How to join the United Nations and apply successfully
ICD, Lucerne, March 2023
Good news: there is probably a UN job for you!

UNDP’s example

Programmatic profiles
- Rule of Law & Governance
- Climate & Environment
- Disaster Risk Reduction
- Poverty Reduction
- Private Sector Development
- Urbanization
- Youth, Gender

Thematic profiles
- Communication
- Partnerships & Advocacy
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Procurement
- Legal Services
- Project Management
- Monitoring and Evaluation
UN Career entry points

Staff Contracts
- Internationally-Recruited (IP)
  - UN/UNDP/etc. job sites - Vacancies
  - Entry and Mid-Level Professional Programmes
  - Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Programme
- Locally-Recruited staff /National Officers
- Fixed-Term and Short/Temporary -Term Contracts (FTA-TA)

Other Contracts
- Consultants and Contractors
- United Nations Volunteers (UNV)
- Fellowship programmes
- Internships
What the UN looks for in candidates

- Motivation and drive
- Innovative mindset, teamwork
- Multicultural interest
- Educational & Professional requirements must be met
- Various core and job-specific personal competencies
- Language requirement: English + another UN working language an asset (French, Spanish, Arabic)
- Prior field and development experience a strong asset
Typical recruitment process

Job opening Search
All international positions (staff contracts, consultancies) are available on the UNDP job site

Online Profile Creation and Application

Evaluation of the application
Job requirements screening, longlisting, shortlisting

Assessment exercise
Some job posts might require written assessment and/or video recordings

Reference Checks

Competency-based interview

Selection Notification
**UNDP Job Requirement Overview**

### Work Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D-2</td>
<td>Over 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-1</td>
<td>Min 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Core Competencies
- Achieve Results
- Think Innovatively
- Learn Continuously
- Adapt with Agility
- Act with Determination
- Engage and Partner
- Enable Diversity and Inclusion

### Cross-Functional Competencies
- Strategic Thinking
- Business Acumen
- Entrepreneurial Thinking
- System Thinking
- Effective Decision Making
- Negotiation and Influence

### Education
Usually requires advanced degree or bachelor degree with 2 years working experience or above.

### Language
Working proficiency on English and/or French. Knowledge of other UN languages is an asset.

### Technical Competencies
Job/function specific skills and competencies

### Business Development and Management

### Values
Exemplifying Integrity, Demonstrating Commitment, Embracing Diversity, Embracing Change
Selection process in the UN

- Internship / consultancy / regular position advertised OR
- Call for applications to a talent roster advertised
- No unsolicited applications
- Computer screening (based on must-have requirements)
- First Human Resources screening (longlisting) based on must-have and nice to have requirements
- Second HR or hiring unit, considering cover letters, and video interviews at times (2nd longlisting or shortlist)
- Eventually, written test to finalize the shortlist, or as part of final scoring
- Competency-based interview (3-4 candidates) to choose final candidate, subject to positive reference checks
Preparing to apply

• Know yourself & your competencies: is this the position for me?
• Do I meet the qualifications and experience requirements?
• What do I know about the organization?
• What do I know about this particular job?
• Have I considered all the implications if I am given the position? (Moving abroad, leaving family, culture shock)
• Will I actually take the job if I am selected?
Writing your CV

- Be careful with acronyms
- Make sure there are no date or spelling mistakes
- Develop a result-oriented CV: what did you achieve?
- Use figures, volume, impact indicators
- Build a “story thread” in your CV
- Make the connection between your qualifications and job competencies
- Adapt your CV each time – no “one size fits all” CV
Writing your application letter

• Identify key words related to knowledge, qualifications and competencies
• Tailor motivation letter & application form to the vacancy announcement
• Think about what message you want to send, and try to stand out
• Keep the layout and formatting simple and clear
• Be careful with acronyms & make sure there are no mistakes
• Make the connection between your qualifications and job competencies
Preparing for the interview

• Find out as much as you can about the organization and duty station
• Understand the position: reference the vacancy announcement and look at the required competencies
• Prepare real examples matching your accomplishments to the competencies and practice beforehand
• Be aware of non-verbal communication
• If possible, do a mock interview, record and review it!
• Dress on the side of conservative
• For phone/remote interviews, find a private location, check your background, check IT equipment beforehand

Homework pays off!
• **Context:** briefly describe the context, the “what”. Do not go into too many details.

• **Action:** explain your role in addressing whatever issue in question, the “how”.

• **Result:** what was the outcome? (Negative outcome can be fine if you learn from it)

• **Learning:** what did you learn from this experience? What would you do differently today?
Final thoughts: the importance to plan ahead

- Building a logical thread in your CV
- Planning two jobs ahead
- Flawless and result-oriented cover letter and CV
- Do your homework when applying: job content, selection process, etc.
- Know yourself and your competencies: is this the position for me?
- Have I considered all the implications if I am given the position?