

**Secretariat**

7 April 2003

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**Information circular\***

To: Members of the staff  
From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management  
Subject: **2003 competitive examination for French-language translators/précis-writers**

1. The purpose of the present information circular is to invite applications from staff members of the Secretariat at the P-3 level and below who wish to take the competitive examination for French-language translators/précis-writers in 2003, in accordance with the provisions of ST/AI/1998/7 of 23 March 1998.

2. The competitive examination for French-language translators/précis-writers will be held on 5 September 2003 in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Paris and other locations according to the number and location of qualified candidates convoked for the examination. The purpose of the examination is to establish a roster from which present and future vacancies for French-language translators/précis-writers will be filled. When a vacancy occurs, successful candidates will be recruited from the roster, subject to the requirements of the service in terms of expertise and language combinations.

3. The examination is open to staff members of the United Nations at the P-3 level and below who meet the eligibility requirements, as well as to qualified external candidates. Staff members from subsidiary organs of the United Nations and staff members whose service is limited to a particular organ, fund or programme of the United Nations or to special missions are considered external candidates for the purpose of the examination. Such candidates, if successful in the examination, will be offered a new appointment with the United Nations subject to normal United Nations recruitment procedures and standards. Staff members who are successful and are selected for inclusion in the roster will be assigned to fill vacancies for French-language posts as they occur in the language services in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Nairobi and Bangkok. Assignments are subject to rotation and successful candidates may thereafter be called upon to serve at other duty stations in Africa, Asia or Europe or at Headquarters according to the needs of the Organization. Successful candidates are expected to serve **a minimum of five years** in language posts. The assignment of staff members of the United Nations who are successful in

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\* Expiration date of the present information circular: 31 December 2003.

the examination and are selected to fill vacancies will be subject to the conditions set out in paragraphs 12 to 15 below.

4. Staff members of the Secretariat applying for the examination must:

(a) Have French as their main language;<sup>1</sup>

(b) Have a perfect command of French and an excellent knowledge of English and one of the other official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, Russian or Spanish). The Board of Examiners, appointed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, requires that candidates' claims to knowledge of official languages be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files. Staff members who have been enrolled in a United Nations language course in any of the languages claimed must have passed the United Nations language proficiency examination in that language. Candidates who have not attended the United Nations language courses in the languages claimed must substantiate their claims to knowledge of those languages. Proof of degrees and certificates will be required from all candidates who are successful in the written part of the examination prior to the interview;

(c) Hold a degree or an equivalent qualification from a university or institution of equivalent status at which French is the language of instruction or hold a university degree from a recognized school of translation;

(d) As an exception, for staff members who hold a university degree in law the requirement of an additional official language may be waived by the Board of Examiners. In such cases, the candidates would be required to select the legal text as one of the specialized texts to be chosen under paragraph 7 (d) below; however, in addition to the legal text mentioned in that paragraph, they will be required to translate another legal text during the time period set aside for the translation of the second language paper.

5. In order to meet the Organization's need to recruit staff for language posts who will serve for a reasonable period of time before reaching retirement age, staff members who do not serve on 100 series appointments and who are over the age of 56 by the deadline of submission of applications (6 June 2003) will not be eligible to sit for the examination. There is no age limit for full-time staff members serving on 100 series appointments.

6. The requirement of a degree or its equivalent from a university or institution of equivalent status mentioned in paragraph 4 (d) may be waived for staff members who, in the judgement of the Board of Examiners, have adequate post-secondary educational qualifications from a university or institution of equivalent status and adequate secondary educational qualifications from an establishment at which the principal language of instruction is French, in addition to five years of continuous service with the United Nations Secretariat by 31 December 1989.

7. All applications will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners. In instances where a large number of applications are received, the Board reserves the right to admit to the examination only the most qualified candidates based on a review of the qualifications which are over and above the minimum criteria set out in paragraph 4. All applicants will be notified of the Board's decision in respect of their application. **The Board's decisions are final.**

8. The written examination for translation/précis-writing, to be held on 5 September 2003, will consist of four papers:

(a) Translation into French of a general text in English (two and a half hours, morning of 5 September 2003). It should be noted that this paper is eliminatory. Only candidates who are successful in this paper will have their other papers marked;

(b) Translation into French of one text chosen by the candidate from a total of four texts, one in each of the official United Nations languages other than French and English. Alternatively, translation of a legal text for candidates with a legal degree (one and a half hours, morning of 5 September 2003);

(c) Summary in French of a text in English (one and a half hours, afternoon of 5 September 2003);

(d) Translation into French of one English text to be chosen by the candidate from a total of four specialized texts (economic, legal, social and scientific/technical). Candidates with a legal degree must select the legal text (one and a half hours, afternoon of 5 September 2003).

9. The use of a dictionary or any other reference material will **not** be permitted during the examination. Similarly, candidates may not use personal computers to prepare their papers.

10. On the basis of the results of the written examination, the Board of Examiners will invite selected candidates to an interview. The Board will interview each candidate to assess general knowledge, professional experience and knowledge of the United Nations and current events. The interview is an integral part of the examination. Therefore, candidates who are invited for an interview **should not** assume that they will automatically be offered an assignment.

11. On the basis of the overall results of the examination, the Board will recommend to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management the names of candidates who qualify for inclusion in the roster. All candidates admitted to the examination will be informed in writing of the Board's final recommendation in respect of their candidature. The Board's recommendations are **not** subject to appeal. The Board **does not** release individual scores or results. When a vacancy occurs, successful candidates will be recruited from the roster, subject to the requirements of the services in terms of expertise and language combinations.

12. Staff members selected to fill vacancies will be assigned as French-language translators/précis-writers for a trial period of two years. Staff members below the P-2 level or who are in the General Service category will receive a special post allowance to the P-2 level. Staff members at the P-2 and P-3 levels will be assigned at their respective levels. During the trial period, following on-the-job training if necessary, successful candidates should be prepared to use a computer workstation and to operate translation software, such as voice recognition.

13. Successful candidates assigned directly to duty stations away from Headquarters will normally be required to spend the first six months of their trial period in the corresponding service at Headquarters.

14. Staff members with a special post allowance to the P-2 level and those already at the P-2 level who complete the trial period successfully and are recommended by

the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of Human Resources Management may be promoted to the P-3 level. Staff members already at the P-3 level who complete the trial period successfully will be confirmed in their functions at the P-3 level. Staff members on fixed-term appointment will be eligible to be considered for permanent appointment subject to the requirements of the staff rules in force. Staff members who do not complete the trial period successfully will be reassigned to posts at their previous levels and the special post allowance, if any, will be discontinued.

15. In accordance with the needs of the service/section, successful candidates may be called upon to work outside normal working hours, including weekends and holidays.

16. Staff members applying for the examination should complete the attached form and submit it, not later than **6 June 2003**, to:

2003 Competitive Examination for French-language Translators/Précis writers  
Examinations and Tests Section  
Specialist Services Division  
Office of Human Resources Management  
Room S-2575  
United Nations Secretariat  
New York, N.Y. 10017  
U.S.A.  
Fax No.: 1-212-963-3683  
E-mail: OHRM\_exam@un.org

Applications may be sent by e-mail, fax or mail. However, since all mail addressed to offices at Headquarters undergoes a process of sterilization, mailed applications can be delayed for up to four weeks. Applicants are therefore strongly encouraged to submit their applications early and preferably by e-mail or fax. Applications received after the above deadline will **not** be considered.

17. In order to ensure receipt of all applications submitted by staff members from offices away from Headquarters, these staff members are requested to return their applications directly to the Examinations and Tests Section through the chief administrative officer or the director of the United Nations information centre of their respective duty station by 6 June 2003, the deadline for receipt of applications in the Examinations and Tests Section, Office of Human Resources Management.

**Application<sup>a</sup>****2003 competitive examination for French-language translators/  
précis-writers**Index No.<sup>b</sup> Last name  Category  Level First name  Male  Female Date of entry on duty Month  Year 

Type of contract \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_

Department/office<sup>c</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ Duty station \_\_\_\_\_

Room No. \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. extension \_\_\_\_\_ Fax extension \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Have you taken this examination before? Yes  Year  No Have you taken another United Nations competitive examination? Yes  Year  No 

If yes, which examination(s) \_\_\_\_\_

What is your main language?<sup>d</sup> **A. Knowledge of other languages<sup>e</sup>**

Language(s)	United Nations language programme (indicate highest level and date)	Courses taken at other institutions (name and location)

**B. Indicate your ability in each of the languages mentioned above**

<i>Language</i>	<i>Read</i>		<i>Understand</i>		<i>Speak</i>		<i>Write</i>	
	<i>Easily</i>	<i>Not easily</i>	<i>Easily</i>	<i>Not easily</i>	<i>Fluently</i>	<i>Not fluently</i>	<i>Easily</i>	<i>Not easily</i>

**C. University degree or equivalent or post-secondary educational qualifications**

<i>Name of institution<sup>f</sup> (include place and country)</i>	<i>Language of instruction</i>	<i>Attended (month/year)</i>		<i>Degree or equivalent<sup>f</sup></i>	<i>Main field of study</i>
		<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>		

**D. Secondary school qualifications**

<i>Name of institution<sup>f</sup> (include place and country)</i>	<i>Language of instruction</i>	<i>Attended (month/year)</i>		<i>Certificate or equivalent<sup>f</sup></i>	<i>Main field of study</i>
		<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>		

**E. Describe work experience (giving dates and length of time) in translation/précis-writing or related fields, if any.**

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I certify that the information I have provided above is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

I have read information circular ST/IC/2003/26 and I understand that, if I am successful in the 2003 competitive examination for French-language translators/précis-writers and recommended for inclusion in the roster, my assignment as a French-language translator/précis-writer will be subject to my acceptance of the conditions of service indicated in paragraphs 12 to 15 of that circular.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Notes*

<sup>a</sup> Staff members applying for this examination **must complete this application form**. Proof of degrees and certificates as set out in paragraph 4 (b) of ST/IC/2003/26 will be required from all candidates who are successful in the written part of the examination prior to the interview.

<sup>b</sup> Normally appears on your grounds pass, monthly salary statement and personnel action (P.5) forms. If not, please contact your Human Resources Officer to obtain your number.

<sup>c</sup> Staff members should indicate the department or office to which they are currently assigned, e.g., DGACM, ECE, UNCTAD, UNOG, UNOV or other (please specify).

<sup>d</sup> “Main language” should be understood to be the language in which the candidate is best able to work. Candidates’ claims to French as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

<sup>e</sup> Candidates are reminded that they must submit relevant documentation to substantiate their claims as appropriate in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 4 (b) above.

<sup>f</sup> Give exact name and title in original language. Do not translate or equate.

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