

Policy Title	Policy and Procedures for the Application of Term Limits
Document Identifier	PPM/TERM-LIMITS/2025
Previous title (if any)	
Policy objective	The present policy establishes the defined duration of assignment for select UNFPA positions to foster a culture of new perspectives and ideas.
Target audience	All UNFPA staff members
Risk control matrix	Control activities that are part of the process are detailed in the Risk Control Matrix
Checklist	N/A
Effective date	25 March 2025
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Mandatory review date	25 March 2028
Policy owner unit	Division for Human Resources
Approval	Link to signed approval template

Policy for Term Limits

I. Purpose

1. The present policy establishes term limits to ensure UNFPA benefits from new ideas through the periodic turnover of incumbents in designated positions. The application of term limits facilitates the Executive Director's ability to compose and restructure the organization as required.
2. UNFPA embraces change as an opportunity for growth and improvement. Term limits for designated positions provide an opportunity for innovation through the inclusion of new perspectives and ideas, and promote good governance.

II. Policy

3. This policy outlines UNFPA's term limits and identifies control actions to mitigate potential risks.

Definitions

4. The following definitions apply for the purposes of the present policy:
 - a. *External applicant*: a candidate applying to a UNFPA position who is not serving under a letter of appointment from UNFPA.
 - b. *Internal applicant*: a staff member applying to a UNFPA position, who is already serving under a letter of appointment from UNFPA in a different position.
 - c. *Position*: a role within the organization as defined in a job description that includes the level of responsibility, accountability and nature of work that is performed.
 - d. *Post*: a job that is classified to determine the appropriate category and grade level for compensation and budget purposes.
 - e. *Term limit*: the restriction that limits the duration a staff member may serve in a particular position. At the end of the time period, the incumbent is prevented from further serving in the position.
 - f. *Staff rotation*: the managed reassignment of staff members from one post to another, within the same or different duty station, for specific tours of duty.

- g. *Tour of duty*: the regular period of time a UNFPA staff member subject to rotation shall serve at a duty station before they are reassigned to another duty station.

General Provisions

5. Staff rotation and tour of duty are conceptually different from term limits.
 - a. Rotational posts are defined in the [UNFPA Policy for Fixed Term and Continuing Appointments: Staffing, Annex II](#) and include posts in the international professional and director grade levels.
 - b. The Division for Human Resources (DHR) identifies the staff members due for rotation after a predefined tour of duty in a respective position.
 - c. Term limits apply to designated UNFPA positions which are either
 - i. subject to restrictions of future employment to enable the highest level of independence and impartiality, or
 - ii. functions for which a change in incumbent facilitates diversity in thought.
6. Specific UNFPA positions, as determined by either the Executive Director or the UNFPA Executive Board, are subject to term limits.
7. When determining whether a position should be subject to term limits, the Executive Director may take into account the function, the job grade, and the interests of the organization. However, the determination may not be made based on the individual incumbent or their performance. A list of positions with term limits at UNFPA is provided in Annex I.
8. The present policy does not apply to the positions of the Executive Director, who serves at the Under-Secretary-General (USG) level, or the Deputy Executive Directors, who serve at the Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) level. The incumbents of those roles are appointed by the Secretary-General and their term limits follow United Nations Staff Regulation 4.5, which prescribes that the appointment of an USG or an ASG “*shall normally be for a period of up to five years, subject to prolongation or renewal*”.

Duration of term limit

9. The term for all positions with any type of term limit is limited to five (5) years from the date of assignment. The term may be extended once for such period as the Executive Director deems appropriate, up to an additional maximum period of five years. No further extensions may be granted.

Duration of staff appointment

10. Candidates who are selected for positions with term limits shall be granted fixed-term appointments. The initial appointment shall be for one (1) year in accordance with [UNFPA Policy for Fixed Term and Continuing Appointments: Staffing, Annex VI](#). The initial appointment may be renewed and must not exceed the end date of the term limit.
11. External applicants to positions subject to term limits who hold a permanent or continuing appointment issued by another United Nations system organization must be released from their parent organization on secondment, for a period not to exceed the term limit of the position. UNFPA will not accept the transfer of a staff member selected for a position with a term limit unless the candidate relinquishes their permanent appointment in writing. Subsequently, they will be granted a fixed-term appointment for one (1) year, subject to renewal not exceeding the applicable term limit of the position.
12. Internal applicants who hold a permanent appointment prior to selection for a term limited position, may be assigned to the position. In the case of the end date of the term limit being later in time than the applicant's mandatory age of separation, the Executive Director shall be under no obligation to extend the applicant's permanent appointment beyond their mandatory age of separation.

Eligibility for continued employment

13. Some of the positions with term limits restrict the incumbent from further employment with UNFPA at any time in the future due to the sensitive nature of the position.¹ This shall only apply to positions whose functions require the highest level of independence and impartiality.
14. In absence of a future employment restriction, the staff member will be deemed eligible to apply for another position in UNFPA prior to the end of their term, at the time of separation or in the future.
 - a. DHR will publish job openings as positions become available. It is the staff member's responsibility to apply to a new position and undergo a competitive selection process, to remain employed by UNFPA.
 - b. Staff members may apply to positions in a lower grade level. If selected, they shall be appointed at the advertised grade of the position. UNFPA abides by a rank-in-post system whereby the staff member is appointed at the grade level of the position. Accordingly staff members shall not retain a personal grade different from the grade of the position they have applied to.

¹Refer to table in Annex I

- c. The Executive Director has the authority to appoint a staff member directly to a vacant post when this is in the interest of the organization, including to a post on a lower grade level. When a staff member is directly appointed to a post in a lower grade level, the staff member may retain their personal grade for the duration of the assignment, as an exception to the rank-in-post system. Once the staff member applies to and is selected for a different position, they will be appointed at the advertised grade of the position in accordance with paragraph 14b above.

Separation from service

15. A fixed term appointment does not carry any expectancy, legal or otherwise, of renewal regardless of a staff member's assignment to a position subject to a term limit. Moreover, the Executive Director may terminate a fixed-term or permanent appointment in accordance with United Nations Staff Rule 9.6.
16. Staff members with future employment restrictions shall be separated from UNFPA upon the end of the defined term limit or expiration of their fixed-term appointment, as applicable.
17. Further to paragraph 14, staff members who do not apply to or are not selected for another position shall be separated from UNFPA upon reaching the end of the defined term limit or expiration of their fixed-term appointment as applicable.
18. Regardless of the duration of a term limit, all staff members are required to separate upon reaching their mandatory age of separation in accordance with United Nations Staff Regulation 9.2 and the [UNFPA Policy on Personnel: Separation from Service](#).
19. Staff members holding a permanent appointment and actively encumbering a term limited position, will retain their permanent appointment. Incumbents of term limited positions who do not apply to or are not selected for another position shall be separated from UNFPA upon reaching the end of the defined term limit. They are eligible for termination indemnity as outlined in the [UNFPA Policy on Personnel: Separation from Service](#) and Annex III to the United Nations Staff Regulations.

Designation of positions

20. The Executive Director will review positions to consider whether existing term limits should be withdrawn, remain appropriate or should be introduced. Such reviews can be undertaken at any time, but should normally take place every two years to coincide with the end of a budget review cycle.
21. The Executive Director will inform the Director of the Division for Human Resources (DHR) of any decision to introduce or remove a term limit for a position and whether a post-term employment restriction will apply.

22. The Director, DHR shall ensure that conditions of the term limit are included in the job description and stipulated in the job advertisement and in the respective letters of appointment, as applicable.
23. When a decision is made to introduce a term limit for a position that is already encumbered, the Director, DHR will communicate the Executive Director's decision to the incumbent and inform them of the applicable end date of their assignment to the position. The time served in the position prior to the introduction of the term limit shall not be counted for purposes of the maximum duration allowed by this policy.

III. Procedures

24. The Executive Director determines whether positions should be subject to term limits.
25. The Executive Director informs the Director, DHR on any decisions regarding term limits.
26. The Deputy Director, DHR ensures that conditions of the term limit are included in the job description, job advertisement, and letter of appointment. When a decision is made to introduce a term limit for a position that is already encumbered, the Director, DHR will communicate the Executive Director's decision to the incumbent and inform them of the applicable end date of their assignment to the position.
27. The Human Resources Business Partner (HRBP) monitors contract durations and informs a staff member in a term-limited position of their upcoming contract end date. The HRBP may delegate this task to a DHR team member.
28. If barred from future employment, the staff member in a term-limited position must separate from UNFPA at the end of their term limit.
29. If the staff member in a term-limited position is not barred from future employment, the staff member is responsible for applying to other positions at UNFPA and undergoing a competitive selection process if they wish to remain with the organization.
30. The Executive Director may extend or renew terms if considered to be in the best interest of the organization.
31. The Executive Director may appoint a staff member directly to another vacant post at the end of their term limit.

IV. Other

No other content available.

V. Process Overview Flowchart(s)

No overview flow chart applicable.

VI. Risk Control Matrix

Risk Description	First Line of Defense Controls			Second Line of Defense Controls		
	Control Activity Description	Reference (Policy section, paragraph or Control #)	Who performs	Control Activity Description	Reference (Policy section, paragraph or Control #)	Who performs
UNFPA loses talent due to positions with term limits	DHR publishes UNFPA vacancies to which employees can apply to, provided they are not barred from future employment in UNFPA	Para. 14 a and b	Division for Human Resources	The Executive Director may directly reassign a staff member to another position.	Para. 14 c	Executive Director
Compliance with term limits is not monitored systematically.	The Deputy Director, DHR ensures consistent application of term limits by documenting them in job descriptions, advertisements, and letters of appointment	Para. 22, 26	Deputy Director, Division for Human Resources	The HRBP monitors contract durations and informs a staff member in a term limited position of their upcoming contract end date.	Para. 27	HRBP

Annex I

List of positions with term limits at UNFPA

Function	Grade	Restriction for future employment within UNFPA	Applicable Term Limit and Notes
Regional Director, Asia Pacific Regional Office	D2	No	Term limit of five (5) years, renewable once, up to an additional 5 years
Regional Director, Arab States Regional Offices	D2	No	Term limit of five (5) years, renewable once, up to an additional 5 years
Regional Director, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office	D2	No	Term limit of five (5) years, renewable once, up to an additional 5 years
Regional Director, Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office	D2	No	Term limit of five (5) years, renewable once, up to an additional 5 years
Regional Director, Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office	D2	No	Term limit of five (5) years, renewable once, up to an additional 5 years
Regional Director, Western and Central Africa Regional Office	D2	No	Term limit of five (5) years, renewable once, up to an additional 5 years
Director, Division for External Relations	D2	No	Term limit of five (5) years, renewable once, up to an additional 5 years
Director, Division of Human Resources	D2	No	Term limit of five (5) years, renewable once, up to an additional 5 years
Director, Humanitarian Response Division	D2	No	Term limit of five (5) years, renewable once, up to an additional 5 years
Director, Programme Division	D2	No	Term limit of five (5) years, renewable once, up to an additional 5 years
Ethics Advisor	D1	Yes	ExBo decision 2010/17, term limit of five (5) years, exceptionally renewable once
Director, Independent Evaluation Office	D1	Yes	UNFPA Evaluation Policy (2024), term limit of five (5) years, renewable once
Director, Office of Audit and Investigation Services	D2	Yes	ExBo decision 2009/18, term limit of five (5) years, renewable once