

**UNFPA**

Policy Title	Policy for Internships
Previous title (if any)	
Policy objective	The objective of this policy is to establish a framework under which the UNFPA offers opportunity for talented students and recent graduates to gain professional experience and greater familiarity with the mandate and work of UNFPA. Simultaneously, UNFPA benefits from the knowledge and perspective that interns bring to the organization.
Target audience	Head of unit, hiring managers and interns
Risk control matrix	Control activities that are part of the process are detailed in the Risk Control Matrix
Checklist	<a href="#">Internship checklist for intern</a> <a href="#">Internship checklist for hiring unit</a>
Effective date	04 April 2023
Revision History	
Mandatory review date	04 April 2026
Policy owner unit	Division for Human Resources
Approval	<a href="#">Link to signed approval template</a>

## Internships

### I. Purpose

1. The purpose of the policy is to set the standards and conditions of service governing internships in UNFPA, and to clarify roles and responsibilities of those involved in the process of seeking and engaging an intern, as well as those serving as an intern.
2. Internships with UNFPA offer university students, students in a similar educational programme or university graduates the opportunity to acquire direct exposure to the work of UNFPA. It is intended to complement academic studies with practical experience. Internships also provide UNFPA offices with the assistance of qualified students or recent graduates specialized in various professional fields.
3. The policy also applies to internships sponsored by academic institutions<sup>1</sup> that are conducted in accordance with the agreement between UNFPA and the academic institution.<sup>2</sup>
4. This policy does not apply to fellows engaged through the UNFPA Special Youth Programmes.

### II. Policy

5. This policy outlines UNFPA's internship program, identifies control actions to mitigate potential risks related to the internship assignment and establishes the following:
  - a. Sponsored internships;
  - b. Recruitment;
  - c. Eligibility;
  - d. Status of interns;
  - e. Duration and work hours;
  - f. Location
  - g. Flexible working arrangements;
  - h. Absences;
  - i. Medical insurance coverage;
  - j. Liability and third party claims;
  - k. Financial support from UNFPA;
  - l. Expiration and termination of internship agreement;
  - m. Employment prospects; and
  - n. Cost.

#### A. Sponsored internships

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<sup>1</sup> Academic institutions include universities, educational institutions and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

<sup>2</sup> Sponsored interns may have other designations, such as "fellows" for the purpose of the agreement with the academic institution. This policy applies to all sponsored interns, regardless of their designation in the agreement.

6. A hiring UNFPA unit must seek clearance from the Director or Deputy Director, Division for Human Resources (DHR), prior to initiating an internship agreement with an academic institution.

## **B. Recruitment**

7. The hiring unit must select each intern following a transparent and competitive process. Due consideration may be given to gender and geographical balance in the hiring unit.

## **C. Eligibility**

8. All interns must meet the following educational<sup>3</sup> and other eligibility requirements:

### *Educational requirements*

- a. Be enrolled in a first university degree programme (such as bachelor's degree or equivalent) and have completed one full academic year;
- b. Be enrolled in a postgraduate degree programme (such as master's programme or higher);
- c. Have recently graduated with a university degree as defined above and, if selected, must start the internship within one-year of graduation; or
- d. Be enrolled in a postgraduate professional trainee programme and undertake the internship as part of this programme.

### *Other eligibility requirements*

- e. Demonstrate interest in the field of development;
  - f. Demonstrate written and spoken proficiency in at least one of the working languages of the United Nations (English or French) and fluency in the official language (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian or Spanish) of the UNFPA office as set out in the Terms of Reference; and
  - g. Demonstrate ability to adapt to new environments and to establish and maintain good working relations with individuals of different cultural backgrounds.
9. An individual whose father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister is a UNFPA staff member is not eligible for an internship with UNFPA.

## **D. Status of interns**

10. The internship must be of a professional nature and include predominantly analytical and conceptual assignments. Support functions that are typically included in the job description

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<sup>3</sup> University or similar education programmes must be offered by an officially accredited or recognized higher education institution as per the International Association of Universities [World Higher Education Database](#).

of a General Service secretarial or clerical position should be limited to no more than 25% of the internship assignment.

11. Interns shall be involved in the work programme of the hiring unit that has selected them for an internship and carry out their assignments under the direct supervision of a staff member in the Professional category of staff.
12. The internship assignment should be related to the intern's field of study or desired future area of work, be meaningful for both the hiring unit and the intern and be at an appropriate level of complexity.
13. Interns are not staff members of UNFPA. They do not enjoy the privileges and immunities under the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations of 13 February 1946 or any basic assistance agreement.
14. Due to the nature of the assignment, interns shall not perform managerial or supervisory functions nor replace existing staff or carry out functions of a vacant post. Internship shall not be sought to replace or substitute a regular staff function.
15. Interns may not represent UNFPA in any official capacity. Travel on UNFPA official business during the internship period is permissible for learning purposes when accompanying a UNFPA staff member. Interns should not travel to undertake functions that would otherwise be assigned to a staff member.
16. Interns may not communicate at any time to the media or to any institution, person, Government or any other external source any information which has become known to them by reason of their association with UNFPA, that they know or ought to have known has not been made public. They may not use any such information without the written authorization of the appropriate official, and such information may never be used for personal gain. These obligations continue to apply after the end of the internship with UNFPA.
17. Interns may address their work-related grievances with their first or second level supervisor. They may also avail of the following channels as deemed appropriate: [Office of Ombudsman](#), [Ethics Office](#), or the Division for Human Resources Division (human resources business partner).

#### **E. Duration and Work Hours**

18. The duration of the internship should be for a minimum of eight weeks and normally not exceed 24 (twenty-four) weeks. Exceptions for a total duration of up to 36 (thirty-six) weeks may be authorized by the respective human resource business partner for reasons specified below:
  - a. fulfillment of the intern's academic requirements; and
  - b. internship assignments completed as part of national service obligations or a post graduate professional traineeship program.

19. All internships are to take place in accordance with the working hours established by the UNFPA office where the intern is assigned.
20. Interns may request to work part-time to accommodate their school schedule or personal circumstances. Such requests are subject to a supervisor's agreement.
21. Part-time internships may only be granted at 50 percent. Other proportions are not available. Part-time schedule within one week may be approved as:
  - a. two full days and one half day, consecutively or non-consecutively,
  - b. one full day and three half days, consecutively or non-consecutively, or
  - c. five half days.

Under this arrangement, interns must have the same work schedule every week.

## **F. Location**

### ***In-person internships***

22. In-person internships may be offered at headquarters, and family duty stations in field locations provided that the hiring unit obtains security clearance for a candidate to work as an intern from the appropriate UNDSS official of that country.
23. In-person internships in duty stations classified as non-family may only be offered to candidates who are nationals of the country or hold a residency status in the country of the duty station.
  - a. The hiring unit must obtain security clearance from the appropriate UNDSS official of that country on behalf of the intern prior to entering an internship agreement.
  - b. Interns may only participate in activities and functions that do not present safety and security risks within their national context.
24. Prior to traveling and/or commencing work, interns must complete the UNDSS mandatory [online security training](#) in force.
25. The intern is responsible for obtaining a passport and all necessary visas. Upon the request of a hiring unit, the human resource business partner will only issue a letter stating acceptance of an individual as an intern and the conditions governing the internship.

### ***Remote internships***

26. UNFPA aims to create a culture based on flexibility, trust, and accountability. In addition to flexible working arrangements described below, UNFPA's goal is to support individual needs and work styles as much as possible, at the same time benefiting from a wide pool of geographical and culturally diverse candidates.

27. Remote internships may be offered in all duty stations. Remote internships can be offered by the hiring unit as indicated in the internship announcement, or at the request of the selected candidate (within or outside the official duty station) either for personal reasons or academic reasons. When a remote internship is at the request of the candidate, it should be agreed to prior to the start of the internship. As not all roles may be conducive to remote working, the hiring manager or supervisor must assess each case and try to support the individual while balancing the organization's business needs.
28. If it is agreed that the intern may work remotely for the duration of the internship and from a different location (i.e., different city or different country), the supervisor and the intern will discuss and address considerations such as role requirements, working methods/times, communication and any other requirements.
  - a. To ensure interns are involved in the work programme of the hiring unit, receive proper mentorship and are afforded learning opportunities, candidates must work in a time zone that is compatible with the core working hours of the office.
  - b. Interns must observe the core working hours of the hiring unit. Under no circumstances, shall an intern work before 8am or after 9pm at their place of work, when working from a location different from that of the hiring unit.

### **G. Flexible Working Arrangements**

29. With the agreement of their supervisor, interns may avail of flexible working arrangements including flexi-time, compressed working schedule, and remote work within and outside the duty station.
30. ***Under a flexi-time arrangement***, interns may adjust the start and end times of their working day to be different from the official working hours of the duty station of assignment. An intern utilizing flexi-time for personal reasons or due to exigencies of service, is expected to work the same overall number of hours as that of a normal working day at the relevant location.
31. ***Under a compressed working schedule***, an intern may compress their work week by extending their daily working hours for nine (9) working days and avail of time off on the tenth (10th) working day.
  - a. The designated day off should be a Friday or a Monday. In countries that do not observe a Monday to Friday work week, an appropriate alternative day may be chosen as the designated day off. Days accrued as a result of a compressed work schedule may not be carried forward, accumulated, or credited to annual leave.
  - b. When a United Nations official holiday falls on the intern's designated day off, an alternative day off may be granted on the working day immediately before or after depending on which option best serves the needs of the intern and office.

32. With their supervisor's agreement, an intern may *work remotely from within the duty station* up to five working days per week.
33. The intern's stipend is specific to their place of work. Any place of work that is different from their initial assignment will result in a change to the stipend rate payable.
34. Interns may request to work remotely from outside the duty station / place of work on a temporary basis for a maximum duration that is equivalent to one working day for each week of their internship assignment<sup>4</sup> without impacting their stipend rate. Interns who forfeit a stipend payment are not subject to a maximum duration of remote work outside the duty station.
35. In all cases, remote work arrangements are subject to manager approval.

#### **H. Absences**

36. UNFPA interns shall accumulate 1.5 leave days per month of continuous service and may take leave with the agreement of the supervisor. In the case of part-time work, interns shall accumulate 1.5 leave days for every two months<sup>5</sup> of continuous service.
37. Interns may avail of any official United Nations holidays of the duty station that fall during the internship, but are not entitled to take a floating holiday.
38. In case of absence due to illness, interns may absent themselves from work for up to seven days of sick leave for the duration of the internship assignment, with no impact on their stipend. Should an intern be absent from work for a period longer than three consecutive days due to sickness, they are required to provide a doctor's certificate to their supervisor.
39. Any absence beyond the allocated sick leave must be charged to the intern's annual leave balance or result in the reduction of the monthly stipend amount accordingly. A supervisor shall inform the respective human resources business partner or human resources focal point in the regional, country or liaison office or the internship focal point at headquarters, of any prolonged absence due to illness for the purposes of consulting United Nations Medical Services and assessing continuation of the internship assignment.

#### **I. Medical insurance coverage**

40. The intern is personally responsible for and must provide proof of adequate and regular medical insurance and must maintain such insurance during the internship.
41. Interns must provide a medical certificate of good health prior to starting the internship. The medical certificate must be in English, French or the official United Nations language

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<sup>4</sup> For example, 8 working days for an eight (8) week internship, 12 working days for a 12 week internship, 16 working days for a 16 week internship, etc.

<sup>5</sup> 1 day leave for first month and .5 day leave for second month of service

(Arabic, Chinese, Russian or Spanish) of the duty station of the hiring unit.

#### **J. Liability and third-party claims**

42. Interns are covered under the organization's Malicious Acts Insurance Policy.
43. UNFPA is not responsible for any illness, injury, accident or death incurred during or in connection with the internship, or costs associated with such events. When an intern dies while in service of UNFPA at an official duty station different than their place of residence, or when in travel status, the organization will pay the following expenses in connection with the transport of the remains to their place of burial, to the extent that they are actually incurred:
  - a. transport of the body from the place of death to the place of recruitment. Transport to an alternate place designated by their family may be authorized provided that any expenses in excess of the cost of transportation from the duty station or place of death to the place of recruitment, as applicable, are paid by the family;
  - b. preparation of the remains (including cremation);
  - c. a casket and any other containers required for the transport of the body.
44. UNFPA is not responsible for any claims by any parties where the loss of or damage to their property, death or personal injury was caused by the actions or omission of action by the intern during the internship.

#### **K. Financial support from UNFPA**

45. Interns who do not receive financial support from an outside party (such as an academic institution, university, government) are eligible to receive a stipend as a contribution towards living expenses.
46. The stipend is based on the intern's agreed place of work, which may be different from the duty station of the hiring office in cases of remote arrangements. The stipend is normally paid in local currency at the end of each month.
47. The stipend amount and currency of payment for each location is published [here](#) each year.
48. In cases where an intern receives financial support from an outside source that is less than the amount of the UNFPA stipend, they are eligible to receive the difference between this amount and the official stipend amount, if any.
49. Interns are responsible for [requesting payment of the stipend](#) at the end of each calendar month.
50. In the event of absences greater than the accumulated leave allowances, the stipend will be deducted accordingly.
51. In the case of part-time work, the stipend amount will be adjusted accordingly. Actual costs



of round-trip travel (ticket on bus, train or airplane), up to a maximum of USD 1,000, may be provided in advance of the travel to interns selected for an in-person internship, who otherwise reside outside of the commuting distance<sup>6</sup> of the duty station.

- a. The hiring unit may purchase the ticket or provide reimbursement upon proof of purchase up to a maximum of USD 1,000, subject to the following considerations:
  - i. Ticket purchased is the most economical route of travel from place of study or residence to the duty station;
  - ii. Travel is undertaken via approved mode of transportation. UNFPA will not provide reimbursement for travel by private car/taxi service; and
  - iii. Ticket is purchased no later than two weeks in advance of the agreed travel date.
- b. The purpose is to attract and encourage talent world-wide, including indigenous communities and developing countries, as well as to enhance geographical distribution and diversity within UNFPA. This will provide an opportunity to qualified candidates who may otherwise be unable to fund their travel.
- c. Alternatively, the hiring unit must specify in advance when an internship offering is limited to candidates applying from within the duty station of the hiring unit.

52. UNFPA is not responsible for arranging accommodation, securing health insurance, or reimbursing fees and costs related to visas, required health certificates or proof of enrollment or completion of university studies.

#### **L. Expiration or termination of internship agreement**

53. The internship shall cease on the end date indicated in the internship agreement.
54. A hiring manager or supervisor may terminate an internship prior to the expiration date of the agreement, due to an intern's personal extenuating circumstances or in the interest of the organization, including but not limited to, when an intern fails to comply with his or her responsibilities in paragraph 69 of this policy or with the obligations included in the relevant internship agreement. This includes any misrepresentations made during the application and selection process. No stipend shall be paid for the period not worked.
55. Under no circumstances shall an internship be terminated early to offer the intern an alternative employment contract with the organization.
56. At the end of the internship, the intern must provide the work unit with a copy of all materials prepared during the internship. The supervisor must prepare a [performance appraisal](#) indicating whether the Terms of Reference and performance objectives were met.

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<sup>6</sup> Commuting distance is normally defined as 60 miles or 100kms. When a staff member works from a location that is outside commuting distance, this is considered remote work outside the duty station. For HQ, commuting distance is considered the New York metropolitan area.

Upon request, supervisors can issue a Letter of Recommendation.

### **M. Employment Prospects**

57. The internship does not give rise to any expectancy of, or entitlement to, future employment with UNFPA.
58. Interns with UNFPA shall not be eligible for recruitment as a staff member within a three-month period following the conclusion of their internship. No break in service is required for an individual moving from an internship to an individual consultant contract.

### **N. Cost**

59. Costs associated with an internship are the responsibility of the hiring unit, including:
  - a. onboarding travel,
  - b. stipend,
  - c. equipment used on UNFPA premises, and
  - d. operating expenses (facilities utilized by an intern on UNFPA or United Nations shared premises).

## **III. Procedures**

60. For individual internships, the hiring manager must advertise the internship opportunity<sup>7</sup> for a minimum period of two weeks. The hiring office is encouraged to advertise across multiple platforms including internship websites and the UNFPA regional and/or country office website for internships outside of headquarters.
61. The hiring office must conduct a competitive process and may consider applicants who have been included on a roster following their application to a previous vacancy announcement.
62. Persons who are eligible for and interested in an internship with UNFPA must submit an application through <https://www.unfpa.org/jobs>.
63. It is incumbent upon hiring managers to select a suitable candidate for a UNFPA internship from among the applicants who submitted applications to the advertised internship. They may choose to apply appropriate selection tools such as one or more of the following: desk review of resumes, interviews, tests, or review of writing or work samples. Upon selection of a suitable candidate, the hiring manager must issue the [Internship Agreement](#) and [Intern Acceptance Letter](#). Following the completion of the recruitment process, the supervisor from the hiring unit must notify all applicants of the decision and provide feedback upon request.

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<sup>7</sup> The hiring office may solicit applications for purposes of creating a roster of candidates. The roster announcement should clearly identify that applications are sought for a roster and not for a specific internship assignment.

64. For sponsored internships, the shortlisting of candidates may be conducted by the academic institution, if so stipulated in the agreement. The hiring UNFPA office should normally receive three applications from the academic institution that meets the eligibility criteria established in this policy. In these cases, DHR in consultation with the hiring manager, makes the final selection from the short list or may request the academic institution for additional applications if no applicant is found suitable.
65. To support compliance with this policy, DHR provides a [process note](#) on internships.

#### IV. Other

##### **Roles and responsibilities**

66. The supervisor shall:
  - a. prepare the terms of reference (“TOR”) describing the intern’s tasks and provide such TOR to the respective human resources business partner;
  - b. review the TOR’s, objectives and learning goals of the internship with the selected intern, ensuring a clear link with UNFPA operational objectives as well as a link to the intern’s professional and academic development;
  - c. provide clear instructions regarding reporting and working arrangements;
  - d. develop and discuss the criteria for joint appraisal on performance and progress made toward the established objectives and learning goals;
  - e. maintain regular dialogue and provide guidance and support to the intern;
  - f. provide induction and supervision on an ongoing basis;
  - g. ensure workspace when the intern works on-site, equipment on premises and related systems are arranged prior to the start date of the internship;
  - h. prepare a written appraisal of the intern’s performance prior to the end of the internship; and
  - i. ensure a detailed and effective off-boarding process.
    - i. Supervisors should meet with the intern during their last week of assignment, to provide feedback and gain insight into the interns’ overall experience.
    - ii. Supervisors should take note of any information that will help the organization manage internships in the future, and transmit this information to the human resources unit or intern focal point in the duty station.
67. Supervisors of interns who work remotely need to ensure that they:
  - a. clearly communicate work scope and expectations;
  - b. establish guidelines regarding expected response times for emails and other communication;
  - c. provide at least weekly calls to check in, offer support, and encourage and motivate the intern;
  - d. provide opportunities for virtual socializing with others in the team;

- e. provide regular coaching; and
- f. give constructive comments.

68. Interns shall:

- a. observe all applicable instructions, procedures and directives of UNFPA, and confirm compliance as certified in the respective checklist, notwithstanding their status as described above;
- b. complete all UNFPA training programmes that are mandatory for interns;
- c. maintain awareness of and compliance with security policies and guidelines applicable to the duty station of assignment or place of remote work;
- d. provide the substantive unit with a copy of all materials prepared by them during the internship. UNFPA shall be entitled to all property rights, including but not limited to patents, copyrights and trademarks, with regard to material which bears a direct relation to, or is made in consequence of, the services provided under the internship. At the request of UNFPA, the concerned intern shall assist in securing such property rights and transferring them to UNFPA in compliance with the requirements of the applicable law;
- e. respect the impartiality and independence required of UNFPA and the United Nations and shall not seek or accept instructions regarding the services performed under the internship from any Government or from any authority external to the United Nations;
- f. refrain from any conduct that would adversely reflect on UNFPA or the United Nations and will not engage in any activity which is incompatible with the aims and objectives of the United Nations;
- g. undertake and perform the tasks stated in the Terms of Reference for the internship;
- h. not communicate at any time, unless otherwise authorized by UNFPA<sup>8</sup>, to the media or to any institution, person, government or any other external party any information that has become known to them by reason of their association with UNFPA or the receiving department/office, that they know or ought to have known has not been made public; and
- i. comply with local laws and customs.

69. The head of unit<sup>9</sup> is responsible for ensuring that:

- a. actions have been duly carried out in line with the provision of this policy, and certified as such in checklist;
- b. the intern's data is promptly recorded in UNFPA's ERP system;
- c. attendance, leave, sick leave days are recorded;
- d. monthly stipend is paid accordingly and on a timely basis;
- e. the intern is informed of any administrative procedures, related to the internship;

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<sup>8</sup> Interns may not use any such information without the written authorization of the appropriate official, and such information may never be used for personal gain. These obligations also apply after the end of the internship with UNFPA.

<sup>9</sup> Head of unit refers to the representative, division director, regional or sub regional director, country representative or director, or head of office in countries without a UNFPA representative. This task can be undertaken by the delegated officer as appropriate.

- f. all mandatory training has been undertaken by the intern, recorded and that a copy of certificates of completion are provided to the intern;
- g. the intern is provided with timely responses to any queries; and
- h. the intern is provided with a certificate of successful completion at the end of the internship.

## V. Risk Control Matrix

Figure 1: Risk Control Matrix

Risk Description	First Line of Defense Controls			Second Line of Defense Controls		
	Control Activity Description	Reference (Policy section, paragraph or Control #)	Who performs	Control Activity Description	Reference (Policy section, paragraph or Control #)	Who performs
Supervisors do not comply with policy requirements including: - selecting candidates without a competitive selection process - assigning tasks that are clerical / not analytical - authorizing payment of stipend unrelated to place of work	The internship must be of a professional nature and include analytical and conceptual assignments.  Any place of work that is different from the initial assignment will result in change of the stipend rate payable.	7, 10, 33	Supervisors	The selection of candidate, terms of reference and stipend rate are reviewed and certified as compliant with policy requirements in the checklist for the hiring unit.	69	Head of Unit

<p>Interns do not have positive learning experience due to lack of exposure, mentorship, substantive assignments.</p>	<p>Interns must work in a time zone that is compatible with the core working hours of the office, and confirm compliance with policy requirements</p>	<p>68</p>	<p>Interns</p>	<p>Supervisors must maintain regular dialogue, offer support, and encourage and motivate the intern.  The head of unit certifies compliance in the checklist for the hiring unit.</p>	<p>66, 69</p>	<p>Head of Unit</p>
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**Annex I: Forms**

The internship application form: <http://www.unfpa.org> (follow link to “jobs”, then “internships”)

- [Certification of Health Insurance](#)
- [Intern Acceptance Letter](#)
- [Internship Agreement](#)
- [Intern Certificate of Payment](#)
- [Internship Performance Appraisal Report](#)
- [Personal History - English version \(P11\)](#)
- [Personal History - French version \(P11\)](#)
- [Personal History - Spanish version \(P11\)](#)
- [Self Certification, Health Status and Financial Support by Third Parties](#)
- [Supplier Profile Form - Quantum](#)
- [Template Internship Certificate](#)
- [Template Intern TOR](#)