

Requests for temporary assignments and temporary appointments

25 September 2025

Key points

- The Redeployment and Transition Support Unit (RTSU) is the focal point within the Division of People Management for short-term assignments. In close collaboration with DESS, RTSU supports emergency operations to fill temporary staffing gaps through short-term assignments in line with the Operational Guidelines on Staffing in Emergencies.
- Jointly the Standard on Management of Short-Term Assignments and the Operational Guidelines provide the base for the management of STAs in emergencies.
- Internal Temporary Assignment (ITA) for internal candidates must be for 6 months or longer. A request for less than 6 months is considered a mission. If the staff member is already present in the duty station, the ITA can be requested for less than six months. The same applies for remote based ITAs which can be for less than six months.
- External Temporary Appointment (ETA) for external candidates (including candidates with UNHCR experience) may be for one month or longer. They may be extended to an accumulated total of up to 364 days, exceptionally extendable to a total of up to 729 days maximum. Processing and assigning an external candidate will take longer than an internal candidate.
- There should be a preference for ITAs to ensure in-house capacity is utilized.

1. Overview

Recognizing the importance of acting quickly, UNHCR has simplified and accelerated its procedure to fill temporary staffing gaps in emergencies. The Standard for Management of Internal Short-term Assignments in respect of International Professional Staff at UNHCR (the Standard) sets out the process for requesting managers and the Division of People Management (DPM) when assigning internal staff members or appointing temporary external staff members in

emergencies.

Operational Guidelines on Staffing in Emergencies (Operational Guidelines) offer advice on how to fill staffing gaps in emergencies, including through emergency deployment mechanisms, and medium and longer-term emergency staffing solutions. Jointly the Standard and the Operational Guidelines provide the base for the management of STAs in emergencies.

Short-term assignments filled by UNHCR internal staff are called Internal Temporary Assignments (ITA); short-term assignments filled by external candidates, including candidates with UNHCR experience¹, are called External Temporary Appointments (ETA). To ensure in-house capacity is utilized, priority is given to internal candidates in need of placement.

While emergency operations normally (in line with the Standard) have the prerogative to assign external TAs directly and immediately, effective 27 January 2025, this is suspended in line with the Special Measures. The freeze applies only to external applicants without prior experience with UNHCR. International ETA re-hires (external candidates who have previously worked for UNHCR) will be treated according to the [Standard on Management of Internal Short-term Assignments](#), which requires hiring managers to first review the Short-Term Assignment Roster (the STA roster) and if no candidate identified advertise the STA position. Please refer to the [Summary of Special Measures](#) available on the intranet.

¹

Former UNHCR staff members (internationally and locally recruited) who held an indefinite or fixed-term appointment (within two years of separation for males and five years for females) are considered candidates with UNHCR experience.

2. Relevance for emergency operations

As a result of the organizational and structural changes within UNHCR, as of 1 October 2025, the Redeployment and Transition Support Unit (RTSU) serves as the Division of People Management (DPM) focal point for emergency staffing and facilitates the rapid deployment of suitable candidates through STAs and missions in accordance with the Operational Guidelines. RTSU provides strategic and technical guidance to ensure effective and efficient redeployment processes in alignment with organizational and operational priorities. It provides support on temporary staffing solutions and talent matching in the emergency response. All activities are carried out in close collaboration with the emergency operation, the relevant Bureau, the Emergency Management Service in DEPS, and other Services such as Staff Health and Wellbeing Services, the Assignment Management Section, the Human Resources Staff Services, the STA processing Unit.

On 2 April 2024, the new [UNHCR/OG/2024/04 Operational Guidelines on Staffing in Emergencies](#) were issued. These guidelines were jointly developed by the Division of Human Resources (DHR) and the Division of Emergency & Programme Support (DEPS). They provide guidance on addressing staffing needs throughout the phases of a declared emergency, from the “expand” period through to the “contract” period, using deployment mechanisms and medium to longer-term emergency staffing solutions. The guidelines aim to promote a cost-effective and forward-looking approach to emergency staffing, minimizing staffing gaps at critical junctures and

reducing the risk of excessive staff costs in the post-emergency period.

3. Main guidance

3.1.1. When to request short-term assignments and for what purpose?

- Short-term assignments and temporary appointments (ITAs/ETAs) are intended to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of an emergency response. They can be used to fill critical staffing gaps from the onset of an emergency during the 'immediate surge'-period (month 1-3), most critically during the preparation for a more sustainable emergency response (month 4-7), up to the 'sustainable response'-period (month 8-20).
- [UNHCR-HCP-2023-01 Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response](#) stipulates that country operation(s) must plan from the outset for the transition from emergency deployments to more stable staffing arrangements, including through temporary assignments.
- In December 2024, UNHCR issued the [Standard for Management of Internal Short-term Assignments in respect of International Professional Staff at UNHCR](#). The Standard sets out that operations in L1-L3 emergencies can directly propose an internal candidate for a short-term assignment identified through different channels, including direct selection from the Workday STA Roster, candidate pools, or previous STA openings. There needs to be a clear justification why a certain candidate was recommended. NOTE: as stipulated under Heading 1 "Overview", this has been suspended in line with the [Special Measures](#) of 27 January 2025. While the Special Measures are still in force, Emergency Operations will need to advertise internally before recruiting externally.
- If a staff member on a fixed-term/indefinite appointment is selected for an STA of less than six months in another duty station, it is administered as a mission if travel to the duty station is required. If the staff member is already present in the duty station, the ITA request can be for less than six months. The same applies for remote based STAs.
- To ensure in-house capacity is utilized, priority is given to internal candidates in need of placement, i.e., non-working staff in between assignments (SIBA), staff on special leave without pay (SLWOP) pending assignment, and other internal candidates in need of placement (last months of SAL/contract, return from secondment/loan, position discontinuation/reclassification, etc.).
- Temporary appointment processes (for external candidates) take longer to process than internal assignments of internal candidates and may delay the arrival of the person on the ground.

3.1.2. How to request short-term assignments

The emergency operation has the possibility to create and requests STAs for P staff via 1. the established HR Cell for the emergency (consisting of the emergency Operation(s), DESS and RTSU) or 2. Direct and immediate selection of a candidate to the STA Unit, DPM for processing.

STAs for GS/NPO will be handled and processed directly by the emergency operation.

a. Pre-identified candidate

Re. 1. The HR Cell jointly consults on the staffing needs and the identification of the staff member. If a staff member has been identified for the need, the operation will raise the JR, or if no staff member has been identified, the operation will request advertisement through the STA Unit.

Re. 2. The emergency Operation can **directly select a candidate** for a short-term assignment (STA).

Candidates may be identified through:

- The **Workday STA Roster** (internal staff members in need of placement),
- **Candidate pools**,
- **Talent search** using Workday's "Find Talent" functionality,
- **Previous STA openings**.

Functional clearance requirements can be waived for STAs in L1-L3 emergencies. Emergency operations must provide a **clear justification** for recommending a specific candidate.

b. Advertisement and Selection

If no candidate can be identified either through the HR Cell, or directly by the Emergency operation, the STA vacancy will, on the request of the emergency Operation, be advertised for subsequent selection by the emergency operation.

3.1.3. Workday initiation and Approval Process for STA assignments/recruitment in Emergencies

1. Job Requisition (JR) Creation:

- The **Operation** (Hiring Manager/local HR) initiates the STA request by creating a **Job Requisition (JR)** in Workday (WD).
- Refer to the Workday Job Aids:
 - [Create a Job Requisition - Managers](#)

2. [Create, Assign Roles and Post a Job Requisition – HR](#) Resource Manager/Budget Holder Approval:

- The **Budget Holder** receives a task in Workday to approve the JR creation.
- Snr Admin Officers or Admin/Finance Officers (operation depending) are **Budget Holders**.
- Refer to the Workday Job Aid: [Role of Resource Manager / Budget Holder in Workday](#)

3. Management Approvals:

- The **Representative** approves the JR creation.
- The **Bureau Director** then approves the STA request.

4. Position Management Team (PMT) Action:

- The **PMT** assigns **costing allocation** for the JR.

5. Routing to STAU:

- The JR is automatically routed to the **Short-Term Assignments Unit (STAU)** in Workday for processing.

NEW STA BUDGET MANAGEMENT PROCESS in place since January 2025:

- The costing allocation for internal STAs AT P/D level will directly be charged to the staff budget of the requesting operation. Be aware of the potential risk of overspending!
 - The costing allocation for ETAs at P/D and all national TAs (GS, NO and FS) will be charged to ABOD.
-

6. Advertisement and Assessment

- If no candidate can be identified either through the HR Cell, or directly by the Emergency operation, the STA vacancy is posted internally for **one week**.
- The Short-Term Assignments Unit (STAU) reviews applications and shares eligible candidates with the hiring manager within **three working days**.
- Managers must assess candidates within **10 working days**, with optional interviews or tests.

7. Priority Consideration:

- **SIBAs at grade or above** the STA grade must be given full consideration.
- If a SIBA is selected at grade or above, no further documentation is needed.
- If selecting a SIBA below grade or a non-SIBA, managers must document suitability assessments for all SIBAs at grade or above.

8. Approval by Head of ITMS:

- STAU reviews pre-selected internal candidate and, where applicable, manager's assessments following advertisement and sends official offer to candidate.
- Upon acceptance of offer by the candidate, Head of ITMS approves the JR.

9. Employment Agreement:

- The JR is referred to the **Personnel Administration Section (PAS)** for Employment Agreement/Staffing Transaction.

10. Next steps:

- PAS contacts the candidate and the receiving operation with information on the next steps, including entry medical examination, visa/residence permit arrangements, UNLP issuance, travel arrangements and security clearance.
- **IMPORTANT:** the candidate may only start working after the **Medical Service confirms the candidate is fit to work, and a visa has been granted, where such is required.**

Information related to short-term appointments for external candidates

While emergency operations normally have the prerogative to assign External Temporary Appointments directly under the [Standard on Management of Internal Short-term Assignments](#), this has been suspended effective 27 January 2025 in line with the Special Measures. The freeze applies only to external applicants without prior experience with UNHCR. Please refer to the [Summary of Special Measures](#) available on the intranet.

International ETA re-hires (external candidates who have previously worked for UNHCR) will be treated according to the Standard, which requires hiring managers to review the Short-term Assignment roster and advertise the position internally as per the Standard. If no internal candidate is identified, an external candidate (who has previously worked for UNHCR) can be re-hired if deemed mission critical and within budget. Any exception to the above requires approval by the Director of DPM.

Further to the above (and provided any necessary exception has been granted), once an external candidate is identified by the hiring team, the Short-Term Assignments Unit reviews in detail the application of the selected candidate to ensure compliance with applicable procedures and rules. This includes eligibility/suitability screening, 'rough grading' to ensure candidate has the required years of experience and education background, the candidate's past contractual arrangement with UNHCR (if applicable), the duration of the proposed ETA, among other things. Once reviewed, STAU sends the candidate's profile for functional clearance (if applicable), for LAS/IGO clearance and for rehire clearance to Chief of APRS. Once it is confirmed that the recruitment of the external candidate is in compliance with applicable procedures and rules, the candidate's file is forwarded to the Risk and Oversight (ROU) Unit for further processing, and once all checks and clearances are received, the case is sent to the Onboarding team of Personnel Administration Section (PAS).

IMPORTANT: Processing and assigning an external candidate will take a minimum of one month.

4. Policies, Guidelines and Useful Links

5. Learning and field practices

Workday Job Aids

[Create a Job Requisition - Managers](#)

[Create, Assign Roles and Post a Job Requisition – HR](#)

[Role of Resource Manager / Budget Holder in Workday](#)

[How to search for Internal Short-term Assignments \(STAs\), and how to save job s...](#)

6. Links

[ST/2024/02 Standard for Management of Internal Short-term Assignments in respec... Quick info](#)

7. Main contacts

Contact in DPM:

- Redeployment and Transition Support (DPM focal point for emergencies): HQRTSU@unhcr.org
- Short-Term Assignments Unit (processing of STAs): HQTSNEED@unhcr.org