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## Policy Guideline

### DETERMINATION OF STEP UPON RECRUITMENT OR MOVEMENT TO A DIFFERENT CATEGORY: IMPLEMENTATION OF PROVISIONAL STAFF RULE 3.3 (a)

OHR/PG/2023/2 – 1 January 2023

#### SCOPE OF APPLICATION

1. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on how the provisions of staff rule 3.3 (a) of ST/SGB/2023/1 are to be applied.
2. Staff rule 3.3 (a) of the provisional staff rules (ST/SGB/2023/1) reads:
  - (a) *On appointment or on selection to a different category staff members shall normally be placed at the first step of the level of their post unless otherwise decided by the Secretary-General.*
3. Note that as per the new provisional staff rule, internal staff members who change categories (including recruitment of GS staff or related categories to the Professional category) will be treated for step determination purposes as if the movement were an appointment or reappointment. Such movements are not considered a “promotion” and therefore the determination of step will follow staff rule 3.3 (a). When a staff member changes category, a new letter of appointment must be issued reflecting the different conditions of service of the new category. This is especially important when the movement involves changes from local to international recruitment or vice versa.
4. Therefore, these guidelines apply to:
  - (a) Selections for positions in a different category than the one held by the staff members, regardless of whether the change of category is the result of a temporary assignment or a recruitment for a position for a year or more; and
  - (b) all initial appointments or reappointments, regardless of appointment type, except for the following cases:
    - Lateral movements on secondments or transfers from common system organizations, which are governed by the provisions of the “*Inter-Organization Agreement concerning Transfer, Secondment or Loan of Staff among the Organizations applying the United Nations Common System of Salaries and Allowances*”;
    - Former staff members in receipt of pension benefits<sup>1</sup>, who are governed by the provisions of ST/AI/2003/8, whereby they cannot be reappointment to a position at a grade and level higher than what they held before separation upon retirement.
    - Recruitment for positions in the Professional category or above that require special language competence, which are covered by their own guidelines.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that former staff members who are not in receipt of pension benefits will be reassessed upon reappointment.

The guidelines are divided into 3 sections: Section I deals with the determination of step upon change of category or recruitment into the Professional category, Section II deals with the determination of step upon change of category or recruitment into the FS category; and section III deals with the determination of step upon change of category or recruitment into the GS and related categories, including but not limited to National Professional Officers, Trades and Crafts and Security Service categories.

## SECTION I: CHANGES OF CATEGORY OR RECRUITMENTS INTO THE P CATEGORY AND ABOVE

### A) MINIMUM ACADEMIC AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY AND ABOVE

5. The minimum academic qualifications required for appointment at the Professional level and above is a first-level university degree from an accredited (recognized) academic institution<sup>2</sup>. In some specific instances, certification of specialized training or license relevant to the job family, such as military and police academy diplomas, may be accepted in lieu of a recognized degree for the positions whose classified job descriptions provide for such alternative. In such cases, this information will be contained in the educational requirements of the job opening. Where there is no language accepting equivalences, no staff member is to be recruited into the Professional category without meeting the requirement of the recognized first-level university degree.
6. An advanced degree is required for certain levels and in such cases, additional years of qualifying work experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree. The UNESCO "World Guide to Higher Education" may be used as a guide in determining the level of degrees in individual countries. Information may also be obtained from other reliable sources, such as official internet sites, permanent missions and/or the educational institution concerned.
7. The table below summarizes the minimum requirements in terms of relevant work experience and academic qualifications for the different levels in the professional category and above for positions that do not require special language competence:

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<sup>2</sup> For a definition of what constitutes a recognized degree, please refer to ST/AI/2018/5.

Professional Level	Number of years of relevant professional experience	
	Masters degree or equivalent Or higher (ISCED <sup>3</sup> Level 7 academic qualifications or higher)	First level university degree or equivalent (ISCED Level 6 academic qualifications)
P1	0	2
P2 Non YPP/G to P	2*	4
P2 YPP/G to P	0	0-2
P3	5	7
P4	7	9
P5	10	12
D1	15	17
D2	Over 15	Over 17

\* At this level, consideration would be given for a doctoral degree (ISCED level 8) or equivalent with no experience.

8. In counting relevant work experience, HR specialists should consider work experience that would contribute to professional competencies/skills and that would prepare a candidate to perform the functions of the post for which the candidate is being selected. Work experience after the completion of the first-level university degree would fall under this category in most instances.
9. Work experience obtained prior to completing the first-level university degree will not normally be considered. However, in some cases, such experience may be considered when it is (1) at the substantive and professional level; and (2) obtained in the fields specified in the job opening.
10. Work experience obtained in the General Service and related categories in the UN common system at the GS-6, GS-7, FS-4, FS-5, S-5 to 7, and TC-6 to 8 levels, National Professional Officer or Language Teacher category may be considered as relevant work experience, provided that the experience meets the above-mentioned criteria under paragraph 8 and 9.
11. Experience obtained in certain job families (such as security, police or military) where certification of specialized training or licence relevant to the job family are deemed to be equivalent to the first-level university degree, may also be considered as relevant work experience, provided that the experience meets the above-mentioned criteria under paragraph 9.
12. Any other situation must be evaluated carefully on its own merits and may only be considered in exceptional circumstances and upon proper justification of meeting the requirements under paragraph 9 above.

<sup>3</sup> *International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011 - UNESCO*. UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012, <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>.

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13. Work experience can be acquired on a full-time or part-time basis. Work experience acquired on a part-time basis should be credited proportionately to the time worked provided that the experience meets the above-mentioned criteria under paragraph 9. When there is no information on the proportion of the time worked, part-time experience will be credited at 50%. This applies to self-employment, including consultancies and volunteer work. Internships will always be counted at 50%, even if they were on a full-time basis.
  14. Work experience acquired during periods of full-time study will always be credited as part-time work experience and will be credited proportionally to the time worked. Therefore, when full-time study takes place concurrently with part-time work, work experience cannot be credited at 100%. Conversely, it should be possible to credit full-time work experience at 100% while undertaking part-time study.

#### DETERMINATION OF STEP UPON APPOINTMENT OR REAPPOINTMENT IN THE PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY AND ABOVE OR MOVEMENT TO THE P CATEGORY FROM ANOTHER CATEGORY

15. Upon initial appointment or reappointment or movement across categories (including movement from the GS to the P category following a competitive examination), selected candidates will be appointed at the first step of the level for which they have been selected when only the minimum academic and experience requirements of the job opening have been met as per paragraph 8 above.
16. When the candidate possesses relevant work experience or educational qualifications over and above the minimum requirements stated in paragraph 8 above, they may be appointed at higher steps. One additional step above step one will be given for each additional completed year of full-time work experience or its equivalence except if the next step in the salary scales requires two additional years of experience as per the staff rules in effect, in which case two additional years would be needed to award the next step.
17. In counting the years of work experience, the following criteria will be used:
  - (a) Only periods of completed full-time work that amount to one year beyond the minimum requirements in paragraph 8 will be counted. Periods of less than one year will be disregarded;
  - (b) A degree at level 8 as per the criteria of the International Standard Classification of Education ISCED (doctoral or equivalent) will be considered as equivalent to two years of full-time work experience.

#### ***Special considerations for determination of step upon recruitment into the P category from other categories***

18. For staff members who are recruited to the Professional category from the GS and related categories, or the FS category up to the FS-5 level, attention should be drawn to staff rule 4.16 (b) (i) requiring that appointments at the P1 and P2 levels be made exclusively through competitive examinations as well as staff rule 3.4 (c) that calls for a grandfathering of the pensionable remuneration prior to the change of category until such time that the pensionable remuneration is surpassed by the one obtained in the Professional category. Such recruitments can only be made at the P1 or P2 level after being successful in a competitive examination.

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19. Internal staff members other than the ones indicated in paragraph 18 can be recruited into the P category from another category provided they meet the requirements of the position. The staff member will be given a new letter of offer reflecting the new contractual conditions as per staff rule 4.5 and the step determination will be subject to the provisions of paragraphs 17 and 18 above. Upon acceptance of the offer, the staff member shall be given a new letter of appointment.
  
  20. There may be some situations in which the net salary of staff members at the P category may be lower than what they receive in their previous category. Under no circumstances can additional steps be given in these cases. Since the change of category represents a change in contractual conditions, the staff member should be given the standard period of time to consider the offer before accepting and be advised to consider the offer in its totality, including the additional entitlements that may be due as per staff rule 4.5.

***Operational Considerations upon change of category: PA actions***

***Temporary assignments***

21. When an internal staff member is selected for a temporary assignment from the GS and related categories to the P category, the movement will be processed as an SPA in accordance with ST/AI/1999/17. Hiring managers are reminded, however, that recruitment to the professional category of staff from the GS and related categories shall be made exclusively through competitive examinations. Even the selection of internal GS staff temporarily on such positions should be rare.
  
22. When an internal staff member is selected for a temporary assignment from the FS category or NPO to the P category, the movement will be processed as a temporary grade. In the case of NPOs, as per Staff Rule 4.4 (b) NPO may be temporarily assigned outside of the country of their employment to a United Nations field mission for a period not exceeding three months or to any other duty station for a period not exceeding six months under conditions established by the Secretary-General. The movement should not involve a change of duty station.

***Selections for P positions for one year or longer***

23. When the movement into the P category or above is the result of a competitive selection through the staff selection system or a recruitment from a competitive examination roster, this movement will be processed as a change of category PA.

**SECTION II: CHANGES OF CATEGORY OR RECRUITMENTS INTO THE FS CATEGORY**

**A) MINIMUM ACADEMIC AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FIELD SERVICE CATEGORY**

24. The table below summarizes the minimum requirements in terms of relevant work experience and academic qualifications for the different levels in the Field Service category:

Level of Appointment	Minimum relevant experience	Minimum academic requirements*
FS-7	12 years **	Completion of Secondary education or equivalent. Technical or vocational certificate.**
FS-6	10 years**	Completion of Secondary education or equivalent or equivalent. Technical or vocational certificate**
FS-5	8 years	Completion of Secondary education or equivalent or equivalent. Technical or vocational certificate
FS-4	6 years	Completion of secondary education
FS-3	4 years	Completion of secondary education
FS-2	2 years	Completion of secondary education
FS-1	0 years	Completion of secondary education

\*Technical positions such as vehicle mechanics, radio technician or communications technicians require a technical certificate/license of successful completion of an apprenticeship and tradesmen's qualifications in the relevant field.

\*\* The minimum years of relevant experience is reduced for candidates who possess a first-level university degree as follows: for FS-6, a minimum of 5 years of experience; for FS-7, a minimum of 7 years of experience.

**B) DETERMINATION OF STEP UPON APPOINTMENT OR REAPPOINTMENT IN THE FIELD SERVICE CATEGORY**

25. Upon initial appointment or reappointment, when only the minimum academic and experience requirements of the job opening have been met as per paragraph 24 above, selected candidates will be appointed at the first step of the level for which they have been selected.
26. When the candidate possesses relevant work experience or educational qualifications over and above the minimum requirements stated in para 25, they may be appointed at higher steps. One additional step above step one will be given for each additional completed year of full-time work experience or its equivalence except if the next step in the salary scales requires two additional years of experience as per the staff rules in effect, in which case two additional years would be needed to award the next step.
27. In counting the years of work experience, the following criteria will be used:
  - (a) Only periods of completed full-time work that amount to one year beyond the minimum requirements in paragraph 24 will be counted;
  - (b) For FS-1 through FS-5, one additional year of experience may be computed for relevant higher-level education, i.e. one step for Bachelor's degree or equivalent and 2 years for Masters. This is not applicable for the FS-6 and FS-7 levels.

***Special considerations for staff members who move to the FS category from a different category.***

28. Staff in the General Service and related categories and NPOs shall be eligible to apply for jobs into the FS category regardless of their current grade and level, as long as they meet the requirements with respect to academic qualifications and years of experience for the category and level they are applying for.
29. In the case of NPOs, as per Staff Rule 4.4 (b) NPO may be temporarily assigned outside of the country of their employment to a United Nations field mission for a period not exceeding three months or to any other duty station for a period not exceeding six months under conditions established by the Secretary-General. The movement should not involve a change of duty station.
30. Such movements are considered to be a recruitment to a new category and the determination of step will be done in accordance with section II. B of the present guidelines regardless of the type of movement and personnel action that needs to be processed.
31. Internal staff members who move to the FS category from a different category will be given a new contract reflecting the different conditions of service of the FS category.

***Operational Considerations upon movement to the FS category: PA actions***

*Temporary assignments*

32. When an internal staff member is selected for a temporary assignment from a different category to the FS category, the movement will be processed as a temporary grade.

***Selections for positions for one year of longer***

33. When the movement to the FS category from another category is the result of a selection through the staff selection system and the staff member holds a permanent or continuing appointment, this movement will be processed as a change of category PA.

**SECTION III: CHANGES OF CATEGORY OR RECRUITMENTS INTO THE GS AND RELATED CATEGORIES OR NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS**

***Definitions:***

34. General Service posts encompass all administrative support functions and range from GS-1 to GS-7.
35. Related categories (RC) encompass technical support or specialised functions other than those in the General Service category. The range of categories and grade levels include those listed below:
  - (a) Trades and Crafts (TC): include functions that are based on manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic, and are related to a specific trade, occupation, or vocation such as drivers, plumbers, electricians, various machine operators, and maintenance workers. The levels are prefixed by "TC", and range from levels TC-1 up to TC-8;
  - (b) Security Service (S): covers security officer function. The levels are prefixed by "S" and range from S-1 up to S-7; This category is limited to New York only.

(c) Public Information Assistant/Tour Guides (PIA): The levels are prefixed by “PIA” and range from PIA-1 up to PIA-3. This category is limited to New York only;

(d) Language Teacher (LT): The level is prefixed by “LT”, with one grade, LT-1. This category is limited to New York and Geneva only.

(e) National Professional Officer (NO-A to NO-D) category covers functions in UN field offices that required national knowledge and experience and could not be carried out as effectively by international professionals.

**A) MINIMUM ACADEMIC, EXPERIENCE AND UN EXAMINATIONS AND TESTS REQUIREMENTS FOR THE GENERAL SERVICE AND RELATED CATEGORIES**

36. The following eligibility requirements must be met by prospective candidates to be recruited for positions in the General Service and related categories:

- (a) The minimum age to be eligible for consideration for a position is 18;
- (b) Applicants must have completed secondary education or equivalent.

In some specific instances certification of specialized training or license relevant to the job family, may be required. In such cases, this information will be contained in the educational requirements of the job opening. Any assessment required for specific functions will be contained in the job opening for the position advertised.

37. The tables below summarize the minimum requirements in terms of relevant work experience and academic qualifications for the different levels in the general service and related categories and NPOs as well as the UN assessments and tests for their respective functions:

General Service	Number of years of relevant post-secondary experience		UN examinations/tests
	Upper Secondary education or equivalent  (ISCED Level 3 academic qualifications)	First-level university degree or equivalent  (ISCED Level 6 academic qualifications)	
GS-1	No experience required	No experience required	The Global General Service Test (GGST) or the Administrative Services Assessment Test (ASAT) or any specialised test required for specific functions <sup>4</sup>
GS-2	1 year	No experience required	
GS-3	2 years	No experience required	
GS-4	3 years	1 year	

<sup>4</sup> Exception to the requirement to have successfully passed the GGST or ASAT is made for:  
 - Nurse positions in GS category where the minimum qualification requirements are a first level university degree (BS or equivalent) and for which specialized assessments are conducted;  
 - For Editorial and Desktop Publishing Assistant positions in the Text Processing Section and/or Desktop



GS-5	5 years	3 years	
GS-6	7 years	5 years	
GS-7	10 years	8 years	

Security Service <sup>5</sup>	Number of years of relevant post-secondary professional experience		UN examinations/tests
S-1	2 years in a police force or 3 years in a military force		Security Officers Examination
S-2	2 years		
S-3	5 years		
S-4	9 years		
S-5	12 years		
S-6	15 years		
S-7	18 years		

Public Information Assistant Category		Number of years of relevant professional experience	UN examinations/tests
PIA-1	Not applicable	No experience required	
PIA-2	Not applicable	1 year	
PIA-3	Not applicable	2 years	

Trades and Crafts Category	Number of years of relevant professional experience		UN examinations/tests
TC-1	No experience required		Trades and Crafts Test
TC-2	No experience required		
TC-3	No experience required		
TC-4	3 years		

Publishing Assistant positions where a verbal reasoning test is administered; Candidates who have passed the Verbal Reasoning part of the GGST are exempt from the VRT;

- Data Analysis Assistant, Data Science Assistant, Data Engineering Assistant;
- Security Officers in GS categories outside New York.

<sup>5</sup> Applies also to Security Officers in GS categories outside New York.

TC-5	5 years		
TC-6	7 years		
TC-7	10 years		
TC-8	12 years		

<b>National Professional Officer Category</b>	<b>First-level university degree or equivalent</b>  (ISCED Level 6 academic qualifications)	<b>Masters degree or equivalent</b> Or higher  (ISCED Level 7 academic qualifications or higher)	<b>UN examinations and tests</b>
NO-A	2 years	0 years	N/A
NO-B	4 years	2 years	
NO-C	7 years	5 years	
NO-D	9 years	7 years	

<b>Language Teacher category</b>	<b>Masters degree or equivalent</b> Or higher (ISCED Level 7 academic qualifications or higher)	<b>UN examinations and tests</b>
LT-1	5 years	N/A

For information on United Nations Online Examinations and Tests System please check: <https://hr.un.org/page/general-service-examinations>

**B) DETERMINATION OF STEP UPON APPOINTMENT OR REAPPOINTMENT IN THE GS AND RELATED CATEGORIES OR NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS**

38. Upon initial appointment or reappointment, when only the minimum academic and experience requirements of the job opening have been met as per section A above, selected candidates will be appointed at the first step of the level for which they have been selected.
39. When the candidate possesses relevant work experience or educational qualifications over and above the minimum requirements stated in the previous section, they may be appointed at higher steps. One additional step above step one will be given for each additional completed year of full-time work experience except if the next step in the salary scales requires two additional years of experience as per the staff rules in effect, in which case two additional years would be needed to award the next step.

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40. In counting the years of work experience, the following criteria will be used:

- a) Work experience obtained in the General Service and related categories in the UN common system may be considered as relevant work experience, provided that the experience meets the above-mentioned criteria under section A.
- b) Work experience obtained prior to completing the required educational qualifications for the category will not normally be considered.
- c) Any other situation must be evaluated carefully on its own merits and may only be considered in exceptional circumstances and upon proper justification of meeting the requirements under section A above.

41. Work experience can be acquired on a full-time or part-time basis. Work experience acquired on a part-time basis should be credited proportionately to the time worked provided that the experience meets the above-mentioned criteria under section A. When there is no information on the proportion of the time worked, part-time experience will be credited at 50%. This applies to self-employment, including consultancies and volunteer work. Internships will always be counted at 50%, even if they were on a full-time basis.

42. Work experience acquired during periods of full-time study will always be credited as part-time work experience and will be credited proportionally to the time worked. Therefore, when full-time study takes place concurrently with part-time work, work experience cannot be credited at 100%. Conversely, it should be possible to credit full-time work experience at 100% while undertaking part-time study.

43. In counting relevant work experience, HR specialists should consider work experience that would contribute to required competencies/skills and that would prepare a candidate to perform the functions of the post for which the candidate is being selected. Work experience after the completion of the minimum required educational qualification would fall under this category in most instances.

***Operational Considerations upon change of category***

44. Staff in the General Service and related categories and NPOs shall be eligible to apply for job openings across categories for positions subject to local recruitment regardless of their current grade and level, as long as they meet the requirements with respect to academic qualifications and years of experience for the category and level they are applying for and the selection does not involve a change of duty station unless the staff member is legally authorised to work in the new duty station. Such movements are considered to be a recruitment to a new category and the determination of step will be subject to the provisions of staff rule 3.3 (a), covered in section III.B of the current guidelines.

45. For selections of staff in the GS and related categories into the Professional category, please refer to section I of these guidelines and for selections into the FS category, please refer to Section II.