

Policy Title	Policy on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities
Previous title (if any)	
Policy objective	The purpose of this document is to set out UNFPA's human resources policy for employment of persons with disabilities.
Target audience	
Risk control matrix	Control activities that are part of the process are detailed in the <a href="#">Risk Control Matrix</a>
Checklist	N/A
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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

I. PURPOSE.....	1
II. POLICY .....	1
A. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION .....	2
B. Recruitment and selection .....	2
C. Career development and training opportunities .....	3
D. Performance appraisal .....	3
E. Retention in employment and return to work .....	3
F. Working environment .....	3
III. PROCEDURE.....	5
IV. OTHER .....	6
B. Inter-agency collaboration .....	6
C. Funding for reasonable accommodation .....	6
V. FLOWCHARTS .....	6
VI. RISK MATRIX.....	6

**I. PURPOSE**

1. This document outlines UNFPA's policies and procedures to create and maintain an enabling, inclusive, and accessible environment for persons with disabilities.
2. This policy applies during the recruitment and selection process and throughout the career of a UNFPA member of personnel<sup>1</sup>.
3. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>2</sup> recognizes the rights of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others, and their right to a work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, including conditions of recruitment, hiring, continuance of employment, career advancement and safe and healthy working conditions.
4. UNFPA is committed to ensuring equal access to employment opportunities, and to promoting an inclusive work environment which allows persons with disabilities to enter into employment and to fully develop their careers on an equal basis with others.
5. For the purpose of this policy, persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others<sup>3</sup>. For UNFPA purposes, this policy also recognizes people with short-term disabilities.

**II. POLICY**

6. This policy outlines UNFPA's procedures for requesting and providing reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities. It explains the principles and special measures to be applied for the employment and inclusion of persons with disabilities and identifies control actions to mitigate potential risks related to the process in the following areas:
  - a) UNFPA will provide qualified persons with disabilities with reasonable accommodation necessary to enable them enter into and remain in employment within the organization on an equal basis with others, unless doing so will impose an undue hardship on the organization.
  - b) UNFPA will ensure selection and performance appraisal processes are conducted based solely on pre-established and objective criteria related to essential functions of the job.
  - c) UNFPA will provide persons with disabilities with reasonable accommodation to ensure they enjoy equal privileges and benefits of the job as others, including training and career development opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this policy, UNFPA personnel shall refer to: (i) UNFPA staff members appointed by or on behalf of the Executive Director under the United Nations Staff Regulations (ii) Interns, United Nations Volunteers and Service Contract holders

<sup>2</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Article 27.

<sup>3</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- d) UNFPA will engage applicants and members of personnel with disabilities in a consultative process to identify and evaluate reasonable accommodations.
- e) UNFPA will protect the confidentiality of information provided relating to a person's disability.
- f) UNFPA will actively collaborate with other agencies in the United Nations Common System to advance the creation of an enabling and inclusive environment for persons with disabilities.

#### **A. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION**

- 7. Reasonable accommodation, in the context of this policy, is the necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments, to ensure persons with disabilities are able to participate and advance in employment, and undergo training and other career development opportunities on an equal basis with others. It may include adjustments to work structure, content or schedule, modifications to the work environment, access to the place of work, provision of special work equipment, access to assistive information and communication technology, and flexible work arrangements. UNFPA will provide accommodation necessary to perform essential functions of a position. Accommodation will not be provided for personal items such as hearing aids and wheelchairs. The appropriate accommodations to be made will be decided on a case by case basis.
- 8. An accommodation should not impose an undue hardship on the organization. An undue hardship is an action that leads to a financial or administrative burden or results in a change in the essential job tasks.
- 9. It is the responsibility of a member of personnel or an applicant for a position to request reasonable accommodation, and UNFPA will consider all such requests. UNFPA may offer an alternative accommodation if the requested accommodation cannot be granted.
- 10. The principles of reasonable accommodation will be applied to all aspects of employment, including the following key areas:
  - a) Recruitment and selection;
  - b) Career development and training opportunities;
  - c) Performance management;
  - d) Retention in employment and return to work;
  - e) Working environment.

#### **B. Recruitment and selection**

- 11. UNFPA will offer equal opportunities to applicants with disabilities if they fulfil the competencies required for the position. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to enable persons with disability to participate in the recruitment and selection process on an equal basis with others.
- 12. Recruitment and selection processes will include the following positive measures:
  - Recruitment and selection processes will be conducted based solely on objective criteria related to essential requirements of positions as outlined in the job descriptions. DHR/hiring units will review job descriptions or job postings job postings and ensure

that no criteria that directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants with disability are included.

- DHR/hiring unit will make all reasonable effort to ensure vacancy announcements are widely accessible. UNFPA may advertise vacancies through networks that promote the employment of persons with disabilities.
- All vacancy announcements must:
  - i. contain a reference to UNFPA's inclusive work environment; and include a statement inviting applications from qualified persons with disabilities;
  - ii. mention that reasonable accommodation is available to persons with disabilities and identify a point of contact for reasonable accommodation requests;
  - iii. include sufficient level of details to enable candidates to assess whether they would need to request reasonable accommodation to perform the essential duties and responsibilities of the post.
- During the selection process, the hiring unit must provide candidates with the opportunity to detail any accommodation they may require, in order to participate in interviews and other assessments. Candidates may provide this information at any time during the recruitment process.
- DHR will provide guidance to interview panels on interviewing candidates with disabilities.

### **C. Career development and training opportunities**

13. UNFPA will ensure persons with disabilities are afforded the opportunity to fully develop their careers on an equal basis with others. The Director, DHR will provide reasonable accommodation necessary to ensure members of personnel with disabilities have access to available training and career development opportunities including seminars, conferences and other fora.

### **D. Performance appraisal**

14. Supervisors must ensure performance appraisals are conducted based solely on objective criteria related to essential requirements of the job and that such criteria do not directly or indirectly discriminate against a member of personnel based on their disability or based on reasonable accommodation provided to assist them in performing essential job tasks.

### **E. Retention in employment and return to work**

15. UNFPA will provide reasonable accommodation necessary to enable a member of personnel with disabilities to remain in employment, or to facilitate their return to work following an absence resulting from their disability.

### **F. Working environment**

16. UNFPA is committed to taking all reasonable steps to eliminate physical, environmental or technical workplace barriers to the employment of persons with disabilities, including:

- a) *Buildings* - The Director, Division for Management Services (DMS) or a designated official will ensure that all buildings or improvements to buildings comply with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with respect to accessibility<sup>4</sup>. The Chief, Facilities and Administrative Services Branch (FASB), or a designated official, will take reasonable steps to ensure persons with disabilities are allocated office accommodations compatible with their individual needs, including the provision of accessible entrances and exits to buildings, and designated parking, where available.
- b) *Office environment* - The Directors, DHR and DMS, or their designated officials, working in close consultation with persons with disabilities, their supervisors and where necessary other professional experts, to the extent possible, will ensure the office environment is suited to the specific needs of members of personnel with disabilities. This includes conducting ergonomics assessments, to address the needs of personnel with disabilities.
- c) *Meetings, conferences, workshops and seminars* – Meeting organizers must ensure venues for meetings, conferences, workshops, and seminars are accessible to persons with disabilities in terms of built environment and access to information and communication facilities. Presentation aids and relevant materials, as far as practicable, should be accessible to persons with disabilities. Where possible, options for remote participation at meetings, conferences and workshops should be made available to participants with disabilities who may not be able to attend in person.
- d) *Flexible work arrangements* - Flexible working arrangements available under the [UNFPA Work and Life Programme – Flexible Working Arrangements](#) may be approved as an accommodation for a member of personnel with disabilities, to meet both the organization’s work requirements and the specific needs of the person. Under this policy, the Director, DHR may authorize reasonable variations to the standard arrangements.
- e) *Access to information* - The Chief, Information Technology Solutions Office (ITSO) or a designated official, to the extent possible, shall ensure information and communication systems and technologies are available to persons with disabilities in accessible format. This includes braille, audiotape, assistive devices and other resources.
- f) *Official Travel* - The Chief, Travel Services or a designated official shall ensure reasonable accommodation is provided to facilitate an official mission travel of persons with disabilities. Taking into account the specific needs of persons with disabilities, travel rules may be modified to accommodate those needs.
- g) *Safety and Security* - The heads of offices or Fire Safety Focal Points (FSFP) shall ensure every office has an emergency evacuation plan that outlines the procedure to safely evacuate persons with disabilities. The Chief, Office of Security Coordinator (OSC)/Regional Security Advisers or their designated officials, shall ensure the specific needs of persons with disabilities are taken into consideration for all emergency protocols.

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<sup>4</sup> The Convention: Article 9, Accessibility

### III. PROCEDURE

#### A. Requesting reasonable accommodation

17. A member of personnel or an applicant for a position or a representative acting on behalf of the member of personnel or applicant, may initiate a request for reasonable accommodation by completing the [accommodation request form](#). A member of personnel may submit a request directly to the Director, DHR or through their supervisor. An applicant may submit a request to the person identified as the point of contact on the invitation letter, for further submission to the Director, DHR.
18. Upon receiving a request for accommodation, the Director, DHR will review the request and may:
  - i. request additional documentation from a medical or other health care professional, in support of the request or
  - ii. request an evaluation or an assessment by the Division for Healthcare Management and Occupational Safety and Health Services at the United Nations Secretariat or other qualified professional.
19. As soon as the Director, DHR confirms the need for an accommodation, the Director, DHR will initiate a consultative process with the member of personnel, their supervisor and all other relevant parties, to determine if a reasonable accommodation can be made, and the type of accommodation that is needed. The consultative process will involve:
  - i. an analysis of the essential job functions, to identify barriers to performance of the job or barriers to participation in other privileges and benefits and
  - ii. an analysis of the requested reasonable accommodation or other alternative accommodation to establish their effectiveness for overcoming those barriers.
20. The Director, DHR will also consult with the Director, DMS regarding funding for the accommodation.
21. As soon as a consultative process has been completed, the Director DHR will advise the member of personnel or applicant of the decision to either:
  - a) grant the requested accommodation;
  - b) grant an alternative accommodation; or
  - c) deny the accommodation if it is determined that granting the accommodation will impose an undue hardship on the organization.
22. A request for reasonable accommodation may also be denied without a consultative process if it is established that reasonable accommodation is not required.
23. A decision to grant or deny a request for reasonable accommodation must be communicated in writing and must include an explanation of the basis for the decision. Where a reasonable accommodation is granted, the terms and conditions of the accommodation should be outlined. If reasonable accommodation is denied, where possible, an alternative accommodation should be offered. The Director, DHR will make every reasonable effort to

identify a suitable alternative, including where possible, the reassignment of the member of personnel to other suitable vacant position.

24. Where a request for reasonable accommodation is denied, the member of personnel should be given an opportunity to request a review of the decision. The process for requesting a review will be the same as a regular request. Additional information should be included in support of the request to review.
25. A member of personnel who requires a reasonable accommodation on a permanent, recurring or on-going basis needs only to make a one-time request. Once approved, the Director, DHR will ensure that the accommodation is applied to all areas as needed. Regular reviews will be conducted to ensure the accommodation remains effective.
26. Immediately upon approving a request for reasonable accommodation, or as soon as is practical in the circumstance, the Director, DHR or a designated official in close collaboration with the supervisor, and the relevant organizational unit will ensure the necessary accommodation is provided to the member of personnel. In the case of an applicant, the person coordinating the recruitment process and the relevant organizational unit will ensure that the approved accommodation is provided.
27. All procurement related accommodations will be processed according to the regular procurement guidelines.

#### **IV. OTHER**

##### **A. Confidentiality of information**

28. UNFPA will respect the confidentiality of information provided relating to a person's disability and will not share such information unless prior approval is obtained in writing from the person.

##### **B. Inter-agency collaboration**

29. UNFPA commits to actively collaborate with other organizations within the United Nations Common System in the sharing and exchange of knowledge and good practices related to employment of persons with disabilities. UNFPA further commits to align itself with United Nations system-wide policies and action plans on disability inclusion.

##### **C. Funding for reasonable accommodation**

30. To ensure sufficient resources are committed to support disability inclusion in a meaningful manner, UNFPA will utilize existing funding sources, where available and permissible, and will establish additional funding mechanisms as required. The Directors DHR and DMS will identify and earmark specific funds for reasonable accommodation as the need arises.

#### **V. FLOWCHARTS**

No flowcharts available

#### **VI. RISK MATRIX**

Risk control matrix can be found here:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1jVROOrJPMIy04uTKjp0psKBSEYC-zVNg>