



United Nations – UN-Secretariat

Junior Professional Officer Program (JPO) Chiffre Nr. 2026-2-26

TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. General Information

Title: JPO in Legal Affairs

Sector of Assignment: Legal Affairs

Organization/Office: United Nations / Office of Legal Affairs / Codification Division

Country and Duty Station: New York, USA

Duration of assignment: 2 years with possibility of extension for another year. The extension of appointment is subject to yearly review concerning priorities, availability of funds, and satisfactory performance

Please note that for participants of the JPO-Programme two years work experience are mandatory! Relevant work experience can be counted. In order to assess the eligibility of the candidates, we review the relevant experience acquired after obtaining the first university degree (usually bachelor's degree).

II. Supervision

Title of Supervisor:

Principal Legal Officer, Codification Division or Senior Legal Officer, Codification Division

Content and methodology of supervision:

Establishment of a Work Plan: During the first month of the assignment, the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) will work jointly with his/her direct supervisor to finalize an agreed upon work plan. The final work plan will be discussed and mutually agreed to by the JPO and his/her supervisor.

Evaluation: The United Nations Performance Evaluation System (e-performance) will serve as a primary platform to evaluate of the JPO's performance.

III. Duties, Responsibilities and Output Expectations

Within delegated authority, the Junior Professional Officer will be responsible for the following duties:

- Conducts legal research on a diverse range of assigned issues in international law and other area(s) of specialization using multiple research sources; selects relevant material, analyzes information and presents findings for internal review;

- Assists Legal Officers in the review of legal documents, instruments, or other material; identifies important issues, similarities and inconsistencies, etc.;
- Facilitates in-person at least one training programme in international law away from Headquarters under the Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law, and assists in its preparation and organization, including proposing and inviting lecturers, logistical and administrative arrangements (i.e. procurement, delegation of authority), updating training materials, completing relevant reports, drafting relevant cooperation arrangements, delivering presentations during the programme, and selecting participants.
- Assists in the maintenance and development of the Audiovisual Library of International Law (assist in the preparation of lectures, attend recordings at Headquarters and away from Headquarters, draft documents for the Historic Archives, undertake research for related materials of lectures, etc.);
- Assists in the preparation of drafts of background papers, studies, reports, etc.;
- Assists in the preparation of legal opinions/advice on a wide range of public international law issues, including the Charter of the United Nations, General Assembly resolutions and decisions involving, inter alia, issues relating to privileges and immunities, peace and security, institutional questions, treaty law and practice, procedural issues arising during meetings of United Nations organs, constitutional law of the Organization;
- Assists in the preparation of agreements and contracts with governments, NGOs and other public and private entities;
- Assists Legal Officers in servicing diplomatic conferences, including the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Humanity, and the process to conclude a legally binding instrument on the protection of persons in the event of disasters;
- Assists Legal Officers in servicing commissions, committees and other bodies, including preparation of background materials, summaries of issues and views of delegations, reports, etc.;
- Performs other duties as assigned, with a view to enabling the JPO to acquire relevant work experience within the United Nations common system.

IV. Qualifications and Experience

Education:

Master's degree in law, with an emphasis in public international law is required.

Work experience:

A minimum of 2 years of relevant working experience in matters related to public international law, including legal analysis, research and writing.

Languages:

English and French are the working languages of the United Nations. For this position, fluency in English is required. Knowledge of another official UN language is desirable.

UN competencies:

PROFESSIONALISM: Shows pride in work and in achievements; Demonstrates professional competence and mastery of subject matter; Is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results; Is motivated by professional rather than personal concerns; Shows persistence when faced with difficult problems or challenges; Remains calm in stressful situations; Theoretical knowledge of and experience in international law, knowledge of, and ability to apply, legal principles, concepts and procedures, examination, and processing of a range of legal documents, mainly in the area of public international law. Knowledge of various legal research sources, including electronic, and ability to conduct legal research and analyze information on a wide range of public international law issues. Ability to interpret and apply legislative instruments, develop and present results, recommendations, and opinions clearly and concisely. Ability to interpret and apply administrative policies. Ability to draft legal papers and work under pressure. Ability to apply good legal judgment in the context of assignments given. Shows pride in work and in achievements; demonstrates professional competence and mastery of subject matter; is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results; is motivated by professional rather than personal concerns; shows persistence when faced with difficult problems or challenges; remains calm in stressful situations. Takes responsibility for incorporating gender perspectives and ensuring the equal participation of women and men in all areas of work.

TEAMWORK: Works collaboratively with colleagues to achieve organizational goals; Solicits input by genuinely valuing others' ideas and expertise; is willing to learn from others; Places team agenda before personal agenda; Supports and acts in accordance with final group decision, even when such decisions may not entirely reflect own position; Shares credit for team accomplishments and accepts joint responsibility for team shortcomings.

PLANNING & ORGANIZING: Develops clear goals that are consistent with agreed strategies; Identifies priority activities and assignments; adjusts priorities as required; Allocates appropriate amount of time and resources for completing work; Foresees risks and allows for contingencies when planning; Monitors and adjusts plans and actions as necessary; Uses time efficiently.

Workforce Diversity

The United Nations believes that an inclusive culture attracts the best talent and encourages all qualified applicants, regardless of gender, disability, sexual orientation, cultural or religious backgrounds, to apply.

V. Learning Elements

On completion of the assignment, the JPO will have/be able to:

- Conduct legal research on a diverse range of assigned issues in international law and other area(s) of specialization using multiple research sources; select relevant material, analyze information and present findings for internal review.
- Attend the debates and discussions of, inter alia, the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly, the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations, the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Humanity, and assist with the preparation of drafts of background papers, studies, draft reports, etc.

- Participate in the preparation of training programmes in international law and of content for the Audiovisual Library of International Law.
- Gain work experience within the United Nations common system.

VI. Background Information

The Codification Division of the Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations, is the Secretariat of International Law Commission, and of the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly. The Codification Division also carries out activities within the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law, including regional courses and the Audiovisual Library of International Law.

The members of the Division participate in various projects involving the three projects mentioned above. The assignment of staff is by project and there are no permanent subdivisions within the Division. All members of the Division are required to perform the same general types of activities. Examples of possible projects which could be assigned drawn from the current programme of work of the International Law Commission and the agenda items for each session of the General Assembly.

The Codification Division of the Office of Legal Affairs would welcome the participation of suitably qualified female and male candidates in this technical field. The recipients of these terms of reference are, therefore, urged to make every effort to locate and nominate suitable candidates, both female and male, for the vacancy. It should be emphasized that engaging the JPO fully in all tasks performed within the Codification Division will certainly add to the professional competence of the JPO.

Bitte senden Sie Ihre JPO-Bewerbung direkt an das Büro Führungskräfte zu Internationalen Organisationen (BFIO) unter Angabe der Chiffre Nr. 2026-2-26 auf dem Bewerbungsbogen