

FAQs for National Competitive Recruitment Examinations (NCRE)

NATIONALITY

Q: I am not a national of a country listed. Can I apply?

A: No, you are not qualified to apply for this exam. There is no exception. Please check our site again next year to see if your country is listed. You may also check the following site <http://careers.un.org/UNCareers/tabid/65/viewtype/SJ/vacancy/All/language/en-US/Default.aspx> for other opportunities.

Q: I have more than one nationality. Am I qualified to apply?

A: Only if one or more of your nationalities is listed. However, you can only apply under one nationality.

Q: I am a resident alien and/or I have applied to become a citizen in one of the countries listed on the web site. Am I qualified to apply?

A: No. You must have the citizenship of one of the countries listed at the time of application, not later.

Q: Why is the programme only open to nationals of these countries?

A: We are mandated by various resolutions of the UN General Assembly to increase the number of professional staff from countries that are not represented or are not adequately represented in the UN Secretariat. Therefore, the programme is open to these priority countries only.

Q: How many nationals from my country will be selected through this process and be offered a post?

A: There is no preset number; the number depends on the achievement of candidates in this competitive process. At the application stage, in instances where a large number of applications are received by the Board of Examiners (more than 40 per occupational group (job family) in a given country), the Board reserves the right to admit to the exam only the most qualified candidates based on a review of the qualifications which are over and above the minimum entrance criteria

AGE

Q: I will be 33 years old on 31 December of the year of the exam. Can I apply?

A: No, you cannot apply because you must be 32 years old or younger as of 31 December of the year of the exam. There is no exception (even for one day) to the age requirement to apply for the National Competitive Recruitment Examination, which is held for recruiting junior professionals. However, with the necessary qualification, you may apply for more senior posts which do not bear age requirements. You may find specific requirements for these posts by visiting <http://careers.un.org/UNCareers/tabid/65/viewtype/SJ/vacancy/All/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Q: I will be obtaining my B.A. in June of next year. Can I apply?

A: In order to be eligible, you must have completed a degree relevant to the occupational group by the time of the written exam. However, if you are obtaining your degree after that, we will not consider your application.

Q: I will be obtaining my Master's degree in June of next year. I already have a B.A. Am I eligible?

A: In order to be eligible, you should hold at least a first-level university degree relevant to the occupational group (job family) in which you would like to take the exam and meet other minimum requirements. Therefore, if your B.A. degree is in the occupational group (job family) in which you would like to take the exam and meet other minimum requirements, then you are eligible.

P-2 EXAM

Q: What do you mean by "P-2" level?

A: This is one of the levels used to classify professional posts at the United Nations. P-2 level is at the entry level and do not normally require any extensive experience. P-2 posts are filled exclusively through competitive examinations.

WRITTEN EXAM

Q: What types of exam is NCRE?

A: The exam will consist of a written exam and an interview. The written exam consists of the following two parts: (a) a general paper which tests drafting skills (forty-five minutes); and (b) a specialized paper (three hours and forty-five minutes) which tests the substantive knowledge of the particular occupational group (job family) that the candidate is applying for.

In cases of high number of candidates sitting for the exam in a given occupational group (job family), the essay section of the specialized paper will be eliminatory.

Q: In what language is the exam given and what language should I use to write answers?

A: The written exam questions are given in English and French, the two working languages of the Secretariat. Candidates must write their answers for the general paper in English or French. However, they may write their answers for the specialized paper in English, French or any of the other four official languages of the Secretariat, i.e. Arabic, Chinese, Russian or Spanish.

Q: What kind of reference materials could I use to prepare for the written exams?

A: You may want to read through newspapers, journals and books you used while you were studying at the university and any other publications which you feel may be useful or relevant to the occupational group you are applying for. We have provided on our website (<http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/examin/ncrpage.htm>) sample questions for your reference. However, the reading materials mentioned in the sample questions are merely suggestions and not requirements.

Q: I will be a resident abroad at the time of the written exam. Can I take the exam in a local university or in my consulate?

A: No. The exams are administered only in a limited number of exam centres, under the supervision of a United Nations official. On request, at the time of the application or at least 6 weeks before the exam, we will attempt to convoke you to the location closest to your residence abroad.

Q: Does the United Nations cover my travel expenses to take the exam?

A: No, the United Nations does not cover any cost (travel, subsistence allowance or stipend, insurance, etc.) incurred for taking the written exam.

However, for those candidates who are successful in the written exam and invited back to the oral exam, the United Nations will cover the cost of travel and subsistence allowance in accordance with its rules.

Q: I have an appointment that I cannot miss on the day of the written exam. Can I take the exam earlier or later on that day or any time before or after the announced exam date?

A: No. All candidates must start and remain until the end of the exam according to the specific schedule of their exam centre. There is no makeup exam; there are no exceptions, not even for medical or other compelling reasons.

Q: Can I arrive late to the exam?

A: Arriving late is strongly discouraged, as it will disturb others and you will miss the instructions read at the start of the exam. In the event that you are delayed, you will be admitted up to thirty minutes after the starting time. You will not receive extra time if you arrive late.

Q: I have a very poor handwriting, so can I use a typewriter or a computer?

A: No. The exam is paper based. It would also raise confidentiality and security issues if typewriters or computers are permitted. Please try your best to write as much legible as possible.

Q: What can I bring to the exam centre? Is there a dress code to take the exam? What is not allowed in the exam centre?

A: Please bring black pens, pencils, highlight pens, calculator, ruler, your convocation document, and a picture ID indicating your nationality (passport, citizenship card, etc.). You may also bring some light food (candies, chocolate, etc.) and refreshments which will not distract others in the room. Smoking is not allowed in the exam room. There is no dress code to participate in the exam. However, some exam rooms might be rather cool or warm. Be prepared!

Do not bring cellular phones, dictionaries, electronic dictionaries, portable computers, reference materials, or draft paper/scrap paper. Should you bring any of these items, you will be required to leave them outside the exam room.

Q: I was convoked to take last year's exam, but I did not take it. May I take this year's exam?

A: In order to take this year's exam you must submit a new application, meet all requirements (nationality, age, occupational group), be selected by the Board and convoked to an exam centre.

EXAM RESULTS:

Q: When should I expect the results of the exam and how will I be notified?

A: The marking of the written exam is expected to be completed within 3 months following the exam depending on the occupational group. Detailed progress for each occupational group will be given on our Internet site beginning in April 2011. All candidates are notified in writing by email and/or airmail at their last updated address. The application numbers of candidates convoked to the interview are also published on our Internet site. The interview usually takes place one to two months after the completion of the marking of the written exam.

Q: I will be moving soon. How can I forward you my new address?

A: The preferred mode of communication is by e-mail; please send us an e-mail message indicating your full name, your application number, your new address, your new phone number, fax number, and any other changes. Our e-mail address is OHRM-NCE2010@un.org.

Q: I passed the written test but failed the oral section. Do I need to repeat both parts of the exam at a subsequent NCRE?

A: Yes, you will have to take the exam again. The NCRE is comprised of both written and oral examinations.

Q: I was not successful in the NCRE. Can I receive information regarding my scores for each part of the exam to identify the areas I need to work on?

A: No, we do not release individual results.

CAREER PROSPECTS:

Q: Are P-2 posts fixed-term contracts? Do they need to be renewed?

A: The purpose of the National Competitive Recruitment Examination is to recruit people for career posts at the Secretariat. Recruits will initially be given a two-year fixed term appointment followed by conversion to a career contract, provided their performance is satisfactory. They are expected to stay on to make a career with the Secretariat as they move on to higher ranks, such as P-3 and then to P-4, etc.

Q: What is next if I am successful in the NCRE? When will I expect to be contacted for employment?

A: Successful candidates will be put on a reserve list or roster. When vacancies occur in the United Nations Secretariat in Addis Ababa,

Bangkok, Beirut, Geneva, Nairobi, New York, Santiago, Vienna or other duty stations, successful candidates will be invited to an interview for a specific vacant post. The length of selection for a specific position varies depending on the needs of the Organization. OHRM is working on expediting the recruitment of successful candidates. A timely update of your Personal History Profile (PHP) or C.V. will definitely facilitate the selection process.

Q: Would I be stuck in the same position after I am recruited?

A: The Organization strongly encourages mobility within and across duty stations and functions. Under the new Managed Reassignment Programme, all P-2 recruits are expected to work in at least two different functions within their first five years of service. After two years in their initial assignment, they will move to a second assignment within the same or a different department, duty station or occupational group. The Office of Human Resources Management will present the P-2 staff available posts for the upcoming reassignment exercise.