

LSE International Organisations Week 2020

Notes on Working with International Organisations

Students who attended the LSE employer events in 2020 made notes on what they heard in order to share the knowledge gained with other students. These notes are not comprehensive and we recommend that you always check the information and advice offered as recruitment policies or approaches may change.

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International Committee of the Red Cross

Background and Context

The ICRC along with 190 national societies and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies make up the Red cross and Red Crescent movement. They are separate entities but are united in the same principles. Each of the national societies within the ICRC (e.g. British Red Cross), has responsibilities to work with people within their own borders and also in conjunction with the ICRC.

Their main mission is humanitarian relief in armed conflict and violence. Their values are neutrality, impartiality, and independence. They have a different approach from Amnesty and MSF, since they are recognised as neutral everywhere in the world. They are therefore able to help everywhere

Their core activities are: cooperation, assistance, protection, prevention.

Roles They Recruit To

ICRC recruits in the areas of disaster management, cash assistance, community engagement, and accountability.

They need public health experts, not only doctors and nurses, to connect the dots in the management of health. Looking to fill various positions with the following in high demand: medicine and health care (clinical professionals, especially anaesthetists and orthopaedic surgeons), forensic specialists, people with experience within military or police and interpreters in various languages (listed on website).

The overwhelming majority of positions are in "field" locations.

Aside from the professional roles (with experience) they also have opportunities for young graduates – for example, the ICRC associate traineeship in Geneva takes 80-100 applicants per year (max 1 year professional experience). More info can be found here:

https://careers.icrc.org/content/Graduates/?locale=en_GB

Requirements

Experience

General criteria include university degree, a minimum of 2 years of experience (sometimes 3-5), international exposure to low-income settings. You must be ready and willing to deploy to any country in need. Lived experience abroad is valued.

Skills

The ability to live alone (without family) for 24 months.

Personal skills, including humanitarian motivation, adaptable, open-mindedness, team- spirit, stress-resistant.

Other

Driving license (manual) and the ability to speak English and other languages highly valued – e.g., French is mandatory in some roles.

United Nations Population Fund

Background and Context

The UN was set up to deliver maintaining international peace and security, promoting sustainable development, protecting human rights, upholding international law and delivering humanitarian aid.

UNFPA goals include creating zero global unmet need for family planning, zero preventable maternal deaths, and zero violence or harmful practices against women and children (e.g. FGM, forced marriage, gender-based violence). It is also the largest provider as free voluntary contraceptives.

Roles They Recruit To

Many roles require substantial experience. A good way to get that experience is by working for other UN agencies, becoming a UN Volunteer, or working for NGOs that do similar work - Marie Stopes International, IPPF, PSI, etc.

You can also apply for an internship as a student/up to 12 months after graduation. The pool is always open for interns to apply - you do not apply for one specific role.

Most jobs are at the UN HQ or in field locations. There are a small number of jobs in London for fundraising and advocacy purposes.

Another focus of work is on data, census and statistical work (population trend analysis by ageing, migration, urbanisation, etc.). The types of job positions they offer are technical roles, operational and corporate roles and representation and leadership.

Since they work in war zones, they also have psychological roles to provide support in those settings.

Recruitment

Master's commonly required, but will be specified in job advert. Graduate level entry positions often require 2-3 years' relevant experience.

There is a long application process: written test/computer based test/interview. Interviews are competency based. Think about example of experiences: how you overcame a particular problem, how did you work with others to find a solution, work with someone problematic.

UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council

Recruitment

The UNHRC has a useful video tutorial with clear instructions on how to apply: <http://youtu.be/D5IZrh8fbpE>.

How to Apply

Register your profile on their careers website: www.unhcr.org/careers

Select the position/profile that most closely matches your experience and skills.

Complete the letter of interest.

Complete all other mandatory fields.

Please note: only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

They suggest that your job application must be precisely tailored to the position that you are applying for. Many people try to write as broadly as possible about themselves and their skills but the UNHRC look for 'precision'. They are interested in the particular skills of yours that match the position that you are applying for.

International Organisation for Migration

Recruitment

Great place to start a career at the UN, with many P1 and P2 level jobs (requiring 2-5 years experience). Remote, paid internships are also currently being advertised.

There are many different types of roles needed: HR, project management, M&E, procurement, communications, etc.

"Best advice on getting through in the application round: match your skillset/resume to the job description. This advice applies to most UN jobs as generally, a computer does the first pass on applicants."

"They went into detail about the organisation, what their goals were, the recruitment process - I was actually able to have an email chat with someone from the organisation about applying for internships and the differences between them and a paid P1 / P2 position."

UN Vounteer Programmes

Background and Context

The UNVP mobilizes volunteers and integrates them in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The UNVP currently have a global talent pool of 320,244 people (41% female, 59% male, with an average age of 33). Many of their volunteers are assigned to African countries.

Recruitment

They require the applicant to have the ability to work in a resource limited environment. You apply for the program online with a form. Many people who apply for the scheme are not given a role -- they match you based on past experience and what you can offer.

The UNVP can be an excellent way to get in the UN, as positions often don't require a ton of experience, though you do usually need to be at least 25 for international positions.

Importantly, they do pay (even though it is called volunteers).

Average age of UN volunteer is 34.

Many positions in West Africa, about 50% of all UNVs nationals of the country they're working in. Positions are based on country requests.

Jobs range from communications, policy, M&E, project management, data analysis, etc.

WFP - World Food Programme

Background and Context

The areas they work in include food assistance, humanitarian services and support, strengthening country capacity and south-south cooperation, by facilitating the access and transfer of technical knowledge, resources, skills advocacy, policy strengthening, etc. They have operations in around 80 countries.

The priority goals of the WFP include eradicating world hunger, improving nutrition, achieving food security and promoting sustainable agriculture.

“In the WFP session, it was reassuring that all the interns are eligible to receive a monthly stipend. Interns must be recent graduate within 6 months of graduation. I didn't know that the JPO programme applies to WFP as well.”

“Like the other talks, they started with talking about their aim, their current and past projects, giving examples of some of the work that they did and were aiming to achieve. Then they talked about the recruitment process and the varying opportunities. I was able to chat to someone about different employment opportunities - namely there are only few internships currently being released for remote work due to Covid. They recommended possible path with my nursing background of an internship to get my foot in the door or there were some other health related options.”

WHO - World Health Organisation

Roles They Recruit To

Entry levels jobs require at least 1/2 years of work experience. Most candidates achieve this requirement by volunteering with UN agencies or even at other NGOs, as well as within the research field (this is especially important for clinical scientists and doctors).

There are internship programs for recent university graduates (bachelor's level), that don't require work experience. They require knowledge of two WHO languages, and the internships can take place in multiple locations. Internships are currently closed due to COVID-19 but should reopen soon.

Junior Professional Officer programme: Can be locally recruited (there's a higher chance of being accepted if local), and internationally recruited. Good for young professionals that want to career in WHO (United Nations). It requires at least 2 years work experience, so not suitable for everyone right away.

“In the WHO session, it was good to know that we preparation for internship should be started soon. The explanation about several options to get hired at WHO was helpful.”

Recruitment

Apply while still enrolled as the application process itself may be lengthy (~6 months).
Before working at WHO - people may have worked at other UN agencies, the NGO sector, academic institutions, private sector etc.

You can apply to the internship with any background, but you do need to be enrolled currently (or start your internship within 6 months of graduating) and have 3 years of university study.

EU Careers

Roles They Recruit To

Long Term and Short Term Contracts, with entry at different levels of experience. Some (such as ASTs - assistant positions) do not require university degree, and is possible to go up levels throughout the years.

Many benefits to working in the EU (family support, pensions, travel), as well as well-being initiatives such as yoga classes.

Job offers require a number of different tests that narrow down candidate lists (at least 2, along with interviews) > however, this does not mean there is a job offer but rather that the candidate is put in a list of pre-selected candidates. Need to apply for specific job openings. Paid traineeship programs of around 5 months, offered across Europe, in multiple institutions with different focuses depending on interests. Programs at the ECDC for instance are well suited for people with background in research of infectious diseases.

European Parliament

Roles They Recruit To

Traineeship opportunities to work in the European Parliament, related more to policies, law, administration and communications, like the Schuman Traineeship. These can be paid and are offered in multiple European institutions that directly report to the European Parliament. Similar hiring processes as seen in EU previously in EU careers: long and short term contracts that require multiple tests and interviews for job selection.

Traineeship with Members of the European Parliament. Work directly with members of the parliament. Similar requirements as Schuman traineeship. More vocational training at the offices of one of the members in parliament, in Brussels.

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

Background and Context

UNDP works in about 170 countries and territories, helping to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and exclusion, and build resilience so countries can sustain progress. As the UN's development agency, UNDP plays a critical role in helping countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

Recruitment

Training and skills in your CV should be carefully aligned to the position. Get NGO exposure first. Prepare a results-oriented cover letter and CV. Provide particular examples that can be measured.

OECD - Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

Background and Context

An international organisation that shapes policies to foster prosperity, equality, opportunity and wellbeing across its member countries. It has a global reach with 37 member countries and 70 partner countries.

Approach to developing policy recommendations across a number of policy areas include: (1) it receives data from member countries; (2) engages in discussions and consultations; (3) sets standards and policy guidance; and (4) provides support for implementation. The OECD is funded by its member countries, considering their economies, and you have to be a national from a member country to apply for jobs. However, internships are open to everyone and the intern population is very large (600+).

Since their HQ is in Paris being a French national is an advantage, but you do not necessarily need to be. You do, however, need to have a good level of English.

Roles They Recruit To

Young Associates Program: recent undergraduates wanting to go on to do a master program

Internships for 1-6 months: recruited on an on-going basis; need to be enrolled as a student, open to OECD nationals and non-nationals. As an intern at the OECD, a typical day could involve coordinating events, attending conferences, documental research and analysis, gathering and analysing statistical data, among others.

Young professionals programs: economists and policy analysis with a masters degree or PhD (this is currently under review).

Most of the recruitments in 2019 were for positions related to policy analysis and advice and economics degrees are one of the most attractive educational backgrounds at the OECD.

World Bank

Background and Context

The World Bank was set up in 1944 at the end of the Second World War. Over the years has focused on a range of topics such as infrastructure, rural development, education, with focus on fiscal, social and governance aspects. More recently it has focused on climate shocks and conflicts. Its mission is to end poverty and build shared prosperity.

“The world bank represents 5 institutions in one group – IBRD [International Bank for Reconstruction and Development], IDA [International Development Association], IFC

[International Finance Corporation, MIGA [Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency] and ICSID [International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes]. The presentation focused on IBRD, IFC and MIGA.”

Roles They Recruit To

Internship (WB + IFC): for graduate students, lasting for 1-4 months, recruited in Winter and Summer. Applicants must be currently enrolled in education and continue following the internship

Young Professionals Program (integrated program across WB, IFC and MIGA): 5-year program for those with graduate level education and work experience. It's a leadership development program with a focus on global work experience with field missions. Consultancy

UN Secretariat

Recruitment

Tips from the presentation:

Cover Letter is important! Make it specific to the role you want.

Employment history: include as much as possible.

Languages - remember to include English, as applications are first screened by a computer.

Applications only need to fit what is desired in the JD.

Demonstrate how you fit with values/competencies in the Cover Letter; this will be tested during interview too.

You might want to go and get experience in NGO/ private sector before considering the UN.

Motivation is important – demonstrate this in the Cover Letter.

“Tip: Do not think that there will be too many applicants per role. Apply if you think you are qualified. The initial screening is done via a computer which rules out if you meet the qualifications or not. Therefore, a lot of profiles of people who are unqualified do not even get seen by recruiters as they do not meet the initial requirements of the role.”