UN job grades explained: what P-3, G-5 or NO-B tells you

A UN job title carries a code. The letter tells you how the post is recruited; the number tells you the level. The figures below are UNFPA's (the UN Population Fund). Other UN organisations use the same grade names, and each posting states its own requirements, so always read the posting.

P and D: Professional and Director (staff)

How they are recruited: normally internationally, which means hired to work outside your home country.

Education: an advanced university degree is generally required.

Minimum years of experience (UNFPA): P-1: no experience required · P-2: 2 · P-3: 5 · P-4: 7 · P-5: 10 · D-1: 15 · D-2: more than 15.

NO: National Professional Officer (staff)

How they are recruited: normally locally, to work at a duty station in your home country. These posts exist only outside headquarters.

Education: an advanced university degree is normally required.

Minimum years of experience (UNFPA): NO-A: no experience required · NO-B: 2 · NO-C: 5 · NO-D: 7.

G: General Service (staff)

How they are recruited: locally, from the area of the office. Any nationality, if you are legally allowed to work in that country.

Education: completed secondary (high school) education.

Minimum years of experience (UNFPA): G-1: no experience required · G-2: 2 · G-3: 3 · G-4: 4 · G-5: 5 · G-6: 6 · G-7: 7.

Not staff posts

UN Careers lists other ways to work with the UN that are not staff appointments: consultants and individual contractors, and unpaid internships. These follow different rules from staff posts, so read the contract type on the posting.

How to read a title: an example

"Operational Risk Control Specialist, P-3, Cairo" is a Professional post, normally recruited internationally, which normally asks for an advanced degree and at least 5 years of experience (UNFPA's figures).

Salaries

Pay for each grade and duty station is set in the salary scales published by ICSC (the International Civil Service Commission): icsc.un.org

Ways in for early-career applicants (UN Careers)

- Young Professionals Programme (YPP)
- Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Programme
- Internship Programme
- UN Volunteers: a separate UN entity with unpaid and paid positions.

Never pay to apply

"The United Nations does not charge a fee at any stage of its recruitment process." (UN fraud alert, un.org)

Full guide with real postings: careermena.com/guides/un-job-grades-explained/

Sources

Our editors read these official pages on 10 Nov 2026. If anything differs, the official page is the reference.

1. Recruitment basis, education and experience per grade (P, D, NO-A to NO-D, G-1 to G-7)
   https://www.unfpa.org/resources/united-nations-staff-categories
2. Staff categories, non-staff paths, early-career programmes, UN Volunteers
   https://careers.un.org/job-level
3. No fee at any stage
   https://www.un.org/en/aboutun/fraudalert/
4. ICSC salary scales
   https://icsc.un.org/Home/SalaryScales