



Secretariat

ST/AI/338/Add.5
2 November 1988

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: VACANCY MANAGEMENT AND STAFF REDEPLOYMENT:
PROVISIONAL GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATIONAddendum

1. The purpose of the present addendum is to provide provisional guidelines for the implementation of the vacancy management and staff redeployment programme established in the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/221 of 22 December 1986 and administrative instruction ST/AI/338 of 22 December 1986 and Add.2, Add.3 and Add.4 of 25, 21 and 28 July 1988 respectively. The present addendum sets out the procedures for announcing vacancies and identifying candidates and provides guidelines for the review of candidates by the appointment and promotion bodies when exercising their functions in the context of redeployment of staff. The effectiveness of these guidelines will be assessed after a period and may be amended or revised as a result of this assessment, after further staff-management consultations.

I. PROCEDURES FOR VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS AND THE
IDENTIFICATION OF CANDIDATES

2. Departments and offices should submit requests for filling vacancies within the limits of their authorized staffing tables. The post must be clearly identified by its authorized post number. Requests for filling posts at the Professional level should be submitted to the Recruitment and Placement Division (RPD), Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), together with a classified job description, on the basis of which vacancy announcements will be issued by OHRM.

3. At Headquarters, OHRM will prepare and issue vacancy announcements to fill vacant posts in the General Service and related categories on receipt of requests from departments and offices which should include a classified job description. A

similar procedure should take place at duty stations away from Headquarters where the local personnel office will prepare and issue the vacancy announcements. At duty stations where no classification exercise has taken place for posts in the General Service and related categories, the local office will be guided by established standards.

4. Interested staff members will be requested to complete an application for vacancy (P.287) form for each post for which they wish to be considered and to submit the completed form, within the established deadline, to RPD, OHRM, for all posts in the P-5 and D-1 levels and to the personnel office indicated in the vacancy announcement for posts at the P-2 to P-4 levels. For posts in the General Service and related categories at Headquarters, applications should be submitted to Room DC1-200, RPD, OHRM. For posts in the General Service and related categories away from Headquarters, staff members at the duty station should submit their applications to the personnel offices at their respective duty stations.

5. Upon expiration of the deadline, OHRM or the local personnel office will review the applications received, taking into consideration the job requirements, in order to determine the eligibility of candidates. In doing so it will also take into account other potential candidates identified by OHRM or the department or office concerned. Staff members identified as potential candidates will be informed, along with the head of their department or office, that they are being considered for vacant posts and that they may send their comments to the appropriate appointment and promotion body through OHRM or the local personnel office at the time of the review.

6. Copies of the applications and of the Personnel Records (fact sheet) of all eligible and qualified staff members who have been identified will be sent to the department or office concerned, which will be requested to send its comments on the suitability of these candidates within the deadline indicated. Such comments will be submitted to the appointment and promotion body with the comments of OHRM or the local personnel office.

7. In the event that the department or office in which the vacancy exists identifies among the applicants a qualified staff member at the level of the post whom the department or office wishes to select, it may request OHRM to approve the movement of that staff member to the post without further review as stated in administrative instruction ST/AI/338/Add.3.

8. OHRM or the local personnel office will ensure that a separate review to ascertain that candidates for posts covered under the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/213 of 10 December 1985 on the designation of staff members performing significant functions in financial management, personnel management and general administration are acceptable to the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, the Controller and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management in terms of their competence in the respective areas of concern prior to review by the relevant appointment and promotion body.

II. GUIDELINES FOR THE REVIEW OF CANDIDATES

9. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, a representative of OHRM or a representative of the local personnel office shall serve ex officio as a non-voting member of the appointment and promotion bodies when they meet in the exercise of their functions related to redeployment of staff. The ex officio member shall provide advice on the proper interpretation and application of personnel policies and procedures and may participate fully in the deliberations of the body concerned.

10. The appointment and promotion bodies shall review the qualifications of the candidates presented by OHRM or the local office and will establish a short list of staff members determined to be the best qualified for each vacancy (the short list should normally contain the names of at least three staff members).

11. The appointment and promotion bodies will be provided with the following information to facilitate the review of candidates:

- (a) Vacancy announcements and job descriptions, including specific language requirements, if any;
- (b) Applications of staff members considered eligible and qualified;
- (c) Fact sheets of eligible and qualified candidates;
- (d) Comments of departments or offices and of OHRM or the local personnel office;
- (e) Comments of candidates, if any.

12. In addition to the above, the appointment and promotion bodies may examine the official status files of candidates and any other pertinent documentation, as needed, and may call upon such persons as they wish to supplement or clarify the information placed before them in any particular case.

13. Candidates will be considered in the following sequence bearing in mind that other things being equal priority should be given to staff members who are encumbering posts scheduled to be abolished:

- (a) Those at the same grade level as the level of the post;
- (b) Those at the next grade level below that of the post;
- (c) Other potential candidates, including those who are two levels below the post if qualified applicants at the same level or one level below are not available.

To the extent that resources permit, special attention should also be paid to the cases of staff members whose spouses are to be redeployed to another duty station and those with certified medical needs or other special reasons for reassignment.

14. For the purpose of this review, the appointment and promotion bodies will apply standards similar to those used in the past for the review of staff members during the promotion exercise. They will take into consideration the following:

(a) Professional qualifications. These include the staff member's proficiency in the relevant field of work and his or her potential as evidenced by the performance and development of the staff member during his or her service with the Secretariat;

(b) Academic training and other qualifications. These encompass training and qualifications gained before and after entry into the United Nations and the candidate's range of experience in a relevant field of work, as appropriate, depending on the level and functions of the post;

(c) Linguistic proficiency. Evidence of proficiency in the relevant languages, where required;

(d) Personal qualities as set out in the guidelines provided in the Manual for Appointment and Promotion Committees at offices away from Headquarters (see annex I to the present instruction);

(e) Supervisory abilities and leadership capabilities, as applicable;

(f) Seniority in grade. The special guidelines with regard to the seniority of women referred to in annex II to the present instruction shall apply mutatis mutandis. In cases where candidates are applying for posts at a higher level than their personal grade level, the appointment and promotion bodies will take fully into account the staff members' seniority in grade, in accordance with the following guidelines:

(i) For staff in the Professional category and above. Qualified candidates at the next level below the vacant post, with a satisfactory performance record, are eligible if they meet the present established seniority requirements for promotion:

P-1 to P-2	Two years
P-2 to P-3	Three years
P-3 to P-4	Three years
P-4 to P-5	Five years
P-5 to D-1	Five years

(ii) In the event that no qualified candidate is available at the level of the vacant post, or at the next level below that of the post who fully meets the established seniority requirement for promotion to the level of the post, other staff members may be considered in the following order:

a. Staff members one level below the level of the vacant post who do not meet the full seniority requirement. If selected, he or she may be promoted to the next level after six months of satisfactory service;

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b. A staff member two levels below the level of the vacant post, only if he or she has the required seniority to be considered for promotion to the next level below that of the post. If selected, he or she may be promoted one level after six months of satisfactory service and to the second level, i.e., the level of the vacant post, after a further 12 months of satisfactory service, meaning a total of 18 months after being assigned the functions of the vacant post;

(iii) For staff in the General Service and related categories. Guidelines for seniority in grade will be issued locally at each duty station;

(g) Improving the status of women. In accordance with the recommendations contained in the first report of the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat of July 1986, which were endorsed by the Secretary-General in his bulletin ST/SGB/220 of 15 October 1986, the appointment and promotion bodies should do all within their means to identify and recommend women who have the potential to take on work of greater scope and complexity. Bearing in mind the impact that placement under the vacancy management and staff redeployment programme may have on the career development of women, the appointment and promotion bodies should also take special note of the measures for the improvement of the status of women outlined in the guidelines for appointment and promotion bodies issued by OHRM (see annex II to the present instructions);

(h) Vacancy situation in the candidates' offices. In order to fill vacancies in a rational and efficient manner on the basis of programme priorities during the retrenchment period, consideration should also be given, to the extent possible, to the vacancy situation in the staff members' current departments and offices.

15. In reviewing candidates for Professional posts in other duty stations, full account should be given to a staff member's record of mobility and the length of service and the degree of difficulty of conditions of life and work at the duty stations at which he or she has served. Unless the staff member has submitted comments to the appointment and promotion body indicating unwillingness to move to another duty station, which may or may not make a difference to the Secretary-General's final decision, there should be no speculation as to whether the staff member may or may not be willing to move to another duty station nor should past expression of unwillingness to move be considered during the review of the staff member's candidature. In addition, in the case of staff members being considered for posts at a higher level at their current duty station, due consideration should be given to evidence of past mobility.

16. In arriving at its short list, the relevant appointment and promotion body should normally not include staff members in the Professional category if they:

(a) Are not transferable for medical reasons;

(b) Have such compelling personal circumstances that a change of duty station would create undue hardship;

(c) Are on a probationary appointment;

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- (d) Have been at their present duty station for less than three years.

With regard to the evaluation of compelling personal circumstances in which reassignment would cause undue hardship for staff members who are selected for reassignment, the judgement of the appointment and promotion body will be indispensable, since no two cases are alike and since often a combination of elements may lead to the decision not to include a certain staff member on the short list. In specific cases, the appointment and promotion body may take into account family circumstances. It shall be the task of the relevant body to weigh the interest of the Organization against that of the staff member.

17. The chairperson of the appointment and promotion body will submit the short list of candidates recommended for each post advertised to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management or the chief of the local personnel office for transmission to the department or office concerned.

18. Similar modalities for the review of staff in the General Service and related categories at duty stations away from Headquarters will be set up at those duty stations.

III. PLACEMENT OF STAFF MEMBERS

19. Upon receiving the short list of candidates, OHRM or the local personnel office will transmit the list to the head of the department or office or the executive officer concerned, together with the application forms, the most recent performance evaluation reports and the fact sheets of the recommended staff members.

20. The department or office will be requested to make a final selection from the short list within a reasonable period of time, normally 10 working days. Upon receipt of the name of the staff member selected by the department or office, OHRM or the local personnel office will initiate the assignment or transfer of that staff member.

21. It should be recalled that staff members are subject to the authority of the Secretary-General and to assignment by him to any of the activities or offices of the United Nations in accordance with staff regulation 1.2. Pursuant to the staff regulations and to the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/165 of 24 April 1978 on transfer and assignment, a Professional staff member may be assigned to any of the offices of the United Nations and has the duty to accept such assignment. Once the decision on transfer or assignment is made, the staff member is expected to comply without undue delay. In cases where staff members refuse to report to duty at the new posting, whatever sanctions are deemed appropriate under the Staff Regulations and Rules may be taken, including separating the staff member concerned from the service of the Organization.

22. Programme managers are required to release the selected staff member within a reasonable period, i.e., six weeks, as indicated in paragraph 16 of administrative instruction ST/AI/338.

IV. MEASURES TO FACILITATE MOBILITY

23. As stated in paragraph 21 above, the concept of mobility in the Organization is set out in staff regulation 1.2, according to which staff members are subject to the authority of the Secretary-General and to assignment by him to any of the activities or offices of the United Nations. The arguments for increased mobility in the Secretariat are compelling, especially in the context of a broader rotation policy, since it would provide for a more dynamic, competitive work environment, give staff a broader range of first-hand international experience, balance the relative amenities of various duty stations through a series of postings and reinforce the concept of the Secretariat staff as an integral whole. While cognizant of the constraints posed by the occupational distribution of posts, the General Assembly has also repeatedly emphasized the importance of mobility. OHRM is committed to the development and implementation of a comprehensive rotation plan designed to ensure that all Professional staff members enjoy equal mobility opportunities.

24. To facilitate the movement of Professional staff, special measures have been decided as follows:

(a) For the purpose of the vacancy management and staff redeployment programme, the duty stations of the Secretariat are grouped into three categories:

Type I	Duty stations in Europe, including Cyprus, Malta, the European portion of Turkey and North America
Type II	All other duty stations not specified as type III
Type III	Addis Ababa and Baghdad

(b) In general, the appointment and promotion bodies are expected to give preference to candidates seeking a lateral move. With regard to vacancies in types II and III duty stations, applications for lateral moves will be solicited with the following provisions:

- (i) Staff at the level of the post with permanent appointments will be considered for assignments of three years' duration. Such staff will be reabsorbed at their duty station of origin upon return from assignment and may expect to be placed in a post commensurate with their legitimate career expectations. Lateral moves between duty stations have an important role in staff members' career development, given the emphasis on greater mobility by the General Assembly, inter alia, in resolutions 33/143 of 20 December 1978 and 42/220 A of 21 December 1987;
- (ii) Staff members at the level of the post with fixed-term appointments will be considered for transfer and their contracts will be extended, if necessary, to cover at least a three-year period from the date of transfer. Staff with five years or more of service on fixed-term appointments would be considered for a permanent appointment upon their assignment to a type II or III duty station;

(c) Where the post is at a higher level than that of the staff member selected, he or she will normally move on the basis of a transfer. However, in the case of type III duty stations, staff could either:

- (i) Transfer with an immediate special post allowance (SPA) and with the understanding that they will be reviewed for promotion after six months in accordance with the procedures for promotion under the vacancy management and staff redeployment programme;
- (ii) Be considered for a three-year assignment with an immediate SPA as an exception to staff rule 103.11, then return to the former duty station with a discontinuance of the SPA. Such staff may expect to be placed upon return from assignment in a post commensurate with their legitimate career expectations;

Staff members already serving at type III duty stations who are reassigned to a higher level post will also be entitled to an immediate SPA with the understanding that they will be reviewed for promotion after six months.

A. Assignment allowance

25. Upon transfer to a type III duty station, the assignment allowance will be payable, including its enhanced level, instead of full removal under staff rule 107.27. At the request of the staff member it may be paid as a lump sum for the first year after the assignment/transfer has taken place. The revised provisions on assignment allowance are contained in administrative instruction ST/AI/263/Amend.2 of 30 March 1988 on assignment allowance and installation grant. It should be noted that salary and allowances during mission assignments fall under staff rule 103.21.

B. Post adjustment

26. Discretion will be exercised to pay post adjustment for a period of six months at the rate applicable to the staff member's former duty station, if the rate is higher than that of the new duty station, provided the staff member leaves his or her immediate family (spouse and dependent child or children) at the former duty station. In addition, at type II and III duty stations post adjustment at the higher rate may be paid for an additional period of up to six months provided that the dependent child or children are enrolled in a school at the former duty station.

C. Installation grant

27. At type II and III duty stations an extended installation grant may be payable until such time as, in the opinion of the Secretary-General, adequate housing facilities are available.

D. Special post allowance

28. Staff members selected for a higher level post at a type III duty station will be granted an SPA immediately upon moving to that post, thus waiving the normal six-month waiting period for the award of an SPA. Where consideration for promotion is envisaged under the provisions of the vacancy management and staff redeployment programme, the SPA will be payable for the first six months following transfer of staff to type III duty stations.

E. Employment of spouses

29. Every effort will be made to facilitate the employment of the spouse of a staff member reassigned to another duty station.

F. Other provisions

30. In addition, it should be noted that a broad range of provisions already exist for all staff upon relocation to designated duty stations as described in administrative instruction ST/AI/280/Rev.3 of 1 July 1987, ST/AI/280/Rev.3/Amend.1 of 9 March 1988, and Amend.1/Add.1 of 30 September 1988 on special entitlements for staff members serving at designated duty stations. Furthermore, effective 1 January 1988, the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) has introduced a mobility element in the assignment allowance (see para. 25 above). A summary of all benefits as well as post reports on Baghdad, Addis Ababa, Santiago, Nairobi and Bangkok are available from OHRM or the local personnel office.

**V. MEASURES TO ASSIST REABSORPTION OF GENERAL SERVICE STAFF
DURING THE RETRENCHMENT EXERCISE**

31. If at a given duty station there is a vacant post in the General Service category which cannot be filled through reassignment of staff at the duty station concerned and which because of the qualifications required calls for international recruitment, consideration will be given to qualified General Service staff members from other duty stations who could not be absorbed within their duty station in the context of the retrenchment exercise. If selected, these staff members will be paid travel and related expenses to the new duty station and will normally be granted international status while serving in that post. Their service would be deemed to be continuous and no separation payments would be payable.

**VI. POSTS THAT WILL NOT BE FILLED THROUGH THE VACANCY MANAGEMENT
AND STAFF REDEPLOYMENT PROGRAMME**

32. There are several categories of posts that cannot be filled through the full procedures of the vacancy management and staff redeployment programme. These categories of posts are listed below, with an indication of the manner in which they can be filled:

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(a) Posts requiring specialized or technical skills not present or in short supply among existing staff members. Where internal candidates are not available to fill such posts and it is determined that the posts are essential to the delivery of mandated programmes, an approval for external recruitment will have to be sought. When an approval for recruitment is granted, an external vacancy announcement will be issued and posted for which internal candidates may nevertheless apply; this will guarantee that any potentially qualified staff member not previously identified by OHRM can still be considered and possibly selected if found to meet the requirements of the post;

(b) P-1/P-2 posts earmarked for competitive examinations. These are filled in accordance with the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/173 of 29 August 1979 on Competitive examinations for promotion to the Professional category of staff members from other categories and with the provisions of the relevant administrative instructions governing such examinations or through external national competitive examinations;

(c) Posts at the entry levels of the General Service and related categories;

(d) Inter-agency posts administered by the United Nations. These must be advertised in all the organizations of the common system. A vacancy announcement would be issued inviting applications from staff members in all organizations participating in the United Nations common system, including the United Nations;

(e) Entry-level posts with special language requirements (editors, translators, interpreters, conference typists, etc.). These can only be filled by staff members and external candidates who have passed the required competitive language examination and whose names are included in the relevant roster;

(f) Posts in the Professional and the Field Service categories in peace-keeping missions. These will continue to be filled in accordance with the existing administrative provisions, which include the issuance of a vacancy announcement and a review by a special panel to recommend assignment, and through recruitment when appropriate;

(g) Posts temporarily vacant owing to staff members being on special leave without pay, maternity leave, etc. The department or office concerned will ensure that the selection of staff to replace those staff members on special leave will be fair and equitable;

(h) Posts subject to geographical distribution needed to "permit replacement by candidates of the same nationality within a reasonable time-frame in respect of posts held by staff members on fixed-term contracts, whenever this is necessary to ensure that the representation of Member States whose nationals serve primarily on fixed-term contracts is not adversely affected". These are filled in accordance with section I of General Assembly resolution 35/210 of 17 December 1980 and subsequent resolutions.

33. OHRM will determine whether a vacancy falls in one of the above categories.

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34. In exceptional circumstances provisions may have to be made to earmark posts that are required to reabsorb staff members who have been on assignment, secondment or special leave of absence without pay and for whom the post that they formerly occupied is not available. Such staff will receive priority placement for posts at their level by OHRM upon their scheduled return.

Annex I

EXCERPT FROM THE MANUAL FOR APPOINTMENT AND PROMOTION COMMITTEES
AT OFFICES AWAY FROM HEADQUARTERS

Personal qualities

(The following personal qualities are not necessarily all-inclusive)

- (a) Devotion to the aims and purposes of the United Nations;
- (b) Personal integrity and devotion to duty;
- (c) Industry and resourcefulness;
- (d) Judgement, general discretion and sense of proportion;
- (e) Administrative and supervisory ability, where appropriate;
- (f) Ability to work well with others.

Annex IIEXCERPT FROM THE GUIDELINES FOR APPOINTMENT AND PROMOTION BODIES
ISSUED BY THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENTMeasures for the improvement of the status of women

1. As indicated in the first report of the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat, which the Secretary-General approved, "the 1986 promotion exercise provides an excellent opportunity to review cases of women who could be considered for advancement, especially to management level positions, and to adjust the criteria to take into account length of service at each level, since women in the past have not been promoted at the same rate as men. The criteria for advancement should stress performance and potential, not simply seniority in grade".

2. Priority should therefore be given to considering women for promotion by using flexibility in applying rules on seniority, both for minimum normal seniority and for seniority in connection with accelerated promotions. This flexibility should take into account the cumulative seniority in the preceding and current grade which, when combined, give an average of the required seniority.

3. The first report of the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat recommends, in subparagraphs 19 (a) and (b), that the appointment and promotion bodies:

"(a) Take the initiative in recommending for accelerated promotion deserving women who have not attained the required seniority, provided that a post is available. Women who have not been recommended, but whose seniority is equal to or greater than that of the recommended candidate, should also be reviewed as collaterals;

"(b) Give sufficient weight to cumulative experience both inside and outside the Organization, as well as to demonstrated potential, especially in the case of women. The seniority factor should thus be adjusted in certain cases to reflect the length of service in both the current and preceding grades;"

4. The above provisions should be applied in a flexible manner consistent with the objectives of the Secretary-General to enhance the promotion prospects for women. The following indicative guidelines are intended to improve the eligibility criteria for promotion of women as regards seniority in grade. Thus, a number of women will be eligible for promotion, whereas under the old system they would not have been considered:

(a) A woman staff member who has the minimum seniority required for accelerated promotion should automatically be reviewed, regardless of whether or not the department/office has included her in its recommendation for accelerated promotion. Due attention should be paid to exceptional merit, ability to perform

at a higher level, classification and availability of a post. It is understood that when there is a recommendation for accelerated promotion by the department, the long-standing policy of reviewing as collaterals all candidates with equal or more seniority remains in effect;

(b) A woman staff member, who had had considerable seniority in her previous grade, should benefit from an adjustment in her seniority at her present grade. For instance, if seniority at the P-4 level is seven years, and if the staff member has three years' seniority in her present P-5 grade, cumulative seniority should be five years in her present grade. Eligibility for promotion will be considered on the basis of normal seniority rather than seniority for accelerated promotion;

(c) In case of an accelerated promotion the adjustment factors should be applied flexibly. In practical terms, a woman staff member who had served five years at the P-4 level and two years at the P-5 level should be eligible for such a promotion because the average seniority in the two grades would be three and a half years; she would thus fulfil the minimum requirement of three years;

(d) The minimum required seniority should be adhered to in all other cases.

5. In the light of the above, deserving women could be recommended for promotion by the appointment and promotion bodies without the recommendation of their departments, provided that a post is available and the established standards for performance and merit have been met. In applying these measures, appointment and promotion bodies should take full account of the present financial constraints and thus exercise good judgement and pragmatism in recommending women whose names have not been put forward by their offices.
