CONTINUING APPOINTMENTS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE 2013 REVIEW

23 November 2015
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A. Inspira access and technical issues

How do I access the menus on continuing appointments in Inspira?

To find the continuing appointments menu, log on to Inspira using your staff ID number and select Self service > Continuing appointments > Continuing appointments. Here you will be able to review and provide comments on your data.

You must have a staff member account in order to view this information and you must have been pre-identified as potentially eligible as at 1 July 2013.

I can log into Inspira using a staff account but when I go to the menu for continuing appointments, it tells me that only some staff members have been given access. Can I still request access to review my record even if I am not eligible?

No. Only staff pre-identified as potentially eligible have been given access to the continuing appointments menu in Inspira.

Staff members who believe they are eligible and have not received email notification of their eligibility for review should contact their Executive Office or local HR office to request review for inclusion by the deadline of 31 December 2015. No requests will be considered beyond this date.

I received an e-mail saying that I can start the continuing appointment eligibility review but I am lost as soon as I log into Inspira. Where do I need to go?

It will be helpful to begin by understanding the continuing appointment process. The review stages are outlined in this step-by-step guide and in ST/IC/2015/23.

Next, refer to the Inspira Quick Guide to help you navigate the different screens in Inspira. You will also find a green information button on each screen that will guide you on what you need to do.

I did not get an email saying that I am potentially eligible and as a result, I cannot access the continuing appointments menus in Inspira to conduct the review. However I meet the requirements to be considered. How can I request access?

If you believe you are eligible for consideration, please contact your Executive Office or local HR Office and make a request to be included. Before you contact them, please be sure you meet the eligibility criteria listed in this {checklist}. 
Please note that the deadline for request to be included in the list of potentially eligible candidates is close of business on 31 December 2015. No requests will be considered beyond this date.

B. Review process

What is the timeline for the first continuing appointments review?

01 December 2015
- Emails will be sent from Inspira to potentially eligible candidates;
- Inspira opens up for candidates’ review of eligibility criteria.

*Staff who do not receive emails and believe they may be eligible should review the eligibility criteria on this checklist and then contact their Executive Office by 31 December to request to be included in the potentially eligible group and to receive access to the continuing appointments data in Inspira.

31 December 2015
Deadline for Executive Office/local HR office focal points of respective department to send lists of additional staff who may be eligible through the “Contact Us” button in Inspira.

31 January 2016:
Deadline for candidates to provide comments and submit additional information through Inspira

*Please note that this deadline will be strictly enforced. Staff members are advised to allow sufficient time to prepare and submit their comments in Inspira.

30 April 2016:
Deadline for Executive Offices/local HR offices to review their staff members’ information in Inspira

Date to be announced
Candidates will be notified when the Executive Offices/local HR offices have completed their review.

Stage 2 – Points Allocation Review

In the event that the post envelope is larger than the number of eligible staff members, the process will end at this stage and all eligible candidates will be awarded continuing appointments.
If the post envelope is smaller than the number of eligible staff members, a points allocation process will be conducted to determine which staff members will be granted continuing appointments.

**One of the eligibility requirements for converting to a continuing appointment is an “appointment through a competitive process”. What does that mean?**

Appointment through a competitive process means that you have been selected for a position via established procedures including review by a central review body that was established by the Secretary-General or through a competitive examination (such as NCRE or G to P). Field central review bodies were established for peacekeeping operations and special political missions in 2009.

**What are the Secretariat review bodies?**

The Secretariat review bodies are: the Senior Review Group (under ST/SGB/2011/8), and the Central Review Boards, the Field Central Review Boards, the Central Review Committees, the Field Central Review Committees, the Central Review Panels and the Field Central Review Panels established under the framework of ST/SGB/2011/7.

**Which Department will conduct my continuing appointment review?**

You will be reviewed by your parent department at the time of the review.

**If I need copies of my performance documents or any additional information/clarification to complete my review in Inspira, can I contact HR Services in OHRM?**

No, you should contact the focal point from your respective executive office/local HR office.

**I was given access to the continuing appointments information in Inspira, so therefore I am potentially eligible. Why do I need to provide comments and information in Inspira?**

Only potentially eligible staff members (i.e. those who meet some, but not necessarily all, eligibility criteria) were given access to the continuing appointments menus in Inspira. However, existing data has to be checked for accuracy and any additional data related to eligibility may not be automated and will require assessment by your executive office or local HR office.

Any comments/additional information you can provide on the data by the deadline date (31 January 2016), will enable your Department to have as much information as possible available to make a recommendation. As review by staff is not mandatory, non-review on your part will not disqualify you for review by departments/offices.
Will I have access to check in Inspira the on-going status of my continuing appointment case after the staff member review deadline?

Once you submit your comments on your eligibility status, your status in Inspira will change from INITIAL to SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW. This indicates that your Executive Office or local HR office will initiate the review of your eligibility. However, as this is a global competitive process, all staff members will be notified on the same date (after 30 April 2016) about the outcome of the eligibility review. Your status will continue to show as SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW until that date and no feedback will be provided while the review is under way.

Some of my personal information is incorrect. How can it be changed?

The data you see has been uploaded to Inspira from different databases (IMIS, Nucleus, etc). You will be able to comment, within the prescribed timeframe, on the data that is critical for eligibility or points allocation determination, and your Department/Office will take your comments into account when making their final decisions.

However, please note that any correction of wrong information will have to be done at the source (i.e. the system from which the data was uploaded). Contact your Executive or local HR office to request a correction. No new uploads of data into Inspira will be done in the course of the review for continuing appointments.

What is the difference between a permanent appointment and continuing appointment?

Permanent appointments were linked to the concept of a career service, and thus subject to satisfactory performance. A staff member granted a permanent appointment had a reasonable expectation of continued employment until his/her mandatory age of separation.

Continuing appointments are open-ended appointments. However, unlike the permanent appointment, the Secretary-General may terminate the appointment without the consent of the staff member if, in the opinion of the Secretary-General, such action would be in the interest of the good administration of the Organization.

How long will the continuing appointment be?

A continuing appointment is an open-ended appointment. Staff members remain, subject to satisfactory performance, for continued employment. A continuing appointment can be terminated for unsatisfactory performance as well as for other reasons including abolition of a post, reduction in force, health reasons, disciplinary reasons, and in the interest of the organization.
C. Eligibility issues

Will I be granted a continuing appointment if I meet all the criteria and I am found to be eligible?

The review of eligibility is Stage I of the process. If the number of continuing appointments to be awarded under a given post envelope is larger than the number of eligible staff members, then those staff members recommended to be granted continuing appointments will be assessed by OHRM to ensure that they continue to meet the following criteria during the entire review period:

(a) have performance rating of at least “Meets expectations” or equivalent;

(b) are not international or locally recruited staff serving in the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda or the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia;

(c) are not be subject to any disciplinary measure;

(d) are not seconded or separated from the Organization. The final determination of granting the continuing appointment will be made by the ASG for Human Resources Management.

If in the event the number of continuing appointments to be awarded under a given post envelope is smaller than the number of eligible staff members, then Stage II, that is, the points allocation, will commence. Staff members and departments/offices will be advised of the timelines of this process in due course. As with Stage I, staff will be given the opportunity to provide comments and additional information through Inspira on the calculation of their points. Then departments/offices will proceed with the review.

Will service with agencies, funds and programmes count towards eligibility and the points for continuing appointments?

In order to be eligible for consideration for the granting of a continuing appointment, staff members must have five years of continuous service on fixed-term appointment(s) under the United Nations Staff Rules and Regulations. Thus, periods of service on fixed-term appointments in another entity governed by the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules prior to joining the United Nations Secretariat shall be counted towards the qualifying service provided the service has been continuous.

Service in organizations not governed by the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules will not count towards the eligibility criteria.

Once considered eligible for the granting of a continuing appointment, points will be allocated based on established criteria regardless of whether the staff member’s
previous service was with the UN Secretariat or with agencies, funds and programmes, provided the service has been continuous.

For example, a staff member employed by UNICEF for 3 years in Khartoum, by FAO for 3 years in Kabul, and by the UN Secretariat for 6 years in New York would be considered eligible for a continuing appointment based on the 6 years of continuous service with the UN Secretariat. FAO is not governed by the United Nations Staff Rules and Regulations, nonetheless points will be allocated for the staff member’s service in Khartoum and Kabul, provided such service was continuous.

**Will there be a certain number of seats available for each Department or Mission?**

As this is a global exercise, individual departments, office, missions, etc., will not be allotted a given number of seats. The number of continuing appointments granted each year, if any, will depend on the level of the relevant post envelope. There will be two global post envelopes; one for the Professional and higher categories and Field Service category; and one for the General Service and related categories, including but not limited to National Professional Officers, Trades and Crafts and Security Service category.

Staff members who are eligible for consideration for the granting of a continuing appointment shall be allocated points and ranked, according to the number of points accumulated, on an annual competitive basis. The ranking is done on a Secretariat-wide basis (not by individual Office, Department or Mission) and undertaken only when the cumulative number of staff members with a permanent or continuing appointment is not equal to or exceeding the established level of the relevant post envelope. Staff members who are awarded the same number of points shall be ranked on the basis of length of continuous service. Continuing appointments shall be granted to the top-ranking candidates subject to the availability of appointments within the relevant post envelope.

**In terms of eligibility for a continuing appointment, is there any difference between a national staff working for a field mission and a national staff working for an agency, fund or programme in the same duty station?**

Agencies, funds and programmes must decide on their own modalities for the granting of continuing appointments.

Regarding national staff in field missions not being eligible for continuing appointments, the General Assembly decided this based on Member States’ view that individual field missions are temporary and have finite mandates. Their view was that granting of continuing appointments to this group of staff would be inconsistent with the purpose of this contractual arrangement.
Why are the staff in the tribunals and national staff (National Professional Officers and staff in the General Service and related categories) in field missions not eligible for continuing appointment?

Given the fact that the tribunals are downsizing and completing their mandates and that Member States view individual field missions as temporary and with finite mandates, Member States concluded that the staff in the tribunals and national staff (National Professional Officers and staff in the General Service and related categories) in field missions are consequently employed only for a fixed period of time. Based on this, Member States were of the view that granting of continuing appointments to this group of staff would be inconsistent with the purpose of this contractual arrangement.

What is the rationale for having an age limitation for eligibility towards the continuing appointment?

The condition of seven years of service remaining before a staff member’s mandatory age of retirement is a requirement imposed by the General Assembly.

In resolution 65/247 of 24 December 2010, the General Assembly specifically decided that in order to be eligible for consideration for the granting of a continuing appointment, staff members must “have at least 7 years of service remaining before reaching the mandatory age of separation”.

The General Assembly based this decision on one of the eligibility criteria which was in place for consideration for a permanent appointment, namely to be under the age of 53 on the date when the staff member has completed or completes the five years of qualifying service. In order to ensure equality in treatment for all the staff members irrespective of their individual mandatory age of separation which varies depending on their date of entry in the Organization, the General Assembly decided to formulate this criterion differently and refer to the number of years of service remaining rather than to the age of staff members.

Does time spent working on a temporary assignment count towards the five years of continuous service required to be eligible for a continuing appointment?

The required five years of continuous service must have been completed without any break in service.

Time spent working under a temporary appointment does not count towards the five years of continuous service given that temporary appointments cannot be converted to fixed-term appointments and staff members separate from the organization upon expiration of temporary appointments.
Assignment of a staff member who holds a fixed-term appointment to a temporary job does not affect his/her continuity of service. Service is considered continuous until the expiration of their fixed-term appointment. If a staff member is separated following the expiration of their fixed-term appointment and then is reemployed on a temporary appointment, the service shall not be considered as continuous between the prior and new appointment.

D. Breaks-in-service in relation to eligibility

I was a former 300 series staff member who was separated with payment of accrued annual leave and reappointed the next day on a fixed-term appointment. Is my service under the 300 series appointment counted towards the five years of qualifying service needed to be eligible for a consideration of a continuing appointment?

Generally, continuity of service shall be considered broken when the staff member has been separated and paid on account of termination indemnity, repatriation grant or commutation of accrued annual leave.

The General Assembly, in resolution 65/247, decided, however, that the service of staff members who were previously appointed under the 100, 200 or 300 series of the Staff Rules, and who have been appointed since 1 July 2009 on a fixed-term appointment under the provisional staff rules after a competitive process under staff rule 4.15, would count towards the eligibility requirement of five years of continuous service for a continuing appointment, if they have served for five years continuously.

Exceptionally, for the purpose of implementing General Assembly resolution 65/247, the service of former 300 series staff who were separated and reappointed under a fixed-term appointment without a break in service would be considered as continuous for the purpose of consideration for a continuing appointment, regardless of whether or not separation payments were made under the 300 series appointment, unless the separation and reappointment occurred at their own initiative through their resignation or application to a position or duty station involving a separation on resignation or expiry of appointment and reappointment to another position. Subject to meeting all other eligibility criteria, the period of service under the 300 series appointment for these individuals would be counted towards the five years of qualifying service needed for consideration of a continuing appointment.
I was “regularized” prior to the continuing appointment eligibility date after having been selected for a position following review by a Secretariat review body. Prior to being regularized, I served for many years on 11-month fixed-term appointments and was required to take a 3-day break in service in between appointments. Is my service under the 11-month fixed-term appointments counted towards the five years of qualifying service needed to be eligible for consideration of a continuing appointment?

Generally, continuity of service shall be considered broken when the staff member has been separated and paid on account of termination indemnity, repatriation grant or commutation of accrued annual leave.

Exceptionally, in order to implement General Assembly resolution 65/247 and to take into account the transition to the new contractual arrangements, for staff formerly appointed under the 100 series of staff rules, service will be considered as continuous in cases where a separation from service occurred before 1 July 2009 and involved an interruption in employment with the United Nations Secretariat for a period of 30 calendar days or less that was imposed by the Organization for administrative purposes only, regardless of whether or not the staff member was paid on account accrued annual leave balance or other separation entitlements. Such service would count towards the five years of service needed to qualify for a continuing appointment, unless the separation and reappointment occurred at their own initiative through their resignation or application to a position or duty station involving a separation on resignation or expiry of appointment and reappointment to another position.

I was serving on an 11-month fixed-term appointment as of 30 June 2009. Under the interim guidelines for the implementation of the contractual reform¹, I was given a one-year fixed-term appointment under the new staff rules with no break in service, which was renewed for another year. After serving two years, I was separated and required to take a break in service, following which I was subsequently reappointed under a fixed-term appointment after having been selected for a position subject to review by a Secretariat central review body. Does my prior service under fixed-term appointments count for the purpose of consideration for a continuing appointment?

Generally, continuity of service shall be considered broken when the staff member has been separated and paid on account of termination indemnity, repatriation grant or commutation of accrued annual leave. Exceptionally, however, bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 65/247 and the transition to the new contractual arrangements, the service of staff who were transitioned to a one-year fixed-term appointment under the new staff rules in accordance with the interim guidelines will be considered as continuous for the purpose of consideration of a continuing appointment.

¹ See “Interim Guidelines for the Implementation of Transitional Measures for the United Nations Contractual Reform for Currently Serving Staff Members, other than those serving in United Nations Peacekeeping and Special Political Missions, effective 1 July 2009.”
in cases where a separation from service occurred after 1 July 2009 and involved an
interrupted in employment with the United Nations of three working days or less that
was imposed by the Organization for administrative purposes, regardless of whether the
staff member was paid on account accrued annual leave or other separation benefits.
Such service will be counted towards the five years of continuous service needed to be
eligible for consideration of a continuing appointment unless the separation and
reappointment occurred at their own initiative through their resignation or application
to a position or duty station involving a separation on resignation or expiry of
appointment and reappointment to another position.

What if I have a temporary appointment in between two fixed-term
appointments, would the period on temporary appointment be treated as
continuous?

The period of service on a temporary appointment would constitute a break in the
continuity of service under a fixed-term appointment, therefore your overall period of
service would not be considered continuous. The period of service under a temporary
appointment would not count towards the five-years of qualifying service. And the
count of qualifying years of service would start counting from the date of your second
fixed-term appointment, posterior to the period on temporary appointment.

E. Performance ratings in relation to eligibility

One of the conditions for eligibility for a continuing appointment is that staff
members must have a performance rating of at least “Meets expectations” or
equivalent in the four most recent and completed performance appraisal reports
of one year or more…” (2.1(b) of ST/SGB/2011/9 and 2.21 of ST/Al/2012/3). What
is understood by the “four most recent and completed performance reports of
one year of more”?

For the 2013 review, as an exception to sections 2.1 (b) of ST/SGB/2011/9 and 2.21 of
ST/Al/2012/3, staff members who have had a performance rating of at least “meets
expectations” or its equivalent in all performance reports, including those of a duration
of less than one year, but covering the past four years, can be eligible for consideration
for conversion to a continuing appointment. However, no points would be allocated for
any performance appraisal report covering a period of less than one year.
Inspira will display the e-PAS/ePerformance on file for 10 years from date of eligibility but
staff members can always provide e-PAS/ePerformance records that the system does
not display for consideration.
Can a missing performance appraisal be substituted by a note from the supervisor indicating that performance has been satisfactory for the continuing appointments review?

Performance appraisals cannot be substituted by a note written by a supervisor. A duly completed performance evaluation is required.

I have a performance evaluation report for 2012-13. Since the eligibility cut-off date is as of 1 July 2013, can I use this one as part of the four required reports?

Yes. Performance reports that have been finalized before the eligibility date can be considered. For this review exercise, the eligibility date is 1 July 2013.

One of my performance appraisals that was completed prior to the eligibility date is currently under rebuttal. Will this appraisal be used in the review for a continuing appointment?

In cases where a completed performance appraisal is under rebuttal, should the rebuttal process result in a change in the rating of an appraisal after the eligibility date but prior to the completion of the ongoing annual review process, the revised rating shall be the one taken into account in the current review exercise.

If a staff member has stayed in one duty station for 2 years or more and had two e-PAS cycles, will he/she be given points for two entries?

Yes, a staff member may receive points for each e-PAS cycle of at least 1 year period when the performance rating received is either “Exceeds expectations” (which refers to the highest rating under the new Performance Management and Development system) or “Consistently exceeds expectations” (the highest rating under the previous Performance Management system) or “Frequently exceeds expectations” (the second highest rating under the previous Performance Management system).

F. Secondment issues in relation to eligibility

I just returned from secondment. Although at the eligibility date I was on secondment, I returned to the Secretariat during the period of consideration. Would I be considered for the continuing appointment?

In accordance with section 2.7 of ST/Al/2012/3, a staff member who is, at the eligibility date or at any point during the period of consideration, seconded from the Secretariat to another United Nations entity will be considered at the next review following his or her return to active service in the Secretariat. The “period of consideration” refers to the period of time between the eligibility date and the date of granting of the continuing appointment. Accordingly, a staff member on secondment to another organization at
the eligibility date and who returned to the Secretariat during the period of consideration would be considered in the next review, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria.

**I am a staff member on a fixed-term appointment who meets all the eligibility requirements. I have always been on secondment from my government. Am I eligible for consideration for a continuing appointment?**

Provided all other eligibility criteria are met, including appointment following a review by a Secretariat central review body, staff members on secondment from their national government are eligible for consideration of a continuing appointment. It will normally be granted only once the secondment status ceases.

**I have been serving in the UN Common System continuously since January 2000. I joined the Secretariat on secondment from the UNICEF in June 2011 and subsequently transferred to the Secretariat in September 2013. Considering that I have been serving with the UN Secretariat since June 2010, would I be eligible for consideration for the granting of the continuing appointment?**

As of the eligibility date i.e. 1 July 2013 your parent Organization was UNICEF as you were on secondment status with the Secretariat. Although during the seconded period you were subject to the Staff Regulations and Rules of the UN Secretariat, you retained your rights of employment with UNICEF. It was only upon your transfer in September 2013 that you became a UN Secretariat staff member and ceased to have any contractual relationship with UNICEF. Accordingly, you may be eligible for consideration in the next review, provided all other criteria are met.

**I am currently on special leave without pay and I meet all the eligibility criteria as of the eligibility cut-off date. Can I get a continuing appointment?**

For the 2013 review exercise, candidates who avail of special leave without pay during the review process will be exempted from being disqualified on the basis of the SLWOP, if they meet all the eligibility criteria and are deemed eligible by their executive office or local personnel office. However, during the final review if the candidate on SLWOP continues to meet the criteria listed under section 2.1(b), (e) and (f) of ST/SGB/2011/9 and a decision is made to grant a continuing appointment to such candidate, it will be granted only upon return to active service.
G. Disciplinary measures in relation to eligibility

Regarding the base criteria for eligibility for a continuing appointment, what is considered a disciplinary measure?

Disciplinary measures can take one or more of the following forms:

(a) Written censure;
(b) Loss of one or more steps in grade;
(c) Deferment, for a specified period, of eligibility for salary increment;
(d) Suspension without pay for a specified period;
(e) Fine;
(f) Deferment, for a specified period, of eligibility for consideration for promotion;
(g) Demotion, with deferment, for a specified period, of eligibility for consideration for promotion;
(h) Separation from service, with notice or compensation in lieu of notice, and with or without termination indemnity;
(i) Dismissal.

Any one of these constitutes a disciplinary measure and means that the staff member does not meet the base eligibility criteria for continuing appointments.

In accordance with section 2.1(f) of ST/SGB/2011/9, a staff member must not have been subject to any disciplinary measure during the five years preceding the eligibility date – which is 1 July 2013 for the purposes of this review.

Is a “letter of reprimand” from a supervisor considered a disciplinary measure?

No. This is an administrative measure and such measures, as listed in staff rule 10.2 (b), are not equivalent to the disciplinary measures which render staff members ineligible.

As of the eligibility date, I had a disciplinary measure imposed on me, but I am appealing the decision through the UN Dispute Tribunal. Will I be eligible for consideration of a continuing appointment?

In accordance with section 2.1(f) of ST/SGB/2011/9, a staff member must not have been subject to any disciplinary measure during the five years preceding the eligibility date. Therefore, if a staff member had a disciplinary measure imposed in the five years preceding the eligibility date, the staff member would not be eligible for consideration at that review, even if an appeal is in progress as of the eligibility date. Should the disciplinary measure be rescinded after the eligibility date, the staff member may be considered in the next review, provided all other criteria are met.