

# **POLICY GUIDANCE ON TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF HIRING FOR REGULAR BUDGET VACANT POSITIONS VERSION 2 amended (dated 11 August 2020)**

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The purpose of this guidance is to assist Heads of Entities (HoEs) in implementation of the temporary suspension of hiring for all regular budget vacant positions, which was communicated to them in the memorandum issued by the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance on 1 April and 12 May 2020 respectively on measures taken to manage the financial situation of the Organization.

## **Section 1. Scope and duration of the suspension**

1.1 As outlined in both the 1 April and 12 May 2020 memoranda, the temporary suspension applies to all new hiring for regular budget vacancies at all levels including the Director levels (D-1 and D-2) and senior-level positions both at Headquarters and in the field, whether funded from general temporary assistance, temporary or established positions as detailed below:

- a) hiring through job openings (including those that might result in the promotion of currently serving staff members);
- b) hiring through temporary job openings;
- c) hiring that takes place outside Inspira, e.g. without a temporary job opening or job opening, including the recruitment of national staff in special political missions if the position in question is funded from the regular budget;
- d) hiring against vacant P-2 positions from the YPP roster if the position is funded from the regular budget; and
- e) lateral reassignments which are within the authority of the Heads of Entities, subject to the provisions contained in section 6 below.

1.2 The suspension of hiring does not however include the extension of temporary and fixed-term appointments of currently serving staff members provided there is still a need for the functions performed and resources exist.

1.3 At this time, the temporary suspension only applies to hiring for regular budget positions and not to positions funded through the peacekeeping budget, including the peacekeeping support account. However, entities are asked to review spending overall in light of the financial situation including, but not limited to, slowing down hiring and taking any other measures to contain expenses to the extent possible to ensure only the most essential operational needs are fulfilled.

1.4 While the suspension does not explicitly apply to non-post expenses, including, but not limited to, hiring of consultants, individual contractors, UN Volunteers and other non-staff personnel etc., all such non-post expenses should be limited and postponed unless they are directly and immediately linked to ongoing mandated activities which are not impacted by the restrictions caused by the pandemic. Hiring of consultants/individual contractors against the regular budget may not be authorized if the liquidity situation does not improve.

1.5 The suspension is in effect until further notice and will be reviewed regularly by the Under Secretary-General for the Department of Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance together with the Assistant Secretary-General /Controller as the financial situation improves.

## **Section 2. Vacant positions (or those becoming vacant) for which a Job Opening (JO) has not been posted**

2.1 There is no restriction on advertising a vacant or temporarily vacant regular budget position at this time, only a restriction in hiring the selected candidate.

2.2 However, as the temporary suspension on hiring may be for several months, candidates who apply for job openings may no longer be available at the time the suspension is lifted and the actual hiring for the position can take place. Hiring managers may proceed with assessments, including interviews, and if doing so, may wish advising job applicants that such assessment is done to advance the hiring process but that no hiring will be made until after the suspension is lifted<sup>1</sup>.

2.3 As completion of the hiring process could therefore be significantly delayed, HoEs should carefully review the decision to advertise regular budget job openings and temporary job openings.

## **Section 3. Job Openings (JOs) which had been published or in various stages of the selection process before CRB endorsement**

3.1 For regular budget vacant positions already advertised through a job opening, or for which the review and assessment of candidates has begun, the cases may be submitted to the CRBs via Inspira, but they will not be processed at this point.

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<sup>1</sup> The Inspira tool has been re-configured to temporarily prevent selection against regular budget positions for both job openings and temporary job openings. It will also prevent selection if there is no position number. Separate guidance has been issued to HR recruiters for ensuring position numbers are entered for non-regular budget positions, hence allowing the Head of Entities to proceed with selection against non-regular budget positions

## **Section 4. Job Openings where CRB review has been completed, yet no selection decisions made by heads of entities**

4.1 For those regular budget vacant positions, for which the list of recommended candidates was endorsed by the Central Review Bodies, no selection decision should be made by the heads of entities and recorded in Inspira until the suspension is lifted. Hiring may resume where the process was left at once the suspension has been lifted.

## **Section 5. Job Openings where selection decisions are made, the offers of appointment processed but not yet issued to the candidate**

5.1 Any offer and ongoing subsequent onboarding process against vacant regular budget positions will compromise the Organization's ability to meet its financial obligations towards existing staff members. For those regular budget vacant positions for which selection decisions have been made, no offer of appointment should be issued to any of the selected candidate(s) in order to avoid potential litigation against the Organization. The same applies to those recruitments made outside of Inspira. The offer management process and subsequent onboarding procedure should be resumed once the temporary suspension of hiring is lifted.

5.2 For the regular budget positions for which selection has been completed and offer management has started, entities should systematically suspend the issuance of offers of appointment for the duration of the temporary suspension of hiring.

5.3 Support account positions for which selections have been made should be comprehensively reviewed against each entity's budgeted vacancy rate and other expenditures before the decision on the issuance of an offer of appointment is made.

## **Section 6. Withdrawal of Offer of Appointment: when offers of appointment have been made and a letter of appointment has not been signed**

6.1 When an offer of appointment for a regular budget vacant position has been sent to a selected candidate but the letter of appointment has not been signed, the Executive Office or local HR office shall review each case for potential withdrawal of the offer, taking into account any potential legal and financial liability. The Head of Entities (HoEs) have the delegated authority for such decision making. Approaching the selected candidate to seek their concurrence may be a proactive step to prevent such liability.

6.2 If the offer cannot be withdrawn, the onboarding process should be delayed until such time the suspension is lifted; and the candidate should be informed accordingly.

6.3 In light of the information above, all entities are reminded to exercise diligence and to carefully review , in consultation with their local Executive Offices or HR offices, all offers of appointment for positions under the regular budget that are still at the onboarding stage, in order to clearly understand the current situation to anticipate to either withdraw or delay onboarding until the temporary hiring suspension is lifted. For additional guidance on a specific case, please contact your entity's Service Provider or DOS-HR-ADVICE.

## **Section 7. Lateral reassignments**

7.1 The temporary suspension of hiring applies to lateral reassignments that are not cost-neutral which are within the authority of the Heads of Entities.

7.2 However, if the lateral reassignment of the staff member is from a regular budget-funded position to another regular budget-funded or to an extra-budgetary-funded position, within the same duty station, they may be implemented as the reassignment would not have an impact on the regular budget liquidity.

7.3 Lateral reassignments within an entity, that would involve a change of duty station, however, are not allowed as they would have financial implications for the regular budget.

## **Section 8. YPP Placement and MRP reassignments**

8.1 The temporary suspension of hiring extends to recruitment of vacant P-2 posts from the YPP roster if funded from the regular budget. Any current YPP roster validity will be extended for the duration of the temporary suspension.

8.2 The implementation of the lateral reassignments of YPP staff members resulting from the 2020 MRP exercise finalized on 11 March 2020, may proceed regardless of the funding source of the positions.

## **Section 9. Temporary appointments and temporary assignments against temporarily vacant positions**

9.1 The suspension of hiring affects both staff members and those who are not yet currently serving staff members.

9.2 The temporary appointments of currently serving staff members serving on regular budget positions may be extended up to the maximum period allowed as detailed in ST/AI/2020/4/Rev.1 on temporary appointments, provided there is still a need for the functions performed and resources exist.

9.3 For currently serving staff members recruited against a regular budget vacant position for three months or less without issuance of a temporary job opening (TJO), their temporary appointments should not be further extended, unless they fall under the exceptional measures put in place in the context of COVID-19 (please refer <https://iseek.un.org/coronavirus>).

9.4 For currently serving staff members temporarily assigned to a regular budget vacant position for three months or less, they should return to the releasing entity upon completion of their temporary assignments if their parent position is not funded from the regular budget. If both their temporary and parent positions are funded from the regular budget and should the extension beyond three months be cost-neutral i.e. not trigger any additional entitlement payment against the regular budget, the Heads of both releasing and receiving entities should agree on the potential extension of such temporary assignment or the return to the parent position.

9.5 Staff members at the G-1 to G-4 levels holding a temporary appointment against regular budget positions may either be granted a fixed-term appointment when reaching 364 days or be extended up to the maximum of 729 days, provided their services are still needed and resources exist. Their contractual situation will be reassessed in the following year or when the temporary suspension is lifted, whichever comes first.

## **Section 10. Special Post Allowances (SPAs)**

10.1 Staff members who are currently in receipt of a special post allowance may continue receiving such payment as long as they are eligible and meet the criteria for such payment as per the Staff Regulations and Rules and duly promulgated administrative issuances.

10.2 Staff members who are temporarily serving at a higher-grade level on a regular budget position following selection through a TJO for a period exceeding three months prior to the suspension of hiring may start receiving a special post allowance if/when they are eligible and meet the criteria for such payment as per the Staff Regulations and Rules and duly promulgated administrative issuances.

## **Section 11. Requests for exceptions**

11.1 Requests for exceptions should be addressed and submitted directly to the Under Secretary-General for the Department of Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) with copy to the Assistant Secretary-General/Controller and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources.



11.2 The only requests for exceptions to be considered are those related to critical hiring processes, such as those linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, for example hiring of medical personnel.

11.3 The decision on exception up to and including the D-1 level will be taken on a case-by case basis by the Under Secretary-General for the Department of Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) upon joint recommendation from the Assistant Secretary-General/Controller and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources, who will inform the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Department of Operational Support of any exception granted.

11.4 The Executive Office of the Secretary-General will decide on a case-by-case basis on the senior level appointments at the D-2 and above level against vacant regular budget positions during the period of the suspension.