Terms of Reference

Internship

UNHCR Liaison Office in New York, USA

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is offering a full-time internship with the **Liaison Office** at **UNHCR** ***New York, USA.***

Established in December 1950, UNHCR is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for asylum seekers, refugees, returnees, internally displaced communities and stateless people. Every year, millions of men, women and children are forced to flee their homes to escape conflict and persecution. UNHCR currently operates in over 130 countries, using its long expertise to protect and care for millions.

**Title**: Liaison Office Intern

**Duty Station**: New York, USA

**Duration**: 6 months (with possible extension up to 8 months)

**Contract** **Type**: **Internship**

**Closing** **date for application**:

**Start Date**: 01 February 2026

Organizational context

NYO represents UNHCR in New York-based UN processes and functions as a liaison working closely with UNHCR's Headquarters, regional bureaus, and country operations, along with UN Headquarters (UNHQ), including the UN Departments of the Secretariat, UN agencies, funds, and programs, the [General Assembly](https://www.un.org/en/ga/) and its [Main Committees](https://www.un.org/en/ga/maincommittees/index.shtml), the [Security Council](https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/), and the [Economic and Social Council](https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/). NYO also works with Permanent Missions of UN Member States (MS), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international and other civil society organizations.

NYO engages in advocacy and partnership to ensure that UNHCR’s mandate and positions are promoted with key (UN, MS, and other) stakeholders in New York. Matters of central concern to UNHCR are high on the agenda of the United Nations and are also of prominent concern to MS, civil society, and the media. UNHCR is appreciated as the agency with operational and policy expertise on refugee, displacement, and statelessness matters.

With increasing numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, the Security Council is often engaged with matters of central importance to UNHCR and the High Commissioner regularly addresses the Security Council. These matters often engage the Department of Peace Operations as well as the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, whose leadership role in integrated and mission settings coincides with some of the largest UNHCR operations globally.

Additionally, NYO is frequently called upon to brief and partner with civil society, including academic institutions, regarding refugees and stateless persons. Moreover, NYO is increasingly the port of call for global media based in New York on issues pertaining to UNHCR's global programs and persons of concern.

The position

The intern is expected to support colleagues who interface frequently with UN, MS, NGOs, and other counterparts on matters of central protection and human rights concern. The intern is expected to provide regular and timely analysis of developments within the UN and their possible impact on UNHCR and its operations worldwide, as well as feed into those processes.

Through the daily work, the intern will learn elements of UNHCR and UNHQ structure and processes. The learning elements result from the tasks the intern carries out during the assignment, such as knowledge of UNHCR policies, the UN system, and its policies, particularly in relation to humanitarian, political, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, development, human rights, and rule of law issues, and from engagement with experienced staff members on the team.

The intern will strengthen drafting and analytical skills, through reporting on meetings, events, and other engagements and developments; as well as presentation and negotiation skills, as the intern will assist in advocating for the inclusion of UNHCR positions into UN policies.

The intern will also develop research skills through more focused and in-depth study into specific thematic and geographic issues.

The intern’s assignment provides an opportunity to develop political awareness and engage in professional networking at an international level. The intern also can keep up with political and other country-related developments of direct relevance to her/his studies and potential future employment.

The intern will have weekly meetings with his/her supervisor to reflect on experiences, questions, workload, and learning opportunities.

Duties and responsibilities

* Attend and report on assigned meetings in an expeditious and timely manner;
* Support UNHCR’s engagement with humanitarian, development, and other UN bodies and processes;
* Monitor, analyze, and report on key developments with relevant stakeholders and processes related to issues that may affect UNHCR's operations and activities, an update NYO and UNHCR HQ;
* Stay abreast of UNHCR’s global operations and policies and support engagement with relevant UNHCR HQ divisions and bureaus to ensure a smooth flow of information;
* Promote UNHCR’s objectives through participation in briefings and inter-agency meetings, with a view to report on policy development, priorities, and work programs of New York-based bodies and processes related to humanitarian response, human rights, development, peace, and security;
* Flag opportunities to enhance understanding of UNHCR’s mandate and operations amongst NY-based stakeholders;
* Make suggestions and provide inputs to ensure that UNHCR's interests and concerns are taken into account in the UN and inter-agency position papers and policy statements impacting UNHCR's operations and protection activities;
* Enable consistent and comprehensive UNHCR messaging and interventions through close collaboration across NYO Units, as well as UNHCR HQ and field;
* Follow and report on relevant negotiations of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions of import to UNHCR;
* Follow and report on high-level events, real-time Security Council briefings and inter-agency meetings and working groups;
* Conduct research and consultations on the topics of relevance and interest;
* Support participation of UNHCR in relevant international and bilateral fora in New York.
* Assist in planning, coordinating, and carrying out public events organized by NYO.

Minimum qualifications required

In order to be considered for an internship, candidates must meet the following eligibility criteria:

* Be either a recent graduate (having completed their studies within two years of applying) or a current student in a graduate/undergraduate school programme from a university or higher education facility accredited by [IAU/UNESCO](https://whed.net/home.php); and
* Have completed at **least two years of undergraduate studies** in a field relevant or of interest to the work of UNHCR.

**NOTE:** An individual whose father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister is a staff member of UNHCR, including a Temporary Appointment holder or a member of the Affiliate Workforce, is not eligible for an internship.

Desirable qualifications and skills

* Degree in international relations, political sciences, law, or related field;
* Demonstrated commitment or strong interest in international relations, refugee issues, and humanitarian response;
* Fluency in English with excellent written and oral communication skills;
* Proficiency in PowerPoint, Microsoft Word, Excel, and Teams.

Conditions

It is a full- time role with working hours starting from 9.00am to 6:00pm Monday to Friday (40 hours per week). The successful candidate will be assigned to support NYO office team in New York, USA.

Internships normally last two to six months with the possibility of extension up to eight months for full-time internships and twelve months for part-time internships.

How to apply

The selected candidate will receive a link to the UNHCR recruitment portal to create a profile.

Obligations

Acquiring and renewing current visas, residence permits including all associated costs, obtaining medical certification and compliance with taxation requirements (if applicable), are the responsibility of the intern.

A G-4 visa is required for interns who are not US citizens or lawful permanent residents and applying rom abroad. UNHCR can provide support with the required documents for a G-4 visa, however, UNHCR accepts no responsibility for any costs connected to the visa.

International students in the US will be required to provide a work authorization on F1-CPT/OPT. As per the requirements of the host country, UN interns on F1-CPT/OPT in New York can work maximum 32 hours/week.

The selected candidate will need to provide UNHCR with a proof of funding from the sponsoring institution (if applicable), health insurance coverage applicable to the assigned internship location and a certificate of good health from a qualified medical practitioner certifying their fitness for work, as well as travel. In the event the candidate is not able to produce the required certificate, they will not be admitted to the Internship Programme.

**Allowance and Travel:** The Sponsoring Institution shall provide non-reimbursable financial support in the form of a stipend/scholarship/allowance/etc. for the period of internship with UNHCR. Travel expenses to and from the internship location shall be the responsibility of the respective sponsoring institution. UNHCR is not responsible for any renumeration for the intern during the internship period.

If you are a person with a disability and you expect you may face challenges during the recruitment process, you can indicate it in your application form.

There are options to select any health conditions you may have and outline any necessary adjustments related to disabilities during the recruitment phases. Providing this information is optional. It will be treated as strictly confidential and used only for the purpose of finding out how to better assist you during the recruitment process.

Adjustments for candidates with disabilities will be provided as best as possible and as needed upon request.

All candidates will be assessed based on meeting the requirements for each vacancy in relation to experience, skills, and education.

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UNHCR does not charge a fee at any stage of its recruitment process (application, interview, meeting, travelling, processing, or training).

We welcome applications from candidates with a refugee or stateless background.

The UNHCR workforce consists of many diverse nationalities, cultures, languages, and opinions. UNHCR seeks to sustain and strengthen this diversity to ensure equal opportunities as well as an inclusive working environment for its entire workforce. Applications are encouraged from all qualified candidates without distinction on grounds of race, colour, sex, national origin, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity.