

LDP (Leadership Development Programme) - Information for Applicants

So you want to apply for the Leadership Development Programme (LDP). What are the next steps?

First things first

The first thing you need to do is verify that you meet the minimum criteria in order to apply. Many applications are disqualified at the beginning of the review process because some applicants do not meet the minimum eligibility requirements.

Also, note that PERS must be completed with all signatures (including second reporting officer if necessary). PAS or ePAS must be finalized. Applications with incomplete PERS, PAS or ePAS are rejected. It is your office's responsibility to ensure that the performance review process is completed on time. Unfortunately, a number of good potential nominees are rejected simply because they did not submit complete PERS, PAS or ePAS. PERs are important because your rationale for participating in the programme must be corroborated by the information contained in your PERs and CV.

Be sure to have all this documentation in electronic format (preferably as PDF attachments) on hand before you apply to the programme. Also, be sure that you properly fill out or click on the appropriate boxes when answering some of the questions asked on the self-nomination form. Some applications are disqualified because the applicant answer "no" when asked if they are proficient in English while in reality they are and should have answered "Yes".

The criterion is set to ensure that the very best candidates are selected for this programme.

Discussing your desire to submit your nomination with your manager

The next thing you will need to do is discuss your desire to participate in the LDP with your own manager preferably before submitting your nomination. Please note that although you can "self-nominate", your manager's endorsement is required in order to be considered for the programme.

Your manager is under no obligation to endorse your nomination. Ideally, in a situation where your manager does not endorse you, your manager should explain the reasons why he/she does not support your nomination and either explore how to build up your competencies in order for you to qualify for the programme in the future or explore alternate developmental opportunities.

Remember, the LDP is NOT a remedial programme for staff that need to develop competencies or build up competencies that are lacking. In such cases a different approach might be required. The LDP targets managers that already display exceptional leadership characteristics.

Also, DHR/OLDS will be paying for your participation in the programme, your accommodations and some meals. Your office will be required to pay for your airfare, partial DSA (or full DSA depending on circumstances), and terminal expenses if you are successfully selected to participate in the LDP. Be sure to discuss such matters with your manager.

Other things to take into consideration

Before applying to the programme you also need to consider your current situation or life circumstances. The LDP is an intensive curriculum that will require extra time and effort in addition to your current functions and personal life. Make sure that you discuss this with your manager and make sure that you are not planning anything that could potentially interrupt your full participation. You will have to reimburse

UNICEF a minimum of \$18,000 plus any other costs incurred should you leave the programme prematurely for reasons which were foreseen and/or do not constitute an emergency.

When to apply?

Once the self-nomination form is open, we recommend you apply as soon as possible for the following reasons:

1. If you experience a technical problem while you are applying, it will give us enough time to assist you. Once the nomination process is closed it is difficult for us to accommodate staff members since we immediately begin the first round of our selection process. Every small delay sets us back considerably.
2. The sooner you apply the more time your manager will have to review your nomination for potential endorsement.

Please note that many technical issues are local in nature due to problems with your internet service providers or bandwidth, or web browser capability. For these problems you will have to approach your local IT desk.

* A Note on public holidays at your duty station - Although UNICEF and the UN as a whole, does all it can to respect local holidays, it is simply not possible to provide extensions for your office because the deadline was near or on your local public or national holiday. Most of our deadlines avoid major religious holidays but we cannot make exceptions based solely on a local holiday or a religious holiday that affects only your duty station or certain parts of your region. Otherwise we would be in a never ending cycle of "extensions" because there is always a holiday taking place somewhere. Please be mindful of this and plan ahead.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will I be considered for a P-5 or above if I complete the LDP?

No, it should NOT be automatically expected as an outcome. Unfortunately successful completion of the LDP has been erroneously associated with placement into higher positions.

What has happened in the past is that some staff accepted into what was known as the LDI programme (now LDP) displayed characteristics which had already placed them on the path for career advancement well before taking part in the LDI. Thus the potential for these staff members to move into another position was already high and their promotions were due to merit based on performance, competencies and overall qualifications and NOT because they participated in the LDI programme. The reality is that UNICEF has many talented managers. Some of these managers, despite not having gone through the LDI or LDP, will still get promoted based on overall merit.

I used to have supervisees who directly report to me in my previous UNICEF role or in my previous job outside of UNICEF. However, I do not have any supervisees in my current function. Can I still apply?

Yes. We have received feedback from past applicants in the LDP regarding such circumstances. In this connection, we have taken this into consideration and will now also consider applicants who do not have any supervisees in his/her current function, but have had managerial roles in professional settings in the

last 5 years of his/her career both within UNICEF or outside. The applicant's manager however, will need to indicate the specifics of these supervising roles on the manager endorsement form.

Some colleagues have asked why staff managing consultants or teams of non-UNICEF staff are not considered.

There are several reasons for this:

1. Consultants and non-UNICEF team members are usually not bound by UNICEF, or even UN staff rules, with the exceptions of stipulations outlined in their TOR or contracts. As such, the behaviour of managers is not the same as it would be with a UNICEF staff member.
2. As a line manager, you are responsible for providing feedback on your supervisees' PER, PAS or ePAS. You are also responsible for addressing developmental issues/learning plans with your supervisees, manage conflict, manage performance related problems, project planning concerns, manage UNICEF staff in sometimes challenging circumstances, communicating with UNICEF team members etc. Again the dynamics are different when compared to managing consultants or non-UNICEF teams. Some exercises during the LDP programme will address UNICEF specific issues related to performance and performance reporting for staff members.
3. Although some consultants have long term contracts and projects will vary in nature and in length, consultancies are typically temporary. As such, the management dynamics are once more very different.

Why must I manage two staff members or a team of UNICEF staff members?

The challenges of managing one staff member are quite different from managing two or more supervisees. In addition, although the LDP programme is not an indication that you will get promoted or that you will be entered in a talent pool, the programme still targets managers with high potential that may very well lead them to manage an office with more than just two staff members. As such, successful candidates need to already demonstrate the ability to manage at least two staff members and/or a team.

I have participated in the Management Development Programme (MDP) before, can I still apply for the LDP?

It depends on when was your participation in the MDP. We believe it takes at least a year for meaningful learning to be absorbed and the acquired soft skills translated into the workplace environment. In addition, the MDP is generally speaking designed for first time managers and the LDP is designed for mid-level managers. By virtue this means staff members need time to excel in their current managerial role and establish managerial patterns before they move on to more challenging and demanding positions. In this connection, if you have participated in the MDP during 2014, while you are NOT eligible to apply for the 2015 LDP, you are more than welcome to apply for consideration in the 2016 LDP once the programme is launched, provided that you meet the eligibility criteria. Please note however, that priority is given to staff member who have never participated in any UNICEF corporate learning programmes before.

I was not selected into the LDP and OLDS suggested that I apply for the Dynamic Leadership Certificate Programme (DLC). Can I apply again for this LDP cohort?

You may apply for this cohort of the LDP provided that you finish the DLC certificate before the LDP starts in May/June 2015.

Why is the Dynamic Leadership Certificate Programme (DLC) now a pre-requisite for the LDP?

The LDP provides a series of learning and training experiences that blend experiential and academic learning, with hands-on exercises focused on developing future leaders. Given the rigor of this type of programme, the LDP demands a significant commitment by participants. To fully benefit from the LDP, it is imperative that participants show initiative in self-development, and assume responsibility for this learning prior to committing themselves to the LDP. In this connection, we strongly believe that staff who complete courses in the DLC will come better prepared for the LDP. We base this conclusion on the discussions we have had with past LDP cohorts (40% have completed the DLC) and professors at INSEAD.

I have applied for the Leadership Development Programme (LDP) or LDI before, but was not selected. Can I still apply for this round of LDP?

When you received our notification, you should have also received an email from OLDS including the recommendations from the selection panel. Please check the recommendation made at the time to determine your eligibility for this round of LDP.

Why must I be in my current post for at least one year in order to be considered for the programme?

Based on past experience with the LDI programme, staff that were in a post for less than a year and participated in the LDI had a very difficult time adjusting to the programme and the quality of their final projects suffered immensely. Moreover, it takes at least one year for colleagues to fully adjust to their new roles and establish managerial patterns with their supervisees.

If I am in the process of moving duty station, can I still apply for the LDP?

You may apply for the LDP. However, you must remain in the same duty station during the entire duration of the programme. This is because as a mandatory and important part of the programme, we ask participants to carry out an Action Learning Project (ALP) and it is critical that the ALP is conducted in the same office in order to have meaningful impacts.

Why must I be proficient in English?

Although we are constantly exploring opportunities to provide programmes in other official UN languages, unfortunately we are faced with the reality of limited resources. Programmes such as the LDP are very costly and as such translating these programmes and finding an institution capable of delivering its curriculum in more than one language can substantially increase the overall cost of the programme at unsustainable levels. The programme will be delivered in English and the written assignments - including your final project presentation - will be in English. As such you should be comfortable enough to function in that language for the purposes of the LDP.

Also, as mentioned before the LDP targets high potential manager that could conceivably move and work in other regions including headquarter offices where the inter-agency and business language with other partners is often English.

Why do I need an advanced degree in order to be considered?

As mentioned above, the LDP targets high potential manager that could conceivably move and work in other regions including headquarter offices. You will not be considered for a senior position if you do not possess an advanced degree. If you would like to be considered for the LDP but do not have an advanced

degree, we recommend you explore the possibility of pursuing advanced university level programmes that will lead to a Masters or higher degree and reapply once the degree has been conferred. Masters that are in progress or near completion do not count. The Division of Human Resources will take disciplinary action if you state that you possess an advanced degree while not having one in hand. Degrees that are not conferred, even if the course work has been completed, do not count.

I am a JPO or a NETI, why can't I be considered for the programme?

As a JPO or NETI, you are already in a developmental programme usually reserved for young and emerging talent or sponsored by your national government. By virtue of this you have been provided with an opportunity within UNICEF to develop your professional and leadership skills. Also, JPOs and NETIs for the most part do not fall in the category of mid-level professional managers.

I have a Temporary Appointment (TA), why can't I be considered for the programme?

Each participant in the LDP programme represents a considerable time and financial investment for the organization. UNICEF would like to ensure a return on that investment through the practical application and transfer of learning so that the organization as a whole benefits from a candidate's training over an extended period of time. This would exclude TAs since by the very nature of such contracts, TAs are not expected to continue with the organization upon completion of their appointments.

If I drop out in the middle of the programme, can I be considered to continue in the next cohort?

No. Although we do what we can to accommodate staff, we ask that you ensure that you do not plan anything that could potentially interrupt your participation in the programme. If you are aware of a situation that could lead to an interruption of your participation, you will be liable to reimburse UNICEF the cost of your seat.

Can we get an extension after the application deadline has passed?

No. If we extend the deadline to one nominee or manager, then we must do it for everyone and this simply creates a situation that becomes unmanageable.

The nomination process entails:

1. Self-nomination and manager's endorsement.
2. First round in the selection process is made after the deadline has passed. Only staff who meet the minimum criteria move on to the second round.
3. Second round entails sending the pool of eligible applicants back to the regions. Utilizing a scoring system, the inter-regional teams then pick the top candidates who score highest on the scale.
4. Third round entails interviews of those top candidates. These interviews are inter-regional, meaning that another region will interview candidates for your region and vice-versa.

UNICEF has more than 10,000 staff members. We understand that some circumstances are exceptional. But the reality is that with such a large pool of staff, someone will miss the deadline for one reason or another. If you are aware that the nomination period will take place during a specific time frame, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are prepared or that your manager is aware before you go on leave. Deadlines are unfortunately a necessity.