



unitar

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

MEMORANDUM

To: Managers

Date: 12 January 2009

From: Marina Vasilescu
Chief, Human Resources Section

Subject: Classification of posts

As announced through the related circular, UNITAR's autonomy has been fully recognized and the Institute has been given authority to classify UNITAR posts up to the P5 level.

The classification exercise will start soon. All new posts created in conjunction with the restructuring process will now be classified and, in cases where duties and responsibilities changed significantly, other posts may be reclassified as requested by the responsible Managers.

As a first step, the following posts require submission of requests for classification from the Managers by the end of January 2009:

Associate Directors
Chief, Partnership and External Relations Section
Chief, AFS
Chief, Human Resources
Chief, Communications and Information Technology
Manager, Knowledge Systems Innovation
Manager, UNOSAT
Peacekeeping Manager
Manager, Environmental Governance
Specialists/Senior Specialists UNOSAT
Associate Programme Officer UNOSAT
Manager, E-Governance
Special Assistant to the Executive Director
IT Specialist
Associate Human Resources Officer

Below you will find some guidelines explaining the context, process and requirements enabling you to write such classification requests using the new standard and the results-based management approach.

Please read these instructions carefully to ensure that the classification requests meet these criteria and are submitted in a timely manner.

In 2000 the UN common System embarked on a reform of its human resources system. As part of the reform, a new job evaluation standard for the Professional and higher categories was promulgated in 2004.

Job classification is a method of organizing jobs and levels of responsibility in a particular order, grouping together similar or comparable jobs according to the functions to be performed and related skills, knowledge or experience required to discharge these functions. It thus creates a hierarchy based on the level of responsibility and tasks assigned, and ensures consistency between the actual duties and responsibilities of a post and the grade allocated.

The United Nations common system opted for the "rank-in-job" approach (tied to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, not to the competence or contributions of the individual – "rank in person") mainly because it is less open to subjectivity and discrimination and better able to adjust to changing organizational demands.

The **job classification** process defines the **post** (duties and responsibilities and corresponding level of remuneration) while **staffing process** selects the **person** for the post. In other words, we classify posts independently from the incumbent.

The new Master Standard is used to classify professional posts across the UN. For General Services posts, the Geneva Standard for the Classification of GS posts applies.

The reclassification of an existing post, upward or downward, occurs when the evaluation of its current work description results in a change of its occupational group and/or its grade level, due to a significant change in the nature of duties assigned to it or if the duties and responsibilities of the post have changed substantially as a result of a restructuring within a unit.

Post description

A post description is a document approved by the delegated authority that describes the work requirements of a position. A post description contains all the information needed to evaluate the work using the appropriate classification standard. The post description must be accurate and the responsibility for determining the role of the job and the contents of the post description lies with the supervisor. When preparing the job description, the supervisor must understand the role of the job by integrating it into the broader context of the Programme's work and objectives as well as its organizational structure. An inaccurate job description will result in inappropriate classification and compensation which can be de-motivating to staff or might affect a staff member's career advancement.

The authority to approve Job descriptions at UNITAR lies with the Supervisors (at the Managerial level at least) who must sign the Job description for certification before it is submitted to HR for classification or re-classification. When there is a first level supervisor at a lower grade than "Manager", the responsibility to certify the correctness of the job description lies with the supervisor and the authorization of approval, with the Manager (second level supervisor).

The authority to classify posts at UNITAR has been delegated by the ED to the Chief of the Human Resources section.

How to write a post description

Occupational categories

UNITAR has two occupational categories: Professional (P or L) and General Services (GS) for which two different formats are used.

The creation of any new post must be approved by the Executive Director. The responsibility to submit the request to the ED belongs to the Managers who must obtain financial clearance for at least one-year contract from the Chief of AFS.

Before starting to draft a post description, the immediate supervisor should:

- search for a generic job profile which fits the function and context (please consult HR for assistance, if needed)
- if there is no generic job description you can always use a similar GJP as the starting point of drafting it
- identify whether you will be writing a GS or a P/L position

"Professional work is analytical, evaluative, conceptual, interpretive and/or creative and thus requires the application of the basic principles of an organized body of theoretical knowledge, such as a field of science, learning or specialized discipline. It is intricate and involves a level of difficulty and complexity requiring the identification and consideration not only of the interrelationships between its constituent elements, which are of a varied and diverse nature, but also the broader context and perspective within which it is performed, including its impact on, and interrelationship with, the larger objectives and programmes of the Organization. It requires judgement in analysing and evaluating problems and in decision-making involving discretionary choices between alternative courses of action. Professional work requires the understanding of an organized body of theoretical knowledge which is of a level equivalent to that represented by a university degree. While this knowledge is customarily and characteristically acquired through formal education, it may, in some fields of learning or specialized disciplines, be acquired through other training, self-study, or practical experience".
(Source: Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth session, Supplement No.30 (A/35/30), para. 261)

"General Service work is procedural, operational or technical in nature and supports the execution of the programmes of the organization. It ranges from simple, routine or repetitive duties based on following detailed instructions to varied and complex assignments requiring identification and consideration of alternative course of action based on extensive and in-depth practical knowledge of a specific subject area. The assignments are generally performed on a continuing basis. The knowledge of the subject field and higher-level skills are generally developed through long experience and familiarity with applicable procedures, regulations and precedents or projects of the Organization in a narrow technical field or in an administrative support activity."

(Source: Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-second session, Supplement No.30 (A/42/30), paras. 247-251)

The form to be used for P/L staff for requests for classification action is attached.

Steps to follow in writing the post description:

- Define and describe the post accurately
- Start by filling out the information required in the cover sheet pertaining to: department/section/unit/programme, post number, present title, status (fully encumbered, vacant, partially encumbered), name of incumbent if any, present grade if it is a re-classification

- Based on the goals and objectives of the work unit as a whole, define the **Basic Purpose** (“raison d’être of the post”, Why is it needed? What are its end results?) which identifies the organizational location and the key results expected of this specific post (three to five results). It also describes the impact the position has on the performance of the team or the Institute in terms of scope.
- Describe the **Major activities** and processes required to achieve the basic purpose/key results:
 - o **WHAT?** Are the activities to be performed by the incumbent. These are listed in a logical order, in order of their importance. The WHAT should be describe by an active verb (**Glossary of Terms attached**). Be careful when using words such as prepare, coordinate, assist and any other verb which does not clearly identify the role of the incumbent. These verbs require further explanation, such as “Prepares official correspondence by formatting text, verifying spelling and grammar and assembling all attachments”.
 - o **WHY?** Is the purpose, variety and organizational scope of the activity. You may look at the key results in the previous section. In many instances a key result can be rewritten into a result-oriented activity statement.
 - o **HOW?** Is the list of duties, procedures or tasks that are performed to achieve the WHAT. They should be a representative sampling of the kind and level of work assigned, and not an exhaustive, step-by-step list.
 - o For the final major activity, you may use the following phrase: “Performs any additional activities that may be required to ensure the success of the work team to which assigned”. This is meant to recognize and encourage a team spirit and cooperative approach to work.
- Describe the **Factors** :

Factor 1 - Nature of Work

To write this factor description, you should describe the substantive contribution of the post in terms of intellectual deliverables (synthesis, analysis, developing innovative approaches, supervising or managing organizational units/teams) and the scope/complexity of subject matter (degree of subject matter expertise required and variety) pertaining to the core activities of the post. Is the work basic implying conceptual comprehension, analytical, seasoned, imperative/originate, integral, ground breaking, implying cross programme cohesion. What are the critical competencies and behaviours and what are the measures of success?

Factor 2 - Enabling environment

To write this factor description, you should describe the independence of the post in terms of managerial controls (supervision received or management responsibility with reference to operational and policy guidelines) and risk management (type and organizational scope of risk, e.g. project/system design and operation or policy, within the Unit, Sector/Bureau, Organization-wide, etc.).

Factor 3 - Partnership

To write this factor description, you should describe the level of contacts by title (colleagues, collaborators, suppliers, clients, media, major donors, etc.) and the skill used in developing and maintaining the contacts (exchanging

information, persuading, advocating, building alliances, making commitments for the Institute).

Factor 4 - Results

To write this factor description, you should describe (1) the nature and range of impact of the work in terms of impact of actions/decisions (individual products or services, performance of systems, execution of programmes, regional or Organization-wide impact) and (2) the supervisory or leadership role of the post (Team Member/Substantive Contributor, Lead Worker or Specialist, Team Leader or Subject Specialist Advisor, Large/Multiple Team Leader/Advisor, Functional Leader/Authority in their Field).

- Indicate the **Minimum qualification required** for the post: This refers to the knowledge of the theories, concepts and principles relevant to a discipline or field obtained through systematic study, professional reading, and/or the conduct of original research. Describe the minimum degree required for the professional post. In accordance with the definition of the P category, this will be, at a minimum, a university degree but the lack of university degree can be compensated by experience in some cases. It is suggested to use the following paragraph: *"First/advanced university degree inor the equivalent combination of education and experience in a related area"* depending on the requirements of the post.
- Indicate the **Number of years and type of practical experience required:** Practical experience refers to the skills and understanding of a discipline or field that are gained through the application of the theoretical knowledge to specific cases and situations, i.e. performance of a job or task. Experience should be stated in terms of progressively responsible experience and described in terms of the specific field of work. The description of the experience should directly relate to the Major Activities of the post description.
 - Indicate the **Competencies (required knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and behaviours)**: A competency is an underlying characteristic that an individual possesses and uses on-the-job and leading to successful performance. Competencies normally include knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes. They can also include behaviours, thought patterns and motivation levels. For the post being described, list the key competencies required. **Please do not cut and paste all the competencies you may find in the GJP but only list the key competencies required for the post being described!** For Manager positions, please make sure that the managerial competencies required are also included.
- If it is a re-classification, as part of the process the content, discuss the draft post description with the staff member concerned prior to formalizing the post
- Sign the draft post description and submit it to the delegated authority (Manager or above) for their approval.
- If it is a re-classification, explain the post description to any incumbent, who should sign the document to confirm their agreement. If the incumbent does not agree and refuses to sign, replace his/her signature by a brief note saying that the content of this post have been brought to the attention of the incumbent and a copy has been sent to him/her.

- Send the request for classification to the Chief, Human Resources in a sealed envelope.

Please remember that the delegation of authority has been given to UNITAR on a pilot basis for one year and all Job Classifications are sent to OHRM New York during this period. The arrangement will be reviewed in 2010. It is therefore crucial for UNITAR to ensure an accurate processing.

For further guidance please get in touch with me.

Thank you for your cooperation and best regards.