

### Sample – POLNET Drafting Skills Test

**Should the programme manager choose this option, OHRM will administer and grade a similar test on their behalf. The test will be graded by POLNET Subject Matter Experts working as consultants for OHRM to ensure that the evaluation meets the necessary network specific requirements.**

#### Typical Pass Candidate Profile

The Drafting test assesses a candidate's ability to write in a professional context. A typical pass candidate is likely to be able to:

- summarise information provided;
- highlight salient facts and opinions;
- make appropriate deductions and draw inferences;
- express opinions;
- draw suitable conclusions;
- use an appropriate structure and format for a specific purpose;
- use an appropriate style for a specific audience;
- convey meaning without intrusive errors impeding communication.

#### Test Specification

<b>Time allowed</b>	50 minutes
<b>What do candidates have to read?</b>	An article or report
<b>How many words do candidates have to read?</b>	About 500
<b>How many words do candidates have to write?</b>	About 300
<b>Task type</b>	Briefing

#### Drafting Task Rationale and Advice

The purpose of the drafting task is to determine how effectively a candidate can draft a typical workplace communication, i.e. a briefing for a manager. To write the briefing, candidates **summarise** the main points made in an article or a report for someone who is unfamiliar with its contents. The candidate also has to state their opinion on the ideas raised.

The main objective is to assess a candidate's ability to write, not their imagination. Consequently, candidates are provided with all of the information that they will require to write the summary. They are given sufficient context and enough details to be able to come up with relevant opinions of their own.

The drafting task is not a test of professional knowledge. Candidates' opinions are assessed in terms of their relevance to the information provided. Therefore, candidates are not advised to show off their in-depth technical knowledge on matters unrelated to the information provided. Responses that deviate from the task at hand will be penalized.

The drafting test is not a test of familiarity with the UN. Candidates are asked to imagine they are writing for the general public, so they should avoid using jargon and terms and expressions that may not be understood by people who do not work for the UN.

Candidates are asked to write a web page for a non-specialist audience. The style of writing should be neutral and informative. It should be neither very formal nor very informal. It would not be appropriate, for example, to use a style of writing that you would expect to find either in an academic essay or in a chatty email to a friend.

The drafting test serves to assess a candidate's drafting skills. Therefore, candidates are advised not to simply provide a list of bullet points. Candidates are advised to use their own words where possible when writing the summary. This will allow them to show their understanding of how ideas in different parts of the text are interconnected. Consequently, it is not recommended that they make use of word processing or online software that shorten texts.

Candidates' responses are assessed using a detailed mark scheme using the following criteria for assessment.

Criteria For Assessment			
<b>Effect on the Target Reader</b> When deciding what score to give for Effect on the Target Reader, graders ask themselves the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well informed would the target reader be about the main points in the article or report?</li> <li>• How well do the opinions expressed relate to the input?</li> </ul>			
<b>Organisation and Coherence</b> When deciding what score to give for <i>Organisation and Coherence</i> , graders ask themselves the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well ordered is the candidate's response?</li> <li>• How logical is the flow of ideas?</li> </ul>			
<b>Clarity and Appropriateness</b> When deciding what score to give for <i>Clarity and Appropriateness</i> , graders ask themselves the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How clearly does the candidate communicate individual ideas?</li> <li>• How appropriate is the style of writing?</li> </ul>			
Candidates' responses are assessed in terms of the criteria for assessment only. <b>Candidates are NOT assessed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relative to each other;</li> <li>• based on their subject matter knowledge;</li> <li>• in terms of their linguistic competence.</li> </ul> The drafting test assesses a candidate's communication skills, not their formal knowledge of the language, such as the rules of grammar and spelling. All candidates, natives and non-natives, are encouraged to make use of the appropriate software tools to check the grammar and spelling of their response before submitting it. However, candidates are not penalised for grammatical errors or spelling mistakes unless these make it difficult to understand the message being communicated. Errors that could be identified and corrected by a language editor, for example, are ignored for grading purposes.			
Mark Scheme			
The graders use a mark scheme to decide on scores for each response. The mark scheme makes use of three criteria for assessment for this task: Effect on the Target Reader, Organisation and Coherence, and Clarity and Appropriateness. A separate score is given for each.			
Score	Effect on the Target Reader	Organisation and Coherence	Clarity and Appropriateness
5	The reader would be fully informed about the main points made in the article. The opinions expressed are directly related to the points in it.	The way that the writing is put together is logical and ordered. The flow of ideas is very easy to follow.	Individual ideas are communicated very clearly. The style of writing is fully appropriate for its purpose.
4	<b>Performance shares features of bands 3 &amp; 5</b>		
3	The reader would be reasonably well informed about the main points made in the article. The opinions expressed generally relate to the points in the article.	The way that the writing is put together is generally logical and ordered. The flow of ideas is generally easy to follow.	Individual ideas are generally communicated clearly. The style of writing is generally appropriate for its purpose.
2	<b>Performance shares features of bands 1 &amp; 3</b>		
1	The target reader would be minimally informed about the main points in the article. Some of the opinions expressed lack relevance.	The way that the writing is put together is occasionally not very logical or ordered. The flow of ideas is sometimes difficult to follow.	Individual ideas are sometimes communicated poorly. The style of writing is somewhat inappropriate for its purpose.
0	The target reader would be misinformed about the article. The opinions expressed lack relevance.	The writing is illogical or disorganised. The flow of ideas is difficult to follow.	Individual ideas are communicated poorly. The style of writing is inappropriate for its purpose.

### Sample Question

You work as a Political Affairs Officer working for the United Nations. One of your duties is to write a web page for the general public to talk about articles in the international media concerning the work of the United Nations. The aim of the web page is to provide a mix of information and personal comment.

Read this recent article about the United Nation's mission in Nolandia Then, in about 300 words, summarise the main points made in the article and state your own opinion on them.

(Assume that your target reader is interested in the work of the UN but is not an expert).

#### **Never-Ending Story**

*From The World's Concerns Magazine*

Nolandia provides a typical example of the UN's failures, and of the way the organisation is constrained by politics. The UN's blue-helmeted troops are supposed to be working with the Nolandese army to stop the bloodshed, but they are not doing so. The UN mission in Nolandia is one of the longest and most expensive peacekeeping operations in the organisation's history. Almost 12,000 soldiers and 400 civilians have a mandate to protect the population, neutralise armed groups and stabilise the state. The aim is to help Nolandia recover from a war that killed anywhere from 250,000 to 1 million people. There is no end in sight and the costs are escalating.

When the armed group, the General Front for Democracy (GFD), seized Lulo, a city of one million that is home to most of the UN's operations in Nolandia, without firing a shot, Nolandese soldiers fled to nearby towns, where they raped and pillaged. UN soldiers stood by, and when, days afterwards, GFD agreed to leave, the UN's headquarters were stoned and many of its vehicles torched.

Nolandia president, Moses Kingston, who took power in 2010 after his uncle was murdered, called for regional support to defeat the group. In 2013, the Nolandese Army, together with UN-led regional forces, quickly defeated the rebels. It was a fine moment for the UN, but it has not led to further progress. UN generals had hoped that it would be possible to take on another rebel group, the Liberation Front of Nolandia, or LFN. However, before the operation began, President Kingston announced that Nolandia forces would be led by two generals who are suspected of human-rights abuses. The UN objected; Nolandia refused to shift; and the operation was cancelled. The fact is that Mr Kingston did not particularly want to fight the LFN and was neither surprised nor disappointed by the cancellation. Since then, Nolandia's government and the UN forces have all but stopped co-operating.

Clearly the mission against GFD succeeded only because the government wanted to defeat them—and regional allies were willing to send troops. For most other armed groups, neither of these holds true. And since Mr Kingston won elections in 2014, the UN's default position has simply been to support the government.

Nolandia is one of the world's poorest countries, but conditions for its soldiers are still shocking. They live in poor conditions and rations—and pay—arrive infrequently. This mistreatment is not incompetence but strategy. Mr Kingston keeps the army weak and divided so that it does not seek to depose him. Money goes instead to the presidential guard and the police, who are more loyal. However, if Mr Kingston is unwilling to strengthen and reform the army, rebel groups will never be defeated.

At the margin, the UN's presence in Nolandia is probably helpful. It brings not just troops, but monitoring staff, who can raise the alarm about political murders and repression. Without it, there would be fewer aid agencies. And there might well be more fighting.

Until Nolandia gets a government able and willing to protect its people, rather than prey on them, the UN will be needed. Yet its presence seems sure to prop up a government that is one of the main causes of its people's misery. And so the mission goes on, endlessly and at great expense.

Start your web page with the words:

The World's Concerns Magazine has published an article, "Never-Ending Story," about the UN in Nolandia.

### A Candidate's Sample Answer

The World's Concerns Magazine has published an article, "Never-Ending Story," about the UN in Nolandia. The article lays a number of failures in Nolandia at the door of the organisation. First, it blames the UN of indifference, saying that UN troops did nothing when Nolandese troops went on the rampage, raping and pillaging in Lulo. Secondly, it says that the UN is unable to achieve its political objectives because although it helped vanquish the General Front for Democracy (GFD), the UN has not been able to deal with other rebel groups. The writer suggests that the reason for this failure was that Nolandia's president, Moses Kingston, does not share the UN's political objectives. The writer even intimates that Kingston might have nominated two generals suspected of human-rights abuses as heads of the armed forces knowing that the UN would object to his choices.

Political problems such as this are obviously difficult to deal with. The article makes the point that without a strong and reformed Nolandese Army, rebel groups will not be overcome. However, since President Kingston does not trust the Nolandese Army and is deliberately keeping it weak and divided, there may not be very much the UN can do. Presumably, paying the Army itself would not be an option for the UN.

In terms of identifying a suitable way forward, on the one hand, the article says that the UN should stop supporting the current regime. On the other hand, it recognizes that if the UN were to leave, the human rights and humanitarian situation would almost certainly worsen. It seems to suggest that there is no way around this problem and I agree. The best way for the UN to achieve its objectives may be to build mutual trust and confidence with the current regime and to forge stronger links with neighbouring states facing the same types of problems. It is clearly important for the UN to remain a strong presence not only for the Nolandese people, but also for the region as a whole.

(323 words).

### Graders' Scores and Comments for the Sample Answer

#### Effect on the Target Reader

- How well informed would the target reader be about the main points in the magazine article?
- How well do the opinions expressed relate to the article?

Score: 4 out of 5

Graders' Comments: The sample answer identifies the two main points in the magazine article. It does not, however, mention the view that the mission has gone on too long or the view that it has cost too much money. The opinions expressed are directly related to the main points identified.

#### Organisation and Coherence

- How well ordered is the candidate's response?
- How logical is the flow of ideas?

Score: 4 out of 5

Graders' Comments: Both parts of the sample answer flow quite easily. However, it could be improved if the text were divided into suitable paragraphs.

#### Clarity and Appropriateness

- How clearly does the candidate communicate individual ideas?
- How appropriate is the style of writing?

Score: 5 out of 5

Graders' Comments: The ideas are expressed very clearly and the text is very easy to read. The style of writing is appropriate for the audience.

**Total Score: 13 out of 15 (Good pass)**