United Nations
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
Ref.

Standard Operating Procedure

Instructions for

Interview Panels and

Panel Members

Approved by: John Holmes, Emergency Relief Coordinator
and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs
Approval date:
Contact: Chief, Human Resources Section, Executive Office
Review date:

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE on
Interview Panel and Panel Members

Contents: A. **Purpose**
              B. **Scope**
              C. **Rationale**
              D. **Procedures**
              E. **Terms and definitions**
              F. **References**
              G. **Monitoring and compliance**
              H. **Dates**
              I. **Contact**
              J. **History**

A. PURPOSE

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is intended to ensure fairness and transparency in the recruitment process, and to recruit the best suited candidate for the functions. This SOP takes into account the Organization's human resources objectives and targets as reflected in the departmental human resources action plan, especially with regard to geography and gender, and gives the fullest regard to candidates already in the service of the Organization.

B. SCOPE

This SOP applies to:

(i)   All vacant posts in Headquarters and the field (including temporarily vacant posts) from G-5 to D-1/L-6 levels, regardless of how the vacancy announcement was issued; and

(ii) All parties involved in the interview process.

Where there is a vacant post for which a vacancy announcement was issued, no selection shall be made based on the desk review alone. Accordingly, and effective immediately, this SOP shall:

(i)   Provide structured guidance to assist Program Managers (PMs), and all those who are in charge of and accountable for convening an interview panel, in managing the overall interview process and producing interview evaluation reports;

(ii) Ensure that the composition of the Panel is governed by the principles of transparency and consistency as well as the operational realities of the Department; and

(iii) Ensure that the interview sessions are conducted in a competitive, transparent, fair and efficient manner, based on UN competency-based interviewing standards.

C. RATIONALE

OCHA's interview practices vary considerably and have largely depended on the knowledge and experience of the programme managers. In order to improve the overall quality of the interview process, in accordance with ST/AI/2006/3 on the staff selection system, this SOP is intended to

ensure standardized and consistent interview methods based on the UN competency-based interviewing, regardless of the type, location or channel of advertisement of the vacant post.

D. PROCEDURES

I. Establishment and Composition of the Interview Panel

Members of the Panel

1.   The Programme Manager in charge of a vacant post is responsible for filling the vacancy and shall normally act as the Chairperson of the Panel and shall be responsible for constituting a Panel. The Programme Manager may delegate the task to another staff member so long as the staff member meets all the criteria to become a member of the Panel.

2.   **Number of the members**: The Panel shall consist of at least three (3) voting members, who have the substantive knowledge and experience to be able to evaluate the candidates.

   i. At least one of the members of the Panel must be serving in a unit/section (Branch?) outside the unit/section where the vacant post is located.

   ii. In addition to the Panel members, a staff representative shall be invited to attend the interviews as an *ex-officio* observer. The Staff Representative shall be selected and perform the functions in accordance with the SOP on Staff Representatives.

   iii. The Panel shall be gender-balanced and take into account the geographic diversity of the organisation; the gender and nationalities of the staff representative may be taken into consideration in ensuring the gender-balance of the Panel.

   iv. The Human Resources Section shall provide appropriate advice and serve as an *ex-officio* observer on the Panel where feasible.

3.   **Level of the members**: The members of the Panel must be staff members at least at the same grade/level or higher of the post under consideration.

4.   A staff member in the receipt of the Special Post Allowance (SPA) at a grade/level of the post under consideration may be selected as a member of the Panel. Can L-staff serve on Galaxy recruitment panels? I would note this here

II. Responsibilities of the members of the Panel

5.   Members of the Panel shall receive the mandatory Secretariat training on "Competency Based Interviewing Skills" prior to becoming a member of the Panel.

6.   **Responsibilities of the Chairperson**: The Chairperson shall be responsible for establishing a Panel as soon as possible after receiving the list/documentation of eligible applicants. To the extent possible, the Chairperson shall ensure that the interviews are concluded within 45 calendar days from the time he/she receives the list of eligible candidates.

   i. The Chairperson shall define the overall modalities of the placement process, in consultation with the members of the Panel, in accordance with the provisions below on assessment method.

   ii. The Panel members shall recommend the best suited candidate to be selected, taking into account the Organization's human resources objectives and targets as reflected in the

departmental human resources action plan, especially with regard to geography and gender, and giving the fullest regard to staff members already in the service of the Organization.

iii. For purposes of consistency, the same Panel members shall interview all short-listed candidates. Only in exceptional and unavoidable circumstances may the Chairperson substitute a member(s) of the Panel. In that event, the Chairperson shall ensure that the new member meets the criteria for becoming a member and shall ensure that the new member receives a thorough briefing of the interview process to date.

7.   **Confidentiality**: All members of the Panel are required to maintain strict confidentiality of any information obtained as a result of being a member of the Panel, including the results of the interviews. No information pertaining to the interviews shall be shared with third-parties.

8.   **Conflict of interest**: In the event that a Panel member knows of a possible conflict of interest that exists between him/herself a candidate, or should have reasonable known of one, the member of the Panel shall bring the matter to the attention of the Chairperson of the Panel or other members of the Panel, as appropriate. In such cases, the member shall recuse himself/herself immediately and the Chairperson of the Panel shall find a substitute for the Panel member.

9.   Such conflict of interest may include, but is not limited to, close personal or professional relationships or ties between a candidate and a member of the Panel, which could have or may have, an appearance of having a positive or negative impact on the decision of the Panel.

III.   Assessment method

10.   All interviews shall be based on the UN core and managerial (if applicable) competencies listed in the VA.

11.   For purpose of consistency, the interview method should be the same, unless the Chairperson receives the approval of the Executive Office.

12.   All candidates shall be given the same amount of time to be asked the same set of questions. The Panel is permitted to ask follow-up questions, as necessary.

13.   In addition to the interviews, the Panel may also use other evaluation methods such as written test(s) and/or other relevant assessment techniques.

14.   If the Panel finds it appropriate or necessary, it may conduct a second round of interviews. The second round should normally be carried out in order to further assess/evaluate the interviewee(s) and identify the best-suited candidate for the post under consideration.

15.   The Panel shall take into consideration the last two years' performance appraisal (normally in the form of e-PAS) of the candidates.

IV.   Recommendation of the Panel

16.   Upon completion of the interview process, the Panel must document its findings in writing, in the format made available by the Executive Office, and submit its recommendation(s) for approval in accordance with the internal clearance procedure, including the signed staff representative form.

E. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

I would include, for example, 'competency-based interview', desk review, e-PAS, ex-officio, OCHA staff (does it include consultants, interns, etc), PCO, Programme Manager, staff representative,

F. REFERENCES

Normative or superior references

Any SGBs or ST-AIs to reference here? IASC guidelines? OHRM Rules and Regulations, ST/AI/2006/3 on the staff selection system

Related guidance

OCHA Human Resources Management and Revised Expedited Recruitment Guidelines?
Competency-based interviewing guidelines?
Staff Representative guidelines

G. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

For example: The Director, Executive Office, is responsible for ensuring adherence to the SOP on Instruction to Interview Panels and Panel Member through the Chief, Human Resources Section. Responsibility for the monitoring of compliance with this SOP rests with each Human Resources Section staff member.

Each OCHA staff member participating in an interview panel in any form is responsible for ensuring the adherence to this SOP by all members of the panel.

H. DATES

Effective Date: XX , 2008
Review Date: this must be no more than two years from the date the SOP is signed into effect

I. CONTACT

The contact person for this SOP is

J. HISTORY

This is a new SOP, based on previous OCHA internal and Secretariat superior guidance materirals.

SIGNED:

DATE: