



Secretariat

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24 November 1986

INFORMATION CIRCULAR

To: Members of the staff at Headquarters

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services

Subject: CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE GENERAL SERVICE
AND RELATED CATEGORIES IN NEW YORK

1. A comprehensive and formal career development plan was established by paragraph 8 of administrative instruction ST/AI/301 of 10 March 1983 on the initial classification of General Service posts in New York to be a prerequisite for the implementation of the results of the classification exercise. The purpose of this circular is to inform the staff of the career development plan being set up for the General Service and related categories at Headquarters and to outline the steps being taken to introduce it.

2. The new career development plan for staff in the General Service and related categories at Headquarters in New York was recommended to the Secretary-General by the Joint Advisory Committee and has been approved. It has been developed in the context of a general career development system that will eventually apply to all staff. The features of the career development plan are described in the following paragraphs.

Occupational groups

3. The career development plan for staff in the General Service and related categories at Headquarters will be organized according to occupational groups. Staff will be able to move within their occupations as well as across occupational groups provided that eligibility and qualification requirements are met. The occupational groups are being identified through the classification exercise.

Career development committees

4. Career development committees will be established along occupational lines. These bodies will include members who have experience in the particular occupational group concerned. The committees will: (a) make recommendations to

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the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services on general matters relating to career development within the occupational group; and (b) review the qualifications of staff members prior to any movement. The committees will therefore replace the existing appointment and promotion panels. These committees will become operational once the classification exercise is implemented. The composition and terms of reference of the committees are set out in annex I to the present document.

Posting of vacancies

5. As a central feature of the new plan, a vacancy announcement procedure will be introduced to provide equal opportunity for all staff to be considered for vacancies. This process will apply to all established posts and any temporary post with a duration of one year or more. The new vacancy announcement process is described in annex II to the present document.

Career paths

6. Career paths will be defined both within and between occupational groups with a view to affording, subject to the requirements of performance and seniority, a minimum career progression of three promotions during the course of a staff member's career. To that end, each occupational group will include a minimum of three levels. The definition of career paths will also include specification of the qualifications and other requirements that will be necessary for staff members to move from one occupation to another. The career paths will be developed after the results of the classification exercise have been implemented, at which time the initial number of posts and number of grade levels within each group will be identified.

Career counselling

7. The Office of Personnel Services will prepare guidelines for a career counselling programme to advise staff on their movement and advancement opportunities and on the training needs for each occupational group. The programme will also identify the possibility of their transferring from one occupation to another in order to further their careers. Individual counselling will also be provided by supervisors and administrative staff, who will be appropriately briefed.

Training

8. The Office of Personnel Services is also developing a pilot project to explore the modalities for expanding the scope of the External Studies Programme. The Staff Development Programme is also being oriented towards training requirements relevant to all occupational groups, which would lead to the development of the common skills needed to perform at a higher level of responsibility. Technical training related to specific occupational groups will be further considered when career paths and the qualification requirements of posts are firmly established.

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Performance evaluation

9. Within the framework of the overall career development system, the Office of Personnel Services is in the process of developing new arrangements for the evaluation of staff members' performance of their functions.

General Service staff resources information system

10. Also as part of the overall career development system, the existing information on staff members' qualifications and experience will be supplemented by additional information on the skills and career aspirations of staff members.

Review

11. The career development plan will be reviewed after the first year of operation to assess its effectiveness. Any amendment or revision resulting from this review will be determined through further staff-management consultations.

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Annex I

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COMPOSITION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES
FOR GENERAL SERVICE AND RELATED CATEGORIES IN NEW YORK

Composition

1. Each career development committee shall consist of a chairperson and an equal number of members appointed by the Secretary-General on the recommendation of the administration and of representatives of the staff.
2. The chairperson and members of each committee shall be appointed for fixed periods, normally two years, subject to renewal.
3. For any particular review where promotion is envisaged, the rank of members serving on the committee shall not be below the level to which promotion is contemplated.
4. A designated official of the Office of Personnel Services shall serve ex officio as a non-voting member.

Functions

5. The committees will have at their disposal all material relevant to their work, including fact sheets, official status files, staffing tables and administrative issuances. In the course of their review, they may invite any staff member, including a representative or representatives of relevant departments, to meet with them for the purpose of providing information required.
6. Each committee will:
 - (a) Make recommendations to the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services, and through him to the heads of other departments and offices, on general matters concerning the occupational group and in particular on the career development of the staff in the group;
 - (b) Review recommendations for conversion of contractual status and other matters currently falling within the terms of reference of the appointment and promotion panels;
 - (c) Review applications of internal and external candidates for vacant posts;
 - (d) Review candidates for promotion, including the incumbents of posts that have been reclassified to a higher level.

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Annex II

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT PROCEDURES FOR THE GENERAL SERVICE
AND RELATED CATEGORIES IN NEW YORK

Scope

1. The vacancy announcement process being introduced in connection with the career development plan for staff in the General Service and related categories at Headquarters will apply to all established posts and to all temporary posts with a duration of one year or more, except those that are filled through examination. The process will apply to lateral movements of staff as well as to promotions and will therefore replace, inter alia, the present annual promotion review of staff in the General Service and related categories.

Purpose

2. The vacancy announcement process is intended to provide to qualified staff members equal opportunity to be considered for new assignments that will promote their career development and to facilitate the identification of qualified staff from among whom the best candidate for an assignment can be selected.

Initiation of procedures

3. The Office of Personnel Services will monitor vacancies and ensure that, for every established post or temporary post of one year or more in duration that is either vacant or will become vacant in the near future, the department or office concerned will initiate a request for a vacancy announcement to be posted.

Classification of post

4. Prior to the issuance of a vacancy announcement, the corresponding post must be reviewed to ensure that it is appropriately described and classified. For this purpose, the department or office concerned will transmit the request for a vacancy announcement to be posted to the Career Development and Placement Unit and a photocopy of the request to the Classification Section with the appropriate Job Description (P.270) or a Request for Confirmation of Classification Level (P.270A) form as appropriate.

5. After the duties and responsibilities of the post are classified and normally within five working days of receipt of the request, in cases where the classified level is confirmed, the Classification Section will notify the department or office of the classified level of the post and forward to the Career Development and Placement Unit the request for a vacancy announcement to be posted and a copy of the job description and the classification notice so that the vacancy announcement can be prepared.

Vacancy announcements

6. All requests for vacancy announcements will be prepared for posting by the Career Development and Placement Unit, normally within five working days of

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receipt. A copy of each announcement will be sent to the department or office concerned before posting to ensure that the vacancy announcement fully reflects the requirements of the post. Vacancy announcements will normally be posted on the first working day of each week. Each vacancy announcement will be posted for 10 working days at designated locations at Headquarters.

7. Each vacancy announcement will contain a serial number, the identification of the post, a brief description of the functions of the post, the job description number, a statement of the qualifications and experience required, the office to which applications should be submitted and the closing date for the receipt of applications.

Applications

8. Eligible staff members who wish to be considered for a post referred to in a vacancy announcement must apply in writing to the Career Development and Placement Unit in the Office of Personnel Services before the close of business on the specified closing date.

Review procedure

9. After the closing date, the Office of Personnel Services will review the applications as well as other relevant personnel data on the applicants to determine if they have the qualifications and requirements for the post as specified in the vacancy announcement, in accordance with the standards for recruitment and promotion in the General Services and related categories. These standards will be developed within the Office of Personnel Services for submission to the Joint Advisory Committee and will cover, inter alia, factors such as required time in grade and relevant skills and work experience. In the event that an insufficient number of qualified internal candidates apply, the Office of Personnel Services may refer to its rosters of internal and external candidates at that stage.

10. The Office of Personnel Services will prepare a list of all eligible candidates for presentation to the Career Development Committee together with a copy of their fact sheets or personnel history form and other appropriate information. This list should be presented within 10 working days of the closing date for applications.

11. The Career Development Committee will review the list of eligible candidates on the basis of their knowledge, skills and ability to perform the job, as well as their merit (performance evaluation) and seniority, in order to prepare a short list of the candidates with the best qualifications and experience for the post.

12. The short list shall normally consist of not less than three and not more than five names and shall be transmitted to the Career Development and Placement Unit, normally within five working days of the list of eligible candidates being received by the Committee.

13. The Office of Personnel Services will then transmit the short list, together with its comments if any, to the executive or administrative office of the department or office concerned. The comments will be transmitted at the same time to the chairperson of the Committee.

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14. The department or office concerned may interview the candidates or make its recommendation based on the information presented to it by the Committee and by the Office of Personnel Services. Should the department or office find and substantiate that none of the candidates proposed is suitable for the post, it may request additional names. The Office of Personnel Services may request the Career Development Committee to establish a further list from those eligible candidates who have applied, and if necessary provide additional names from its internal and external rosters. A new list is then submitted to the department for review and recommendation.

15. Taking into consideration the recommendation of the department, the Office of Personnel Services will take a decision on which candidate will fill the vacancy and inform the department or office concerned as well as all candidates of the outcome of their applications. The Office of Personnel Services will also develop a format through which staff members will be periodically informed of the names of successful candidates in the vacancy announcement process.

Promotion after assignment

16. Six months after the staff member selected has assumed the responsibilities of a higher level post, the Career Development Committee will review the staff member's performance. Provided the staff member's performance has been fully satisfactory and provided the staff member has served the required time in grade and, taking other relevant information into account, the Committee will recommend the staff member's promotion in accordance with staff rule 104.14.

17. Following approval of this recommendation by the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services, the promotion will be implemented as follows:

(a) In the case of staff who had already satisfied the required minimum time in grade before moving to the higher level functions, promotion will be made retroactive to the date on which the new functions were assumed;

(b) In the case of staff who had not yet satisfied the required minimum time in grade prior to undertaking the higher level functions, promotion will normally be approved with effect from the first of the month following the fulfilment of time in grade criteria.

18. If the staff member's performance has not been fully satisfactory, the Committee shall set a date for subsequent review, which would normally take place not more than one year later, or the staff member may be moved to another post at the staff member's level.
