



administrative circular

ORIGINATOR: Corporate Services, Human Resources
and Finance Department (CS)

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ENQUIRIES TO BE DIRECTED TO: Human Resources Support Service (CSP) **Date.** 21 March 2014

JUNIOR PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMME

Purpose

1. The purpose of this circular is to outline arrangements for the implementation of a Junior Professional Programme (JPP) at FAO.

Objectives of the JPP

2. Implementation of the JPP gives effect to clause 3.62 of the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO renewal, which calls for the establishment of “a joined-up and consistent system for the recruitment and development of young professionals, particularly from developing countries”.

3. The JPP is a centrally-coordinated, structured programme involving a streamlined recruitment process, which will enable the Organization to recruit young, motivated professionals on a fixed-term basis without committing to ongoing employment and benefit from their skills and knowledge for the duration of their assignment.

4. The JPP complements existing programmes which aim to attract young, talented professionals to FAO, including the Associate Professional Officers (APO), Internship and Volunteer Programmes.

5. The JPP is an active mechanism to recruit entry-level professionals with the target of young professionals who are from non- and under-represented developing countries. Active measures will be taken to attract participants from target countries. These may include the establishment of links with relevant tertiary educational institutions and professional associations to grow the database and market the programme; advertising in newspapers and journals in targeted countries as appropriate, and the promotion of the programme to the FAORs and the Permanent Representatives of the targeted countries.

6. The JPP also aims to support the Organization to achieve greater gender balance amongst its professional staff. In this view, a participation target of at least 50% women has been established.

7. As it increases in scale and senior staff members leave the organization, the programme will assist FAO to rejuvenate its workforce through the establishment of a pipeline of talented young professionals suitable for future ongoing employment.

8. Programme participants will be referred to as Junior Professionals (JPs). The JPP aims to retain a proportion of high performing Junior Professionals, although it is acknowledged that some participants may not be found suitable for service in the Organization or may not wish to compete for Regular Programme funded or project positions at the end of their assignment.

Employment Components

Eligibility Criteria

9. The eligibility criteria for JPP candidates are as follows:

- a) Candidates should be 32 years of age or younger as of 31 December of the year of application;
- b) Candidates should hold an advanced university degree (Master's, Ph.D. or equivalent) in a field relevant to the work of FAO;
- c) Candidates must have at least one year of experience in a field relevant to the work of FAO;
- d) Candidates must possess a working knowledge of one of FAO's official languages (English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian) and a limited knowledge of another, depending on the working language of the duty station;
- e) Applicants must not bear any of the following relationships to staff members of the Organization: son, daughter, brother or sister;
- f) Applicants are subject to the Organization's spouse employment policy;
- g) Candidates should meet the minimum requirements stated on the Vacancy Announcement of the Junior Professional position they are applying for.

Duration of Appointment

10. Successful applicants will be employed within the framework of the JPP for an initial period not exceeding two years, subject to a one-year probationary period. This term may be renewed for a period of up to two additional years. The decision to renew a Junior Professional's term of appointment will be based on individual performance, the needs of the Organization and available budget.

11. Junior Professionals may compete for other positions within FAO at the same or a higher grade providing that they meet eligibility requirements. Transfers from the JPP to regular programme-funded positions at the same grade will be treated as lateral transfers.

12. Unless a Junior Professional's appointment is renewed or he or she is successful in being selected for another position, the term of the Junior Professional's appointment will expire automatically on the expiration date specified in the letter of appointment.

Conditions of Service

13. Junior Professionals can be assigned at FAO Headquarters or in offices away from Headquarters (Regional or Subregional Offices, Liaison Offices or FAO Representations). The Department or Office in which the Junior Professional works will be referred to as the "host unit".

14. New P-1 posts will be established and allocated to departments and offices for each Junior Professional position. The posts will be active for the duration of the programme and can be used solely for the recruitment of Junior Professionals in accordance with the criteria and procedures provided herein.

15. Junior Professionals will be staff members of FAO under fixed-term appointments for the duration of their assignment. The terms and conditions (e.g. salaries, allowances and benefits) applicable to professional staff holding fixed-term appointments shall apply to them unless otherwise provided herein.

16. Junior Professionals will generally be employed at P-1 step 1 level on initial appointment and will move to P-1 step 2 level for the second year of their assignment. Upon successful completion of the initial 18 months of the programme, Junior Professionals may be selected for a P-2 post, for which they are suitably qualified, through a competitive selection process.

17. Junior Professionals may be employed at a higher P-1 step on initial appointment if this can be justified on the basis of the established procedure of the Organization. The decision to appoint a Junior Professional at a higher P-1 step will be made in accordance with the relevant rules and procedures.

Programme Components

Responsibilities

18. The programme will be developed and implemented by the Human Resources Support Service (CSP) in close co-operation with host units. A dedicated CSP staff member will be nominated to coordinate the JPP and other entry-level programmes.

19. CSP will have primary responsibility for co-ordinating the programme and its components – recruitment, assignment, training and development. Host units will guide the participants and provide formal performance appraisals in line with FAO's policy on performance management. Selection of Junior Professionals will be a shared responsibility between CSP and the host unit.

Funding Mechanism

20. The programme will be centrally funded. Host units will not be responsible for any of the core costs for their Junior Professional (recruitment, remuneration, training and development, etc.) whilst he or she is employed under the programme for the initial term.

21. Host units will assume full responsibility for funding their Junior Professional from their departmental appropriation if a decision is taken to extend his or her term of appointment under the JPP for up to two additional years after completion of the initial programme term.

Recruitment and Placement Process

22. Participants in the JPP will be selected with due consideration to achieve the highest standards of efficiency, competency and integrity.

23. Participants will be assigned to one primary host unit for the duration of the programme.

Training and Development

24. An orientation programme for JPP participants will be developed by CSP and delivered in close cooperation with the host units.

25. Junior Professionals will have the same learning opportunities/resources as staff members. Detailed information on the opportunities available as well as the application procedures are provided in the orientation programme described above and are available on the CSP website.

Appraisal of Work Performance

26. The Junior Professionals are subject to a one-year period of probation as set forth in Manual paragraph 305.5.2. Formal appraisal will take place annually in line with the Organization's Performance Management System (PEMS) after the first year of service.

Retention

27. Junior Professionals may compete for other positions in FAO providing that they meet eligibility requirements. Recruitment processes for such positions will follow procedures set out in Administrative Manual Section 305 – Recruitment and Appointment, with the exception of the arrangements outlined in paragraph 17 above.

This Administrative Circular supersedes Administrative Circular 2010/11.

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