
OHR Policy Guideline

2026 lateral reassignment exercise within entities

Managerial measure to mitigate the impact on serving staff members who encumber posts which, in the context of the UN80 initiative, were abolished by the General Assembly resolution 80/242 of 30 December 2025 on the 2026 programme budget (i.e., regular budget including special political missions) and the revised 2025/26 peacekeeping support account budget¹

OHR/PG/2026/1 – 14 January 2026

I. Purpose

1. This document provides policy guidance to Heads of entity on how to exercise their delegated authority to effect lateral reassessments within their entity under Staff Regulation 1.2 (c), as per Annex IV of ST/SGB/2019/2 on *Delegation of authority in the administration of the Staff Regulations and Rules and the Financial Regulations and Rules*. It provides details on the **lateral reassignment of staff members within entities** (including across duty stations where applicable) **as a managerial measure to minimize involuntary separations of serving staff members who encumber posts approved for abolition by the General Assembly resolution 80/242 of 30 December 2025**, on the 2026 programme budget (i.e., regular budget, including special political missions) and the revised 2025/26 peacekeeping support account budget.

2. **Heads of entity must maximize lateral reassessments within their entity by no later than 31 January 2026**, before DMSPC proceeds in March 2026 with a one-time global lateral reassignment exercise Secretariat-wide (i.e. across entities, including duty stations, as applicable) under the authority delegated by the Secretary-General to the Under-Secretary-General for DMSPC, and prior to the activation of the downsizing policy by entities (if needed).

¹ Except staff members who encumber abolished posts in field missions as a result of the governing bodies' decision to end the mandate; and are therefore under liquidation.

3. The lateral reassignment exercise within each entity is the first managerial measure of a three-step approach that will be taken in response to General Assembly resolution 80/242 to minimize the impact on serving staff members and maximize retention:
 - *Step 1:* Lateral reassignment exercise within the entity;
 - *Step 2:* Global lateral reassignment exercise Secretariat-wide managed by OHR/DMSPC; and
 - *Step 3:* Activation of the downsizing policy at the entity level (where required).
4. The guideline does not replace the Staff Regulations and Rules, administrative issuances, or other OHR policy guidelines. In accordance with the jurisprudence of the United Nations Dispute and Appeals Tribunals, administrative decisions must be lawful, rational, procedurally correct, and not influenced by bias or improper motives. Decision-makers must provide reasons for all administrative decisions, supported by facts.

II. Definition/scope of application

5. A lateral reassignment is a movement for an indefinite period to a different post or function, at the same level, within a department or office, with or without a change of duty station. Upon lateral reassignment, there is no change in the type of appointment held by the staff member concerned who will retain their current appointment type (i.e., permanent, continuing or fixed-term without service limitation).
6. This guideline applies to **UN Secretariat staff members in the Professional and higher categories, Field Service category, General Service and related categories, including but not limited to National Professional Officers, Trades and Crafts and Security Service categories** who:
 - a) serve up to and including at the D-2 level²; and
 - b) hold a permanent, continuing or fixed-term appointment without service limitation³; and
 - c) are encumbering a post subject to either:
 - i. international or local recruitment which is abolished as of 1 January 2026; or

² In accordance with ST/SGB/2019/2, the Secretary-General has retained the authority for selection decisions, appointments and lateral reassessments of staff members at the D-2 level.

³ The guidelines do not apply to staff members who have not been recruited in accordance with established procedures under staff rules 4.15 and 4.16 and who, as a result, hold an appointment with service limitation.

ii. local recruitment which is abolished or which is redeployed (i.e., abolished and re-established) to another duty station in another country as of 1 January 2026, as per the General Assembly decision on the 2026 programme budget (i.e., regular budget including special political missions) and the 2025/26 peacekeeping support account budget.

7. The guideline does not apply to:

- a) Staff members holding temporary appointments;
- b) Staff members holding fixed-term appointments with service limitation³;
- c) Staff members, irrespective of their type of appointments, who are serving in a field mission under liquidation as a result of the governing bodies' decision to end their mandate;
- d) Staff members on secondment or loan to the UN Secretariat from another organization, institution or government;
- e) Internationally recruited staff members who encumber posts redeployed to another duty station in another country as per the above-mentioned General Assembly decision.
- f) Affiliate personnel (e.g., UN Volunteers, consultants, individual contractors, etc.).

III. Governing principles

8. Lateral reassignment decisions within the entity must be guided by the following principles:

- a) **Primacy of retention:** Lateral reassignment within entity is a required managerial measure to maximize staff retention and minimize involuntary separations.
- b) **Exhaustion of internal options:** All suitable vacant posts and projected vacant posts (as defined in paragraph 12 below) within the entity must be considered.
- c) **Equity and consistency:** Decisions must be consistent across the entity and organizational units.
- d) **Objective assessment:** Suitability determinations must be based on documented, job-related minimum requirements (see paragraph 14 b) below).
- e) **Procedural fairness:** Decisions must be reasoned, proportionate, free from arbitrariness.

IV. Initiation of lateral reassignment exercises within entities

9. Following the decision of the General Assembly to abolish posts funded from the regular budget and the peacekeeping support account budget as per its resolution 80/242 of 30 December 2025, Heads of entity must **immediately** initiate lateral reassignment efforts within their respective entity for both locally and internationally recruited staff members who meet the criteria detailed in paragraph 6 above.
10. **All staff members encumbering abolished posts must be reviewed against vacant and projected vacant posts (including temporarily vacant posts) for identification of lateral reassignment within their entity as soon as possible and by no later than 31 January 2026.**

V. Identification of available posts for within entity lateral reassignment

11. Lateral reassignment within the entity may be made only to:
 - a) **Vacant posts not approved for abolition; or**
 - b) **Projected vacant posts not approved for abolition: i.e., posts which will become vacant by 31 August 2026; or**
 - c) **Temporarily vacant posts not approved for abolition and projected temporarily vacant posts not approved for abolition** which are currently **temporarily** vacant or will become **temporarily** vacant by 31 August 2026, respectively, **for a timebound period of time pending the return of the incumbent who has a lien on the post.** These temporarily available posts may be used to laterally reassign staff members **who only need to remain in service for a limited period of time** before separating from the Organization, such as staff members who will reach:
 - i. the mandatory age of separation; or
 - ii. the normal age of retirement, should the staff member wish to avail themselves of their acquired rights to the latter; or
 - iii. pension contributions' milestones should the staff member wish to avail themselves of early retirement;

prior to the expected date of return of the incumbent with a lien to the temporarily vacant post.

12. A projected vacant post or projected temporarily vacant post is one that will become vacant as a result of separation of the incumbent upon either:

- a) Mutually agreed early separation under any of the three 2025 Early Separation Programmes; or
- b) Retirement upon reaching the mandatory age of separation (MAS) of 65; or
- c) Retirement upon reaching the normal retirement age (NRA) of 60 or 62, as applicable, should the staff member request to avail themselves of their acquired rights to NRA; or
- d) Expiration of secondment or loan to the UN Secretariat from another organization, institution or government which will not be renewed upon reaching the current expiration date; or
- e) Expiration of a temporary appointment which will not be renewed upon reaching its current expiration date; or
- f) Expiration of a fixed-term appointment with service limitation which will not be renewed upon reaching its current expiration date; or
- g) Pending the return of an incumbent who has a lien on the post.

13. Vacant posts, projected vacant posts, temporarily vacant posts and temporarily projected vacant posts must be preserved, until further notice, for lateral reassignment of staff members encumbering abolished posts as defined in paragraph 6 above; and in accordance with existing hiring restrictions, must not be filled through the established recruitment processes whether for selection of internal or external candidates until further notice.

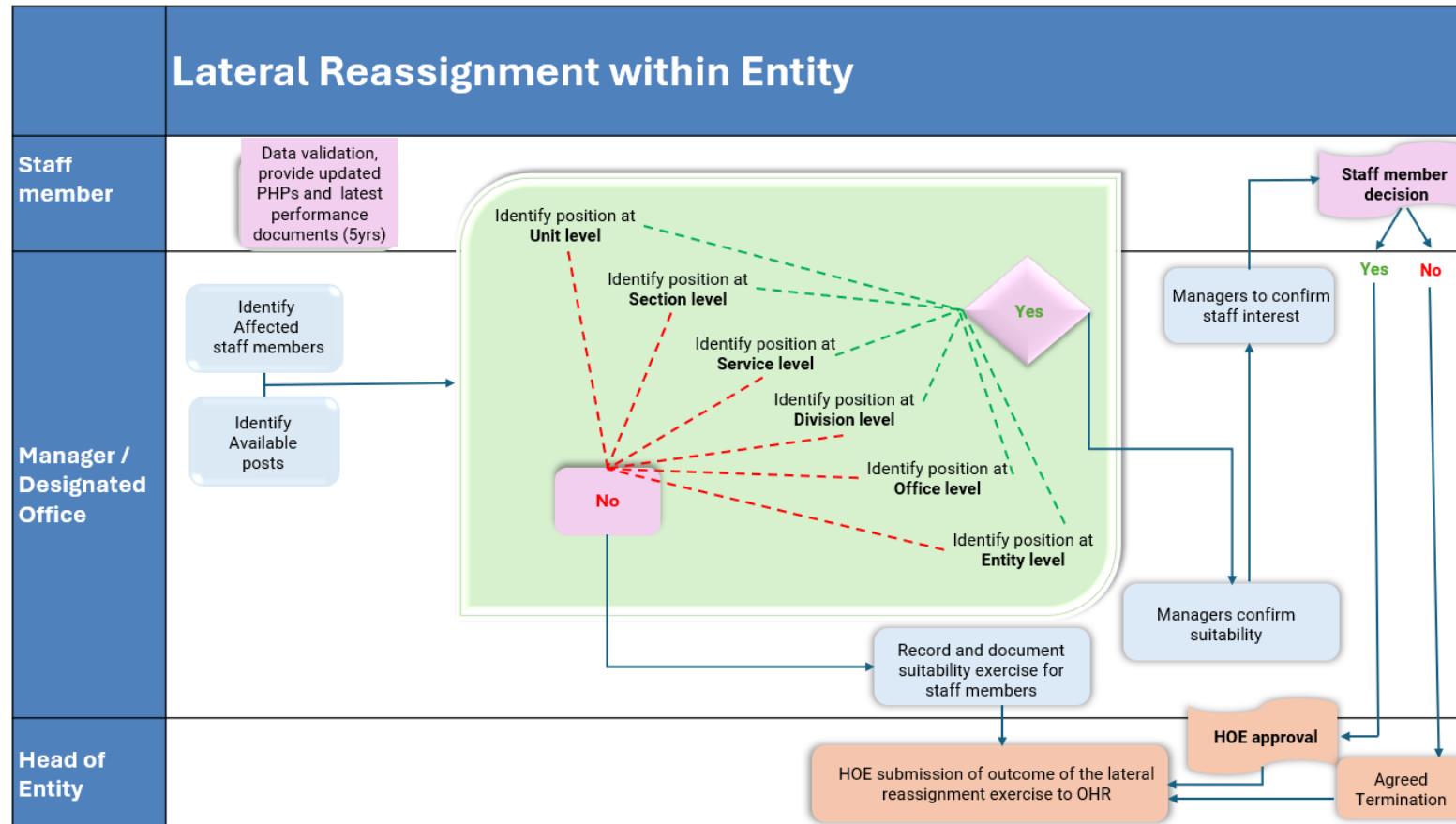
VI. Order and sequencing of lateral reassignment efforts

14. Entities must apply the following process when undertaking the lateral reassignment of staff members:

- a) Identify all affected staff members as defined in paragraph 6 above and obtain their updated Personal History Profiles (PHPs) reflecting their most recent experience and qualifications for the purpose of determining suitability; and seek their validation of their personal data, including years of continuous service;
- b) Identify all available posts, including posts projected to become vacant or temporarily vacant by 31 August 2026 (as defined in paragraph 12 above).

- c) Review staff members exclusively against the required criteria of the post as listed in the latest job opening for the position or confirmed by the manager if the post was last advertised more than 5 years ago. **Desirable criteria must not be considered.**
- 15. The exercise may result in staff members being found suitable for one or more posts, or for none.
- 16. Where only one staff member is found suitable for a vacant or projected vacant post (including temporarily vacant ones) at any organizational unit level within the entity, the lateral reassignment can be immediately approved by the Head of entity, except in the case of staff members at the D-2 level (please refer to paragraph 28 below), with an effective date as per paragraph 30 below.
- 17. Pursuant to paragraph 3 of Article 101 of the United Nations Charter and as further reflected in Regulation 4.2, Article IV of the Staff Regulations and Rules, the paramount consideration in the employment of the staff shall be **the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity**. Due regard shall be paid to the importance of retaining the staff **on as wide a geographical basis as possible**
- 18. Where two or more staff members are found suitable for the same vacant post or projected vacant post, due regard must be given in **all cases** to relative **competence, integrity, and length of service**. **In making their decision on lateral reassignment within their respective entity, Heads of entity must also prioritize the type of appointment, gender and nationality of the staff members concerned, in accordance with the Organization's regulatory framework, as applicable.**
- 19. Heads of entity must ensure that lateral reassignments within their entity are conducted in a transparent, consistent, and cost-effective manner.
- 20. **Only after opportunities for lateral reassessments within the entity have been fully and demonstrably exhausted**, may staff members who could not be laterally reassigned within the entity be referred for the subsequent step for DMSPC consideration under the one-time global lateral reassignment exercise which will be managed by the Office of Human Resources, in accordance with Staff Regulation 1.2 (c) as delegated by the Secretary-General to the Under Secretary-General for DMSPC and further sub-delegated to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources.

Lateral reassignment within the entity – workflow process⁴



⁴ For staff members at the D-2 level, Heads of entity must first submit their proposed lateral reassignments to OHR/DMSPC for review and consultation with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General before a final decision (see also paragraph 28 below).

VII. Suitability

21. The suitability of an affected staff member for lateral reassignment to a vacant or projected vacant post within the entity must be determined by comparing the category, level and qualifications of the affected staff members with the minimum educational requirements, experience and skills, including the language requirements for such available posts.
22. In determining whether a staff member meets the minimum requirements of the post (i.e. education, work experience and language) in accordance with paragraph 21 above, managers must give particular **emphasis** to a staff member's capacity and demonstrated ability to acquire the required competencies and perform the functions of the post **through on-the-job learning, to maximize opportunities for lateral reassignments within the entity and retention of serving staff members.**
23. **Lateral reassignments within the entity must be at the same grade level (lateral).** If a staff member is temporarily encumbering a post at a higher grade level within the entity, **they must be returned to their parent post at their personal grade level and any payment of SPA be discontinued.** Should their parent post be a post approved for abolition by the General Assembly, they will be considered for lateral reassignment at their personal grade level.
24. **Lateral reassignments within the entity may occur across job families**, provided the staff member meets the requirements of the post (i.e., the desirable criteria cannot be invoked to eliminate a staff member from consideration for lateral reassignment within the entity to a post for which they meet the required criteria). Suitability must be fully documented in writing (see a sample form in [Annex A](#)). Heads of entity are responsible for lateral reassignment decisions within their entity under their delegated authority and will be held accountable including for payment of a financial award resulting from judgements from the UN Dispute and Appeal Tribunals to award compensation to staff members if the process was not followed. Staff members will be rostered for the post they will encumber upon lateral reassignment within the entity.
25. **Renewals of temporary appointments and fixed-term appointments with service limitation beyond their current expiration dates must be carefully reviewed, mindful of paragraph 12 e) and f) above.**

VIII. Communication with staff

26. Managers are expected to engage with their staff to explain the proposed lateral reassignment(s) within the entity. As such, affected staff members must be:

- Informed at the earliest possible stage that lateral reassignment within the entity is being explored;
- Asked to update their PHP in inspira using their internal account **immediately but no later than 21 January 2026**; and
- Consulted regarding suitability, functional alignment, and (where applicable) impact of a potential change of official duty station should the lateral reassignment within the entity involves such a change before a decision is made. Such consultation is an opportunity for the staff member to provide their views. There is, however, no requirement to obtain the consent / agreement of a concerned staff member to reassign them to different functions.

IX. Documentation and implementation of the lateral reassignment within the entity decisions

27. Decisions on lateral reassignment within the entity must be supported by:

- A desk review to determine suitability on the basis of the staff members' updated PHP; and
- A record of the vacant post(s) and/or projected vacant post(s) (including temporarily vacant ones where applicable) considered.

28. For staff members at the D-2 level, the Heads of entity must first submit their lateral reassignment proposals to OHR/DMSPC for review and consultation with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General prior to a final decision by the Secretary-General.

29. Entities must notify staff members in writing of the lateral reassignment decision by the Head of entity and provide them with the respective terms of reference for the new assignment.

30. If the post identified **is immediately available**, staff members must be laterally reassigned within the entity to that post retroactively **effective 1 January 2026**; and

otherwise as soon as the projected vacant post becomes available, and by no later than 31 August 2026.

31. In cases where staff members do not wish to avail themselves of the opportunity for a lateral reassignment within their entity, their decision must be formally documented and escalated to the Office of Human Resources for record-keeping. **In the event that a staff member is not inclined to report to their new assignment, the staff member will be given an opportunity to consider whether they would accept an agreed termination. If a staff member does not consent to an agreed termination, the staff member will be expected to report to their new assignment. This should be communicated to the staff member in writing. Should the staff member fail to report to their new assignment and not consent to an agreed termination, their appointment will be terminated by the Secretary-General in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules, which do not provide a staff member the right to “refuse” a reassignment by the Secretary-General.**

X. Escalation to DMSPC for consideration under the one-time global lateral reassignment Secretariat-wide

32. Once all lateral reassignment opportunities within the entity have been fully exhausted, **the Head of entity must submit to DMSPC the list of affected staff members who have not been reassigned as well as a list of vacant posts and projected vacant posts (including temporarily vacant ones where applicable).** This transmission must be supported by evidence that:

- a) All potential lateral reassessments within the entity were fully exhausted; and
- b) No suitable vacant posts or projected vacant posts (including temporarily vacant ones where applicable) remained available within the entity to accommodate the lateral reassignment of staff members who could not be reassigned within the entity.

33. **Heads of entity must submit to the ASG/OHR (GlobalR@un.org) the Template in Annex B as soon as possible and no later than cob 05 February 2026.** The excel sheet includes 2 tabs that must be **accurately and fully completed** to ensure the global reassignment exercise can be implemented:

a) a Tab called “Abolished posts & Reassignments”, which should provide information about:

- the abolished posts (position ID, position title, position nature, position category/grade, position duty station, position job code);
- the staff members encumbering those posts (index number, given name, family name, nationality, gender, category/grade, type of appointment, functional title) and the reassignment within the entity decisions;
- vacant or projected vacant post (including temporarily vacant ones) used for reassignment within the entity.

b) a Tab called “Available posts” which should list all currently vacant posts and all projected vacant posts (including temporarily vacant ones) up to 31 August 2026 (as defined in paragraph 12 above).

34. **Additionally, for staff members who could not be laterally reassigned within the entity, reason for non-reassignment within the entity must be provided in [Annex B](#) under tab “Abolished posts & Reassignments”, and a copy of the most recent available PHPs and the e-Performance records for the last 5 years for those staff members must be submitted in the same communication to ASG/OHR (GlobalR@un.org).**

35. **The Office of Human Resources will review the information submitted by entities, including abolished posts, their incumbents, vacant post(s) and/or projected vacant post(s) (including temporarily vacant ones where applicable) and lateral reassessments within the entity identified, and if applicable, staff members encumbering abolished posts who could not be laterally reassigned within their entity by the Head of entity.**

36. Staff members who cannot be laterally reassigned within their entity and as a result remain encumbering an abolished post will be included by OHR in the list of staff members to be considered during the second step, i.e., under the one-time global lateral reassignment which will take place in March 2026.

37. More information on the one-time global lateral reassignment Secretariat wide will be forthcoming in a separate OHR policy guideline.

XI. Inquiries

38. Staff members should address any questions regarding the lateral reassignment(s) within their entity to their Executive Office or local Human Resources Office as Tier 1.
39. Executive Offices and local Human Resources Offices may reach out to the Human Resources Services Division (HRSD) in the Department of Operational Support (DOS) as Tier 2 for operational guidance, advice and support (DOS-HR-Advice dos-hr@un.org), which may in turn reach out to OHR Policy as Tier 3, should further policy support and authoritative policy interpretation be needed (DMSPC-OHR-GSPD-Policy Support ohr-policy@un.org).

ANNEX A – SAMPLE form for suitability review of staff members for lateral reassignment within their entity

Pursuant to the Secretary-General's delegation of authority as set out in ST/SGB/2019/2, the authority to laterally reassign existing staff members within their respective entity is delegated to each Head of entity.

In this context, managers (normally the first reporting officers) must review the suitability of staff members who are encumbering posts which were abolished or which were subject to local recruitment and abolished and re-established to another duty station in another country against the minimum requirements of vacant and projected vacant posts within the entity, as a managing measure to minimize involuntary separations resulting from the abolition of posts and reduction of staff under the UN80 initiative.

Entities may use this form to document how each vacant and projected vacant post were considered in identifying suitable lateral reassessments within the entity; and provide detailed justification for the suitability determination of each staff member. Such justifications will serve to substantiate the entity's determination in the event of a legal challenge.

Lateral Reassignment within the Entity	
Dept / Office/Mission):	
Vacant Post Title:	Category/Level:
Vacant Post No.:	Vacant Post Duty Station:

Note: Entities may use this form to document how each vacant and projected vacant post were considered in identifying suitable lateral reassignments; and provide detailed justification for the suitability determination of each staff member.
 Enter below detailed justification for determining the staff members suitability for the listed vacant position.
 Suitability screening means assessing each PHP against the academic, work experience and language requirements of the position. (Desirable criteria must not be invoked).

No.	Name	Index Number	Functional Title	Job Family	Category /Level	Type of Appointment	EDD	Nationality	Gender	Required Criteria					Comments	Recommendation
										Education	Work Exp #1	Work Exp #2	Work Exp #3	Languages		
1									Select an option							Select an option
2									Select an option							Select an option
3									Select an option							Select an option
4									Select an option							Select an option
5									Select an option							Select an option
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ANNEX B – Table Template – Outcome of the lateral reassessments within the entity

Tab 1 – Abolished posts and reassessments

List of abolished posts, encumbering staff and reassignment decisions

i.e. with staff encumbering these posts, reassignment decision, and vacant posts used for reassignment, if applicable

Abolished posts							
No.	Entity	Position ID	Position title	Position nature	Position category / level	Position duty station	Position budgetary job code

	Encumbering staff member									
Index Number	Given Name	Family Name	Category / level	Type of appointment	Functional title	Nationality	Gender	Reassigned within entity (Yes, No, n/a)	Reason for not reassignment within entity (choose one option)	Remarks
				select an option				select an option	select an option	Select an option
				select an option				select an option	select an option	Select an option
				select an option				select an option	select an option	Select an option
				select an option				select an option	select an option	Select an option
				select an option				select an option	select an option	Select an option

Vacant or projected vacant post used for reassignment					
Reassignment - Position ID	Reassignment - Position title	Reassignment - Position nature	Reassignment - Position category/level	Reassignment - Position duty station	Reassignment - Position job code

Tab 2 – Available Posts
List of available posts, including vacant posts and posts projected to be vacant by 31 August 2026

i.e. posts projected to be vacant include posts with staff approved for early separation, posts with staff retiring by 31 August 2026, posts with staff with temporary appointment expiring by 31 Aug 2026, posts with staff with limited fixed-term appointment expiring by 31 Aug 2026, posts with staff on loan/on secondment to the Secretariat expiring by 31 August 2026

Vacant or projected vacant posts							
No.	Entity	Position ID	Position title	Position nature	Position category / level	Position duty station	Position budgetary job code

Encumbering staff member										
Index no.	Given Name	Family Name	Category / level	Type of appointment	Appointment expiration date	Retirement date (if applicable)	Reason for projected vacancy	Functional title	Nationality	Gender
				select an option						select an option
				select an option						select an option
				select an option						select an option
				select an option						select an option
				select an option						select an option