the job opening is located, who will undertake the assessment of applicants for a job opening.

(h) *Job*: for the purposes of the present administrative instruction, the term “job” shall refer to the set of duties and responsibilities associated with a vacancy and to be performed by a staff member on either a fixed-term appointment or an initial appointment of less than one year.

(i) *Job opening*: vacancy announcement issued for one particular vacancy.

(j) *Lateral move*: movement of a staff member to different functions at the same level for the duration of at least one year between different offices or within the same office of the secretariat. Inter-agency loans or other movements to and from other organizations of the United Nations common system are recognized as “lateral moves”. Within the same office, a lateral move will normally involve a change in functions with or without a change of supervisor. When the supervisor remains the same, there will be a lateral move if the responsibilities are substantially different, for example, if there is a different area of responsibilities or a change in the offices or units serviced by the staff member. A change in supervisor without a change in functions does not represent a lateral move. Temporary assignments of at least three months but less than one year, with or without special post allowance, shall also qualify as a lateral move when the cumulative duration of such assignments reaches one year. Lateral moves should meet the relevant goals and criteria, such as promoting professional development, enhancing organizational flexibility, and optimizing the deployment of personnel based on their skills and expertise. Lateral moves should also contribute to a more versatile and adaptable workforce, fostering a dynamic and efficient work environment within the secretariat.

(k) *Selection decision*: decision by the Secretary-General to select a candidate for a particular vacancy up to and including the D-1 level from a list of qualified candidates which has been reviewed by the APB taking into account the Authority’s human resources objectives and targets, especially with regard to geography and gender, and giving the fullest regard to candidates already in the service of the Authority.

(l) *Temporary vacancy*: vacancy blocked for a specific period of time for the return of a staff member on temporary assignment, mission assignment, special leave, secondment, or loan.

(m) *Vacancy*: vacancy available for one year or more and not blocked for the return of a staff member on temporary assignment, mission assignment, special leave, secondment, or loan.

(n) *Vacancy-specific job opening*: a job opening used for the filling of an individual vacancy.

Section 2

General provisions

2.1 The staff selection system includes the recruitment, placement, and promotion of staff within the Secretariat. The present administrative instruction sets out the procedures applicable from the beginning to the end of the staff selection process.

2.2 Selection decisions for vacancies up to and including the D-1 level shall be made by the Secretary-General when the APB is satisfied that the evaluation criteria have been properly applied and that the applicable procedures were followed. If a list of qualified candidates has been endorsed by the APB, the hiring manager may

recommend to the Secretary-General any one of those candidates for the advertised job opening, subject to the provisions contained in sections 9.2 and 9.3 below.

Section 3

Scope

3.1 The staff selection system applies to the selection and appointment of staff members for one year or more in all categories and at all levels except as provided in section 3.2 below.

3.2 The system shall not apply to the following:

- (a) Initial appointment for less than one year.
- (b) Lateral movement of staff by the Secretary-General.
- (c) Placement of staff by the Secretary-General under section 11.

(d) Promotion of staff who accepted the job at a lower level than that under the advertised job opening but who are subsequently recommended for promotion to the advertised grade after no less than one year of satisfactory performance.

However, in all above cases, the selection of staff should be reviewed by the APB in accordance with section 8 below. In case of lateral movement or placement of staff, the staff member and the heads of offices concerned should be consulted in advance.

Section 4

Job openings

4.1 Immediate and anticipated job openings for vacancies of one year or more shall be advertised under the UN Inspira System and at the website of the Authority.

4.2 Vacancy-specific job openings shall be advertised when:

- (a) A new job is established, or an existing job is reclassified.
- (b) The incumbent separates from service.

(c) The incumbent is selected for another vacancy under the provisions of the present administrative instruction or because of a lateral reassignment by the Secretary-General.

4.3 The hiring manager shall be responsible for creating the job opening and for promptly requesting the advertisement of the job opening by the Human Resources Officer.

4.4 The job opening shall reflect the functions and the location of the job and include the qualifications, skills and competencies required. Job openings, to the greatest extent possible, shall be based on generic job profiles applicable in the United Nations common system, a previously published job opening or a previously classified individual job description reflecting the actual functions of the job. Each job opening shall indicate the date of posting and specify a deadline date by which all applications must be received.

4.5 Pre-screening questions should be prepared as part of the job opening to assist in determining applicants' qualifications for the job opening to which they apply. The pre-screening questions must be related to the job and the experience and professionalism required to undertake the functions, as reflected in the job opening.

4.6 The deadline for applying for job openings shall normally be:

(a) 45 calendar days after posting for vacancy-specific job openings in the Professional and higher categories, unless in cases of unanticipated job openings the Secretary-General exceptionally approves a 30-day deadline.

(b) 30 calendar days after posting for project-funded vacancies unless the Secretary-General exceptionally approves a 15-day deadline.

4.7 The deadline for applying for job openings in the General Service and related categories, including National Professional Officer, shall normally be 30 calendar days after posting.

Section 5 Applications

5.1 Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions set out in the job opening, including use of the electronic platform provided for this purpose.

5.2 Applying for a job opening carries an expectation to accept it, if offered.

5.3 Staff members are encouraged to carefully consider all suitable job openings.

Section 6 Eligibility requirements

6.1 All applicants are eligible to apply for job openings regardless of their current grade and level if they meet the requirements with respect to academic qualifications and years of experience.

6.2 As of the posting date of a job opening, the minimum age to be eligible for consideration for a vacancy is 18.

6.3 Applicants who have reached the mandatory age of separation are not eligible to apply for job openings.

6.4 Staff members who are on secondment to an organization of the United Nations common system shall be granted a lien against a specific job for up to two years. If the staff member, while on secondment, applies for job openings in the Authority they will be considered an internal applicant. After two years, should the staff member wish to remain on secondment, the lien on the specific job shall be surrendered but the staff member retains return rights to the Authority up to a maximum of five years. At the end of the five years, a transfer to the receiving organization shall be initiated unless the staff member wishes to return to the Authority. To return to the Authority, the staff member is eligible to apply for job openings. Staff members who are unsuccessful in their applications to other job openings of the Authority will have the right to return to the Authority at their level at the time of release on secondment.

6.5 Staff members holding an initial appointment for less than one year who are recruited in the Professional and higher categories, and placed on a vacancy authorized for one year or more may not apply for or be reappointed to their current vacancy within six months of the end of their current service, if the vacancy is advertised through the established procedures and will result in a fixed-term appointment. In exceptional circumstances, the required break-of-service period of six months can be shortened or waived if the Secretary-General determines there are compelling reasons for authorizing such a measure, on a case-by-case basis.

6.6 Interns, consultants, and individual contractors may not apply for or be appointed to any vacancy in the Professional or higher categories within six months of the end of their current or most recent service. This restriction does not apply to Senior Professional Officers and Junior Professional Officers appointed under the

Staff Rules. In exceptional circumstances, the required break-of-service period of six months can be shortened or waived if the Secretary-General determines there are compelling reasons for authorizing such a measure, on a case-by-case basis.

Section 7

Pre-screening and assessment

7.1 Applicants applying to job openings will be pre-screened by the Human Resources Officer based on the information provided in their application to determine whether they meet the minimum requirements of the job opening.

7.2 The hiring manager shall further evaluate all applicants released to them and shall prepare a shortlist of those who appear most qualified for the job opening based on a review of their documentation.

7.3 Shortlisted candidates shall be assessed to determine whether they meet the technical requirements and competences of the job opening. The assessment of shortlisted candidates shall not commence before the deadline for applying for the job openings, as provided for in sections 4.6 and 4.7 above, has passed. The assessment shall include a competency-based interview to be conducted by an interview panel and/or other appropriate evaluation mechanisms, such as written tests, or work sample tests.

7.4 For each job opening, up to and including the D-1 level, the hiring manager, with the assistance of the Human Resources Officer, shall prepare a reasoned and documented record of the evaluation of the proposed candidates against the applicable evaluation criteria to allow for review by the APB and a selection decision by the Secretary-General.

7.5 For vacancy-specific job openings, up to and including the D-1 level, the hiring manager shall transmit the proposal for one candidate or, preferably, a list of qualified, unranked candidates, including normally at least one woman candidate, to the APB to ensure that, in making the proposal, the hiring manager has complied with the process.

Section 8

Appointment and Promotion Board (APB)

8.1 The APB established pursuant to staff rule 4.12 shall review and provide advice to the Secretary-general on the recommendations for selection of staff.

8.2 The APB shall review proposals for filling a vacancy-specific job opening to ensure that applicants were evaluated based on the corresponding evaluation criteria and that the applicable procedures were followed.

8.3 In so doing, the APB shall consider only whether:

(a) The recommendation of candidates is reasoned and objectively justifiable based on evidence that the evaluation criteria set out in the job opening were properly applied.

(b) The record indicates that there was no mistake of fact or mistake of procedure, prejudice or improper motive that could have prevented a full and fair consideration of the candidates' requisite qualifications.

(c) The record contains a fully justified analysis of each of the competencies listed in the job opening, which must be evaluated during the competency-based interview and/or other assessment methodologies for all shortlisted candidates.

8.4 When the APB has found that the evaluation criteria were properly applied and that the applicable procedures were followed, it shall so inform the Secretary-General, and recommend that the Secretary-General approve the proposed candidate(s) for selection.

8.5 When the APB has questions or doubts regarding the proper application of the evaluation criteria and/or the applicable procedures, it shall request the necessary information from the hiring manager or the ex officio member the APB, as appropriate. Once the questions are answered to the satisfaction of the APB, it shall proceed as provided in section 8.3 of the present administrative instruction.

8.6 If the APB finds that the evaluation criteria have not been properly applied and/or the applicable procedures have not been followed, the APB shall transmit its findings and recommendation to the Secretary-General with respect to the particular job opening.

Composition and rules of procedure of the Appointment and Promotion Board

8.7 The APB shall consist of no fewer than five and no more than eight members and alternate members nominated by the Secretary-General from among the staff having due regard to gender and geographic diversity. A quorum of the APB shall consist of three persons, including at least one woman. At each meeting, the APB shall determine its own chairperson. The Human Resources Officer shall serve as ex officio and shall be responsible for maintaining the records of the APB.

8.8 The APB shall meet as often as necessary and shall endeavour to review cases within seven days of their submission to the APB.

8.9 The members of the APB shall serve in their individual capacity. Once appointed, they shall carry out their mandate in accordance with staff rule 4.12 and relevant provisions under the present administrative instruction and shall not be subject to instructions from any extraneous source. The members of the APB shall normally be at the same level as, or at a higher level than, the level of the job openings for which the APB is considering the candidates proposed for appointment, review, or promotion.

8.10 A member of the APB who is also a head of office or unit, shall be excused from participation in any deliberations of the APB concerning cases from his or her organizational unit. That member shall not discuss the case or attempt in any way to influence any member of the APB with respect to the consideration or review of such proposals.

8.11 Members shall excuse themselves and not participate in the consideration of cases when there is a conflict of interest, for instance when they would be directly affected by the outcome of the deliberations, either personally, as managers or as hiring managers, interview panel members, or any other instances where they would not have the required impartiality.

8.12 The APB shall attempt to make its recommendations by consensus. In cases where it is not possible to reach consensus, the APB shall record the different views and submit the case to the Secretary-General for decision.

Section 9

Selection decision

9.1 Staff members holding a fixed-term appointment should normally serve in a job for at least one year before being eligible to be appointed to another job.

9.2 The selection decision for vacancies up to and including at the D-1 level shall be made by the Secretary-General based on proposals made by the responsible hiring

manager when the APB finds that the candidates have been evaluated on the basis of the approved evaluation criteria and that the applicable procedures have been followed. Before submission of the proposal to the Secretary-General, the hiring manager should complete the references check, with the assistance of the Human Resources Officer.

9.3 When recommending the selection of candidates for vacancies up to and including at the D-1 level, the hiring manager shall support such recommendation by a documented record. The Secretary-General shall select the candidate that the Secretary-General considers to be best suited for the functions. In the final selection decision, due consideration should be given to women candidates.

Section 10

Notification and implementation of the decision

10.1 The Human Resources Officer shall inform the selected candidate of the selection decision within 14 days after the decision is made. Other candidates convoked for assessments but not selected shall be so informed by the Human Resources Officer within 14 days after the selection decision is made in writing. Applicants eliminated prior to the assessment exercises shall be duly informed.

10.2 The decision to select a candidate shall be implemented upon its official communication to the individual concerned. 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 availability of the job and the assumption of higher-level functions. However, when an encumbered job has been advertised after upward reclassification and an applicant other than the incumbent is selected, the decision shall be implemented only when a suitable job has been identified for the incumbent. When the incumbent is selected, the promotion shall be effective retroactively from the first of the month following receipt of the reclassification request fulfilling the conditions under section III of the procedures for classification and reclassification of posts annexed to the present administrative instruction.

10.3 If the selected candidate fails to take up the functions within the specified time frame for personal reasons or leaves the job within one year, the Secretary-General may select another candidate from the list endorsed by the APB with respect to the particular job opening. If no such candidate is available, the vacancy shall be advertised.

10.4 Medical clearance for employment is valid for three months and for the duty station and job type for which it was granted. Where candidates for employment are not granted medical clearance, they shall be considered as not having fulfilled the requirements and may not be recruited.

Section 11

Placement of staff members outside the normal process

11.1 The Secretary-General may place in a suitable job the following staff members when in need of placement outside the normal process:

(a) Incumbents, other than staff members holding an initial appointment for less than one year, of jobs reclassified upward for which an applicant other than the incumbent has been selected.

(b) Staff members who return from secondment after more than two years.

11.2 After determining the availability of a suitable job in consultation with the head of office and the staff member concerned, the Secretary-General shall decide on the placement, in accordance with staff regulation 1.2 (c).

Section 12

Final provisions

12.1 The procedure for classification of posts is attached to this administrative instruction as an annex.

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



(Signed) Michael W. Lodge
Secretary-General

Annex

Procedures for classification and reclassification of posts**Section I****General**

1.1 Professional and General Service posts, including National Professional Officer posts, shall be classified in accordance with the methodology promulgated by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and with procedures established by the Secretary-General.

1.2 Classification of posts is the process of post evaluation within the UN common system that determines the grade of a post. The classification process only considers the duties and responsibilities inherent to the post and not the skills and capabilities of the person performing the role.

1.3 When a post is vacant, the process of grade determination is referred to as classification; when a post is encumbered, the process is referred to as reclassification.

Section II**Request for the classification or reclassification**

2.1 Requests for classification or reclassification may be made in the following circumstances:

(a) when a post is newly established or has not previously been classified.

(b) when the duties and responsibilities of a post have changed substantially as a result of a restructuring within an office or unit.

(c) when, prior to the issuance of a vacancy announcement, a substantive change in the functions of a post has occurred since the previous classification; or

(d) when required by an organizational review or by the Secretary-General or as mandated by the ICSC.

Section III**Procedure for submission of requests for classification or reclassification**

3.1 Requests for the classification shall be initiated by the head of office. Requests for reclassification of a post shall be initiated by the supervisor of the incumbent of the post and approved by the head of office.

3.2 Requests for classification or reclassification shall be submitted, through the Human Resources Officer, to the Director of the Office for Administrative Services for review and recommendations to the Secretary-General.

3.3 Requests shall include:

(a) a cover memorandum, which reflects the justification for submission.

(b) a complete and up-to-date job description of the post in question, using standardized job descriptions, where applicable, which must be agreed by the incumbent of the post and the supervisor in writing in the case of reclassification.

(c) consideration and confirmation of the available budget for the post by the Director of the Office for Administrative Service.

3.4 The Human Resources Officer shall provide classification advice during the classification or reclassification process.

Section IV

Classification standards

4.1 Posts shall be classified in accordance with the classification standards established by the ICSC for posts in the Professional and higher categories and for posts in the General Service and related categories, including National Professional Officers.

Section V

Procedure for classification and reclassification

5.1 Classification and reclassification of posts is conducted by OneHR centre, an independent and harmonized UN-wide centre of excellence that conducts job evaluations in adherence to ICSC job evaluation and classification, standards, and methodologies.

5.2 A notice of the reclassification results, including the final ratings and/or comments on the basis of which the decision was taken, shall be sent by the Human Resources Officer to the requesting head of office and provide a copy to the incumbent of the post.

Section VI

Procedures following classification and reclassification.

6.1 If a post is vacant, it will be advertised at the classified grade.

6.2 If a post is encumbered and reclassified at a grade level below the personal grade level, the incumbent will retain his or her current grade and salary level until his or her departure from the post, on the understanding that every reasonable effort will be made to reassign the concerned staff member to a post at his or her personal grade level. ~~Subsequently, the post will be advertised at the new grade if the duties and requirements have remained unchanged.~~

6.3 If a post is encumbered and reclassified above the current grade, the following applies:

(a) The post will be advertised for recruitment.

(b) After the recruitment process, if the incumbent meets all qualifying requirements satisfactorily, the incumbent shall be selected and accorded the new grade of the post. In this case, the new grade shall be effective retroactively from the first of the month following receipt of the reclassification request fulfilling the conditions under section 3.3 above.

(c) After the recruitment process, if the incumbent does not meet the qualifying requirements for the role at the new grade, the incumbent will retain his or her current grade until his or her departure from the post, on the understanding that every reasonable effort will be made to reassign the concerned staff member to a post at his or her personal grade level.

Section VII

Appeal procedure

7.1 The decision on the reclassification level of a post may be appealed by staff member who is the incumbent of the post at the time of its outcome, on the grounds that the reclassification procedures were incorrectly applied resulting in the reclassification of the post at the wrong level.

7.2 Appeal shall be submitted in writing to the Director of the Office for Administrative Services. Appeals must be submitted within 60 days from the date on which the reclassification result is received, and accompanied by the job description on the basis of which the post was reclassified.

7.3 The Director of the Office for Administrative Services will refer to the appeal to the OneHR centre and request a review by a panel of three experts any of whom has not participated in the concerned reclassification exercise.

7.4 If the review results in an upgrading of the classification to the level sought by the appellant, the decision of the Secretary-General to that effect shall be final. The concerned staff member and the relevant head of office shall be notified in writing of the decision.

7.5 If the result of the review is to maintain the original reclassification or to classify the post at a lower level than that claimed by the concerned staff member, the decision of the Secretary-General to that effect can be appealed by the staff member through the system of administration of justice as provided in Staff Rules 11.1 and 11.2. Since the decision is taken pursuant to advice obtained from a technical body, the staff member is not required to request management evaluation under Staff Rule 11.2 (a) but can appeal directly to the Joint Appeals Board.
