



Capacity Building Initiative (CBI)

Frequently Asked Questions for external applicants

April 2015

1. What is the CBI?

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) approved UNHCR's International Recruitment and Conversion Policy for the Capacity Building Initiative (CBI) on 17 January 2013 (IOM/FOM/002/2013). The CBI is geared to attract mid-career level professionals with expertise and working experience in functional areas where the organization lacks internal capacity to meet its operational requirements.

Through the conversion of UNHCR staff members and the recruitment of external candidates, a cohort of qualified, motivated and talented individuals will be selected to join the CBI at the P3, P4, and P5 levels in many different locations and functional areas.

The overall strategic objective for UNHCR's International Professional Recruitment and Conversion Initiative is to identify the talent UNHCR requires to meet its operational and organizational demands today and in the future.

The CBI is geared to the filling of specific positions, identified as critical to achieve UNHCR's mandate.

Eligibility, application and selection process

2. What are the eligibility requirements?

Eligibility Requirements are as follows:

- Advanced university degree and/or a Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a significant years of relevant work experience in accordance with UN grading criteria at P3, P4, or P5 levels in the functional area of specialization or expertise according to the vacancy announcement;
- Excellent knowledge of English and a second UN language (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish). For very few exceptional positions advertised in the CBI April 2015 exercise, the second UN language is desirable;

- Ability to work in a multicultural team;
- Willingness to serve in conflict zones, deep field locations;
- Willingness to rotate every few years.

3. Positions advertised on a profile-based approach: What does this mean?

Applicants will apply to a functional profile without a specific location. Selected candidates will be matched to whichever post or location best matches their skills profile.

4. How will applicants be selected?

Applicants, both internal and external, will be screened using various criteria including: eligibility requirements, relevant work experience, functional qualifications, written and analytical assessment tests. Shortlisted candidates will be subject to a panel interview and those selected will form the CBI cohort and be placed in their posts following completion of a comprehensive UNHCR Induction and Orientation Programme. If a candidate declines the position offered, he/she will be deemed to have given up their membership as a cohort member.

5. Is there some flexibility with language skills?

All positions require an excellent knowledge of English and a second UN language (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish). For very few positions advertised in the CBI April 2015 exercise, the second UN language requirement has been exceptionally waived and is only desirable. In such cases, the appointment of a monolingual candidate will be limited to the position and does not carry any expectation of renewal or conversion, or assignment to another position. One of the important criteria for a career with the UN and in particular in UNHCR is proficiency in two UN languages. Therefore, eligibility for any further assignment to another position with UNHCR is subject to the acquisition of proficiency in a second UN language at the B2 level or above, under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

6. Where are the jobs located?

When applying for a generic profile, if selected, the candidate will be matched to a job opening that best matches the skills and the operational context of a specific position. These locations are in most cases in hardship and non-family duty stations and located throughout the world.

Induction and Orientation Programme

7. What exactly is involved in the onboarding/orientation programme?

CBI cohort members will be provided with an overview of UNHCR, its vision, values, mandate and its operational work. In addition, cohort members will be given specific functional training in their areas of expertise. During the first six-months in the CBI, cohort members will also conduct self-study, participate in topical webinars and undergo coaching and mentoring.

Terms of appointment and future opportunities

8. What are the terms of my appointment if selected?

All candidates will be appointed on a one year renewable contract, as per UNHCR rules. Staff members are expected to rotate to a new location every 2 to 5 years depending on the category of duty station they are appointed to.

9. Once I become a Staff member of UNHCR, what opportunities are there for me?

UNHCR offers career opportunities in many different functional areas within its humanitarian mandate. Since developing a career is closely linked to training opportunities, UNHCR also has a Global Learning Center to support staff in either improving their skills or in acquiring new ones.

10. Where can I find more information?

For more details on the CBI programme please check the CBI webpage on UNHCR website www.unhcr.org/careers or write to hqcbi@unhcr.org.