

## **Frequent Asked Questions (FAQ) on the GRADING of selected candidates for international contracted positions in a Civilian CSDP Mission**

If you are selected for an international contracted position, in line with the Call for contributions (CfC)/vacancy notice, you have to prove that your education and professional experience meet the requirements of the vacancy publication.

The salary will depend on the grading, which is established based on the so-called Grading Guidelines<sup>1</sup>. An [excerpt of the Grading Guidelines](#) can be downloaded from EEAS website.

These FAQ complement the Grading Guidelines and facilitate the better understanding of the applicable rules. In case of contradictions, the Grading Guidelines will prevail.

### **1) How is the grade of a selected candidate for an international contracted position in a CSDP Mission determined?**

The grade of a selected candidate for an international contracted position in a CSDP Mission is determined by: (1) the level of the position, as advertised in the job description; (2) the number of years of relevant and proven professional experience.

### **2) How is the grade attributed to a selected candidate belonging to a specific category/level?**

There are four position categories/levels:

- (1) Expert level;
- (2) Mission Support management level (MSML),
- (3) Mission Support Assistant level (MSAL) and
- (4) Secretary level.

These categories are attributed to positions and not to the person selected for the job.

Where a candidate does not fulfil all the requirements defined in a job description, he/she cannot be selected for the advertised position.

Where a candidate exceeds the requirements of a given job description, his/her grading is nevertheless confined to the framework of the category attributed to the position he/she has been selected for.

The grade of the envisaged international contracted staff member is determined by:

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines on the main principles of classification of posts and grading of international contracted staff.

- The level of the position, as advertised in the vacancy notice;
- The number of years of relevant and proved, professional experience, corresponding to job vacancy.

Selected candidates are requested to provide the CSDP Mission with the proof of their relevant professional experience and education within a deadline set by the CSDP Mission. Only duly documented experience can be taken into account for the purposes of grading.

Should the selected candidate fails to provide the proof of a given education or professional experience, said experience cannot be taken into account.

**3) Can the selected candidates, who have already served in a CSDP Mission, choose not to be re-graded ?**

Selected candidates who have served previously in a CSDP Mission can choose not to be re-graded when applying for a position in another Mission, if the following two conditions are met: a) an interruption counting from the end of employment with a prior CSDP Mission until the taking-up of duties with another CSDP Mission is no longer than 5 years; and b) the candidate is recruited to a position within the same category and with equivalent tasks.

**4) Who will do the grading?**

The grading is done by the Mission that has selected the candidate for the advertised position. In certain cases, the CSDP Mission's grading may need to be reviewed by the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments of the European Commission.

**5) When is the grading done?**

Once selected, the candidate will be invited to provide the Mission with the supporting documents for the grading. Subsequently, the Mission will proceed to carry out the grading.

Please note that the Mission will not offer an employment contract before it has entirely finalised the grading process.

**6) How long does the grading take?**

A grading process may take up to 3 weeks, if the candidate provides all relevant supporting documents in time. The grading may last up to 10 weeks, or even longer, if the application has more than 10 supporting documents and/or some supporting documents are missing.

**7) Can the Mission take into account relevant professional experience or relevant education qualifications without a formally documented certification?**

Professional experience must be attested by documentation such as official letters signed by the relevant former employer proving the referred employment experience, including the scope and the nature of duties), letters of recommendation, payslips, contracts or any other certified documents that contains at least the referred job title, the exact period of employment and the indication as to whether the post was full- or part-time.

If the referred professional experience is part-time, the indication of the precise working time must be clearly mentioned in the supporting documentation.

The Missions verifies the coherence between the information provided in the job application, the CV and the information appearing in the supporting documents. In case of discrepancies between the information contained in the job application form and in the CV and the information contained in the certified documentation, such as differences in job titles or inaccurate periods of employment, the data contained in the certified documentation prevails.

If the candidate fails to provide the Mission with certified copies of supporting documents the candidate cannot be recruited.

For example, if 5 years of relevant professional experience is required and one has 6 years of working experience but only 4 years and 10 months are certified, the candidate cannot be recruited.

**8) What happens if the candidate does not submit the corresponding certificate/s of professional experience mentioned in his CV?**

Candidates are strongly advised to contact their formal employer(s) during the application procedure asking them to provide them with the necessary certificates. Non-certified employments cannot be taken into account during the grading process.

**9) How is the relevance of experience assessed?**

Despite the complexity involved in assessing the relevance of a particular previous professional experience for the job advertised by the CSDP Mission, a good indication for considering experience as relevant is that it is either fully in line with the requirements of the advertised position or it represents a clear asset in performing the tasks of the CSDP Mission's position in question, in line with its specific job requirements.

Experience that can only partially be considered to be an asset for performing the tasks of the CSDP Mission's position in question shall be counted at 50% rate.

**10) If a previous educational or professional experience is not relevant, will it be taken into account?**

Only relevant, certified educational and professional experience can be taken into account when a Mission assesses the applications received for the vacancy notice.

A previous educational or professional experience can only be considered as relevant if it fulfils the minimum requirements of the job vacancy.

For example, if 5 years of relevant professional experience is required and you have 6 years of professional experience, but only 4 years and 10 months are relevant, you will not be recruited.

**11) Are the relevance and the certification of a professional experience equally important?**

During the grading stage, the Mission will assess the candidate's educational qualifications as well as the relevance and length of his/her prior experience. Nevertheless, before the Mission can establish the grading, it has to verify if the selected candidate complies with the selection criteria set in the vacancy notice. Hence, if, at the grading stage, the candidate fails to demonstrate his/her eligibility, the Mission will not offer a contract of employment. Overlapping periods of experience may be counted once only.

The Mission is obliged to compile a grading file for each selected candidate that includes all his/her educational and professional experiences and the corresponding grade.

**12) Should I translate the certifications?**

Selected applicants are requested to provide a certified translation of their supporting documents into the working language(s) of the Mission.

**13) How the length of a former professional experience is calculated?**

Experience can be taken into account only if it is acquired after the date on which the educational requirements have been met. Any requirements of professional experience should therefore bear a mention 'after having fulfilled the education requirements, or equivalent.

**14) What is the “cut-off” date for professional experience indicated as “on-going” in the application form?**

The 'cut-off date' for professional experience indicated as on-going in the application form is the closing date for the submission of applications for a given job vacancy. Experience acquired after the deadline will not be taken into account even in cases where a delayed

selection or request for grading could work in favour of the candidate. Overlapping periods of experience will be counted once only.

**15) Can Education be counted as experience?**

The relevant educational qualifications above the minimum requirements for the advertised job will be counted as equal to the relevant professional experience as long as the following conditions are met:

- (a) additional qualification is obtained after having completed the minimum educational requirements for the given position;
- (b) additional qualifications are assessed to be an asset for the advertised position;
- (c) the normal duration of the educational programme is at least one academic year; and
- d) the study period does not overlap with any other period of relevant work experience.

**16) Can the police and/or military education or training be taken into account when carrying out the grading?**

In cases where a formal education (Police or Military Academy) is a usual way of access to or progression in the military/police career, an awarded diploma would satisfy the education requirements, provided that those studies are officially recognised as equivalent.

Alternatively, the police/military rank awarded as a result of graduation from a police or military academy, career progression and/or on-the-job training may be taken into account.

This alternative has to be clearly indicated in the job description published in a CfC/vacancy notice in order to be applicable.

**17) How is a “part-time” job counted in terms of relevant professional experience?**

When the attested professional experience considered relevant is part-time, it will be counted in proportion to full-time experience at a rate of 50% (substantial experience time-wise) or 0% (sporadic and irregular experience).

Where the candidate provides a certificate demonstrating the exact proportion of time worked on a given job/activity, the given episode of professional activity will be calculated pro rata, based on the certified percentage of full-time hours worked.

**18) How are steps for managers awarded?**

An additional step may be granted in specific cases where a staff member selected to or occupying a post of MSML category is heading a unit/team with less than two international staff at MSML. An additional step may also be granted in specific cases where a staff member occupying MSAL category post is heading a unit/team.

**19) Are additional responsibilities taken into account to increase the step and/or the grade?**

Taking into account specific organisational or management responsibilities in addition to those associated with the post to which a person is recruited, the Mission may award one or two additional steps within a grade or recruit the staff in a grade immediately above the grade to which he/she was entitled based on prior professional experience. Additional grades/steps can be awarded in cases where substantive additional tasks of organisational/management nature are attributed to the staff member concerned, without the need to change the category of the post.

**20) Is the seniority in a grade considered to advance to the next step?**

Any person employed as international contracted staff member will automatically advance to the next step in a grade, provided that he/she has completed one step in that grade for a period of one year ['seniority step']. A 'seniority step' is awarded after a calendar year of service [excluding any unpaid leave] in a particular post on a date of anniversary of recruitment.

**21) Can a staff member submit additional supporting documents after having been graded?**

**If a staff member wishes to provide additional documentation that could potentially change the grading, this is only possible within the time limit set by the CSDP Mission (no longer than three months following the signature of the employment contract). In such cases, the review will be implemented retroactively. After the deadline has elapsed, neither new related claims nor further documents for review of the grading can be accepted.**

**Brussels, 22 January 2021.**