

## OHR Policy Guideline OHR/PG/2026/1

### January 2026 entity-level lateral reassignment exercise

#### Frequently Asked Questions

##### **Scope – staff members**

#### **1. Who must be included in the January 2026 entity-level lateral reassignment exercise?**

The January 2026 entity-level lateral reassignment exercise must include all staff members encumbering or with a lien on posts/positions which, in the context of the UN80 initiative, were abolished by 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<sup>1</sup> who:

- a) **have not signed an agreed separation;** or
- b) will not reach the mandatory age of separation (MAS) of 65 years old **on or prior to 31 August 2026.**

#### **2. Must entities inform staff members who encumber posts/positions that were abolished by General Assembly resolution 80/242 of 30 December 2025?**

Staff members who encumber posts/positions that were abolished by the GA Resolution 80/242 and who:

- a) signed an agreed termination under any of the 2025 three early separation programmes will be separated on the mutually agreed date as contained in said agreement; and do not need to be notified of the status of the post they encumber;
- b) did not sign an agreed termination should be informed that their post was abolished effective 1 January 2026 and asked to provide the following:
  - i. A copy of updated Personal History Profiles (PHPs) reflecting most recent experience and qualifications for the purpose of determining suitability;
  - ii. Copies of performance documents of the last five performance cycles; and
  - iii. Confirmation of continuous service and EOD reflected in the Umoja records (validation of personal data, including years of continuous service).

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

- 3. If a post/position abolished by General Assembly Resolution 80/242 is encumbered by a staff member on a fixed-term appointment without service limitation expiring in the middle of 2026, would the staff member be considered for the January 2026 entity-level lateral reassignment exercise, or should the entity let the contract expire?**

Except for staff members reaching mandatory age of separation by 31 August 2026, all currently serving staff members on permanent, continuing and fixed-term appointments without service limitation encumbering posts/positions abolished by General Assembly Resolution 80/242 must be considered for the January 2026 entity-level lateral reassignment exercise.

- 4. What happens to staff members on secondment or special leave without pay (SLWOP) with a lien a post/position which was abolished by GA Resolution 80/242? Are they included in the January 2026 entity-level lateral reassignment exercise?**

Except for staff members reaching mandatory age of separation on or before 31 August 2026, all staff members who are on secondment or SLWOP with a lien on a post/position which was abolished by GA Resolution 80/242 must be considered in the January 2026 entity-level lateral reassignment exercise.

- 5. Why are staff affected by the peacekeeping contingency plans not included in the January 2026 entity-level lateral reassignment?**

The decision to activate contingency plans in October 2025 stemmed from a funding shortfall in the 2025-2026 peacekeeping budget. It differs from the revised estimates submitted to the General Assembly in the context of the Secretary-General's UN80 initiative, which proposed post abolitions. For mission contingency, missions had to identify posts/positions to be vacated due to funding reductions (i.e. these positions were not abolished).

Staff members occupying posts/positions which were on the list to be vacated in order to decrease the staffing levels due to funding reductions, had to be separated. Some missions managed to mitigate these separations through:

- a) laterally reassignments to vacant posts/positions which were not on the list of posts/positions to be vacated (i.e., they were already reviewed for lateral reassignment within their entity on available vacant posts/positions); and
- b) agreed separations under any of the three 2025 early separation programmes.

When the above measures were insufficient, the downsizing policy was activated.

***Scope – posts/positions***

**6. Which posts/positions must be included in the January 2026 entity-level lateral reassignment exercise.**

The January 2026 lateral reassignment exercise within entities should consider vacant and projected vacant posts/positions from all budget sources, including extra-budgetary.

**7. Which are the projected vacant posts/positions for purposes of the January 2026 entity-level lateral reassignment exercise?**

Projected vacant posts/positions for purposes of the January 2026 lateral reassignment exercise within entities are those 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.

**8. Will current regular budget vacancies that have been unfilled due to the hiring restrictions be included for the lateral reassignment within entities exercise?**

Yes, all current regular budget vacancies that have been unfilled due to the hiring restrictions must be included for the January 2026 entity-level lateral reassignment exercise.

It is important to note that the January 2026 entity-level lateral reassignment exercise is focused on staff members encumbering posts/positions approved for abolition by the General Assembly resolution 80/242 and minimizing involuntary separations.

**9. Are vacancies that were advertised a few months ago but subsequently placed on hold included? Should those recruitment exercises be cancelled in order to prioritize the lateral assignment exercise?**

The underlying principle is that all available vacancies should be used to accommodate currently serving staff members holding a permanent, continuing or fixed-term appointment without service limitation who encumber an abolished post, through the lateral reassignment exercises within entities regardless of whether those vacant posts/positions have been advertised and regardless of at what stage of the recruitment process they are. The priority is to maximize the use of existing vacant and projected posts/positions to retain affected serving staff members and minimize involuntary separations.

If as a result of the January 2026 entity-level lateral reassignment exercise, a staff is reassigned to the advertised position, then the ongoing recruitment process is cancelled.

**10. Why are all vacant peacekeeping positions not included in the January 2026 entity-level lateral reassignment?**

The decision to activate contingency plans in October 2025 stemmed from a funding shortfall in the 2025-2026 peacekeeping budget. It differs from the revised estimates submitted to the General Assembly in the context of the Secretary-General's UN80 initiative, which proposed post abolitions. For mission contingency, missions had to identify posts/positions to be vacated due to funding reductions (i.e. these posts/positions were not abolished).

## ***Review exercise***

- 11. What happens when an entity has no available posts/positions at their grade level? Can it offer posts/positions at a lower grade should staff members choose to accept? Can they offer posts/positions at a higher level retaining their current grade?**

The January 2026 entity-level lateral reassignment exercise is limited to **lateral movements at the same grade**. This means that reassignment is confined to posts/positions of the **same** category and level (e.g., G-5 to G-5, P-3 to P-3, NOB to NOB, D-1 to D-1).

Reassignment to a **lower** grade does not constitute a lateral move, is outside the scope of the January 2026 entity-level lateral reassignment exercise and is **not permitted**.

Similarly, reassignment to a **higher** grade while retaining the former level is outside the scope of the January 2026 entity-level lateral reassignment exercise and is **not permitted**.

- 12. Can an entity reclassify a GS-OL post one level down (i.e., GS-6 to GS-5), to be able to laterally reassign a staff member encumbering a post/position which was abolished by GA Resolution 80/242?**

No, entities are required to conduct the lateral reassignment exercise using vacant or projected vacant posts/positions at the grade level at which they are currently classified.

Post reclassification should be undertaken in accordance with the applicable policies governing job classification (ST/AI/1998/9 on *System for the classification of posts*) and not for the purposes of retaining a staff member through the January 2026 entity level lateral reassignment exercise.

## ***Implementation of the approved entity-level lateral reassignments***

- 13. What is the budgetary effective date of the lateral reassignment?**

For budgetary purposes if the post/position identified is immediately available, staff members must be laterally reassigned within the entity to that post/position retroactively effective 1 January 2026; and otherwise as soon as the projected vacant post becomes available, and by no later than 31 August 2026.

**14. What happens if a staff member is offered a lateral reassignment within the entity and does not wish to move? Will the staff member then be included in the global lateral reassignment exercise?**

When staff members do not accept the offer to be laterally reassigned within their entity, they will be given an opportunity to consider an agreed termination. If the staff members do not consent to an agreed termination and fail to report to their new assignment, their appointment will be terminated by the Secretary-General in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules.