

UN Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Program: Frequently asked questions

General Information

Will there be multiple placements rounds per year?

DFAT is looking to sponsor approximately 16 JPOs per year. These positions will be advertised periodically.

Do I need to move overseas?

Yes, JPOs will be required to relocate to the relevant duty station for the duration of their assignment that will be specified in the job description.

Can I bring my family?

Yes. Successful applicants can be accompanied by their spouse and accompanying dependents for the duration of their assignment. The UN may provide allowances for accompanying family members in accordance with standard UN rates. Further details are available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/jpo/current-jpos/>.

Are placement dates flexible?

The successful officer will be required to negotiate their start date with the relevant UN organisation. Officers should be aware that their start date may be dependent on operational requirements for the role.

How long are assignments?

The duration of assignments is an initial 12 months (subject to satisfactory performance). There is an option to extend for a further 12 months subject to agreement by the candidate, their APS Department, the UN organisation, and DFAT. Extension of appointment is subject to yearly review concerning priorities, availability of funds, and satisfactory performance.

Supporting Diversity

DFAT values workplace diversity and we encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, women, people with disabilities, people who identify as LGBTQI+ and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Can I apply if I identify as LGBTQI+?

We actively support and encourage people who identify as LGBTQI+ to apply to the JPO program. In your planning you will need to factor in different legal contexts and cultural norms in the country and UN Agency where you may be deployed. We encourage you to talk to our team if you have any questions – please contact JPO@dfat.gov.au

Can I apply if I have a disability?

We actively support and encourage people with disabilities to participate in the JPO program. We aim to make the program as accessible and inclusive as possible to people with a wide range of disabilities. Access and inclusion plans will need to be discussed with your UN Agency during the mobilisation discussions.

People who identify as having disabilities or who would like to find out more information about the program's disability-inclusion approach, please contact JPO@dfat.gov.au

Do I travel on my personal passport?

Mobilisation and return is on your personal passport.

Eligibility Requirements

Who is eligible to apply for the JPO Program?

The JPO Program is only open to Australian Citizens who are permanent Australian (Federal) Public Service (APS) and corporate Commonwealth entity employees, including members of the Australian Federal Police. Non-ongoing APS, contractors, and non-Australian citizen locally engaged staff (LES) are not eligible to apply.

I am 35 years of age or over – can I still apply?

No, applicants must be no more than 34 years of age at the time of their application.

Do I need a security clearance?

Applicants do not require an Australian Government security clearance to apply for the JPO Program.

I am an employee of a state or territory government, can I apply? What if I am on secondment to the Commonwealth government?

Unfortunately, employees of state and territory governments are not eligible under the criteria for this program.

I work for a corporate Commonwealth entity. Does my employer need to 'opt in'?

Permanent employees of corporate Commonwealth entities are usually eligible to participate in the JPO program. If you are concerned whether you may be eligible to apply, please contact JPO@dfat.gov.au

I am currently participating in an APS Graduate Program – am I eligible to apply?

APS graduates can apply once they have completed their probation period, and meet the position requirements.

I am in the Australian Defence Force – am I eligible to apply?

Unfortunately, ADF personnel are ineligible to apply for the program.

I work in the Australian Federal Police– am I eligible to apply?

Yes.

Can I apply if I have a health issue?

A health issue does not exclude you from the JPO Program. Some in-country locations can be challenging and may have limited medical facilities. You may need to go through a medical clearance process. Any existing health issues and their potential management will need to be discussed with your UN Agency during the mobilisation discussions.

Experience and Education

Do I need a second language to be able to apply for the JPO Program?

JPOs are required to be proficient in one of the working languages of the UN (English or French). Additional language skills will be looked upon favourably if relevant to the specific placement. Please refer to the JPO Placement Position Description for more information on the specific placement.

Is the qualification requirement flexible – what if I have an Honours degree or a Graduate Certificate?

Please refer to the relevant JPO Placement Position Description for more information on the specific placement. Each placement has different requirements. In some cases the UN may accept additional work experience in place of a Master's degree or other post-graduate qualification.

Am I eligible if I'm currently enrolled in a post-graduate degree?

You are eligible to apply, however your assessment will be based on completed degrees only.

What kind of qualification/work experience are you looking for?

Please refer to the JPO Placement Position Description for more information on the specific placement. Every position is different, and the requirements vary across positions.

Can I include work experience from a long time ago in my application? Internships applicable?

Only relevant professional fulltime work experience is counted. Your internship or volunteer work will not meet the work experience requirement. You need to meet the work experience requirement as detailed in the placement.

Application Process**Do I need to complete two applications – one for DFAT and one for the United Nations?**

The recruitment process is a two-step process. The first is managed by DFAT (beginning with the JobConnect advertisement) and will identify a shortlist of candidates whose names will be passed onto the UN. The successful shortlisted candidates will then have to go through the UN agency's process, such as completing a UN personnel information form and being interviewed by the UN agency, and they will make the final selection.

Successful candidates will need to apply for leave without pay (LWOP) from their agency for the term of their JPO assignment.

Are DFAT applicants preferred?

No, this is a whole-of-government program.

Can I apply for more than one JPO placement?

Yes, applicants can apply for multiple JPO assignments if they have relevant skills and qualifications. A separate application is required for each placement.

What kind of work will I be doing?

All advertised JPO assignments will include a position description, which will provide an overview of duties, responsibilities, specific skills/experience and qualifications and general information on each opportunity. Candidates are encouraged to undertake additional research on the specific multilateral organisation. JPOs generally do not supervise teams.

Will I receive training on-the-job?

Successful applicants will receive employment inductions from their host agencies as well as on-the-job learning.

Will I get feedback on my application?

Applicants who make it to the interview stage will be provided feedback if requested.

What pre-deployment arrangements should I be aware of?

Successful candidates may receive pre-deployment briefings prior to their departure in consultation with the DFAT JPO team.

Conditions of Service**Who will be my employer?**

For the duration of the placement the successful applicant will be an employee of the relevant UN agency or multilateral organisation, and subject to the organisation's terms and conditions. While on LWOP the JPO will also continue to be a member of the APS and therefore will need to adhere to the APS Code of Conduct and Values.

What is the salary?

All JPOs receive a salary at the UN P2 step 1 level, plus allowances, unless otherwise specified in the position description. Note: The base UN P2 step 1 level commences at about US\$50,000, plus allowances. Candidates should read the JPO General Information for additional information on salary and allowances [JPO-Conditions-of-Service.pdf \(un.org\)](#). Candidates should also seek their own independent financial advice based on their specific circumstances.

What travel/accommodation arrangements for placements? Is there relocation assistance?

Successful applicants become an employee of the UN agency for the duration of their placement and will be subject to UN travel entitlements, which can include economy class international and domestic travel. The employing multilateral organisation is responsible for flights, and individual passport and visas arrangements. Different UN agencies will have varying levels of relocation support.

What superannuation considerations should I be aware of?

APS employees remain members of their relevant APS superannuation fund while acting as JPOs and normal LWOP superannuation processes apply.

As employees of the relevant UN agency, JPOs' superannuation will be funded in accordance with the UN Pension Fund. Candidates should undertake their own research on the relevant UN agency's conditions of service. Candidates should also seek their own independent financial advice based on their specific circumstances.

Is there a correlation between APS levels and JPO levels? Is this pitched at a particular level?

JPOs are junior-level positions (P2) in the UN hierarchy. There is no strict correlation to APS classifications, the closest equivalent is APS5-6.

DFAT Employee Specific Information**Is a JPO placement considered 'time at Post' or 'time served in Canberra'?**

A JPO Placement is not the same as a DFAT Posting. LWOP for a JPO placement will only count as service if the employee returns to their APS job.

Can I apply while at Post?

Yes, candidates may apply while at Post. Candidates will need to discuss this with their supervisor and whether the timing of their posting is likely to affect their availability to deploy as JPOs.