



ARTICLE 10 - JIU60

Developing the Next Generation of Oversight Professionals: Investing in the Future of the United Nations System

This article is part of a series commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations system highlighting its mandate, evolution and contribution to the United Nations system over the last six decades.

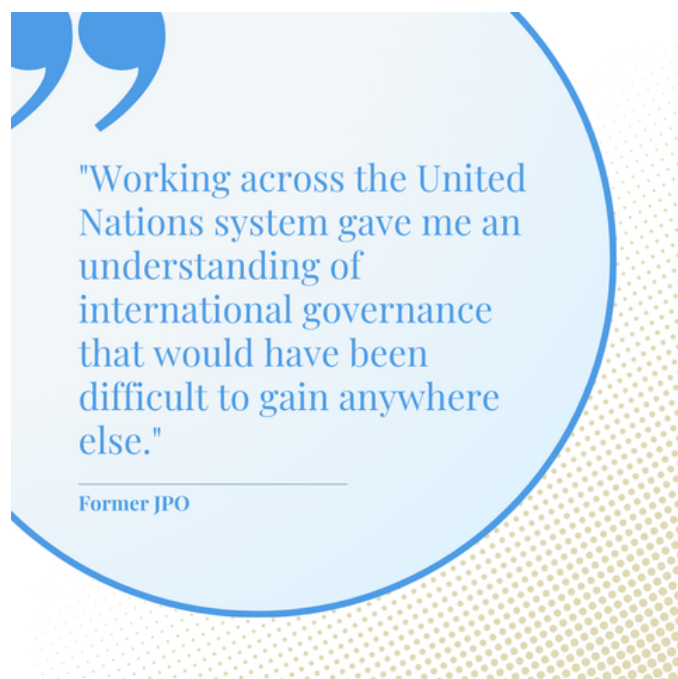
As the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) marks its 60th anniversary, it is not only reflecting on six decades of independent system-wide oversight, but also looking ahead to the future. A key part of that future lies in developing the next generation of oversight professionals who will help strengthen governance, accountability and organizational effectiveness across the United Nations system. Investing in young professionals has become an important way of ensuring that the expertise, values and independence underpinning the Unit's work continue to evolve across generations.

Through its Junior Professional Officer (JPO) and internship programmes, the JIU provides early-career professionals with a unique opportunity to contribute directly to system-wide oversight while building the skills needed to support the evolving needs of international organizations. As oversight functions increasingly operate in an environment shaped by artificial intelligence, digital transformation, cybersecurity, enterprise risk management, data analytics, environmental sustainability and system-wide reform initiatives such as UN80, attracting and developing the next generation of professionals is more important than ever.

To this end, the JIU draws on the energy and skills of early-career talent through two complementary channels: JPO, funded by donor Member States, and interns hosted under the United Nations internship programme. Both bring specialized knowledge, recent academic training and fresh perspectives to the Unit's oversight work, while offering participants a formative experience at the heart of the United Nations system. Few early-career assignments offer such a broad perspective of the United Nations system. Rather than working within a single organization, JPOs and interns contribute to reviews spanning multiple entities, enabling them to compare governance models, management practices and reform efforts across the UN system.

From the initial scoping phase to the drafting of final reports, they contribute to evidence gathering that informs recommendations considered by governing bodies and executive heads. They also engage directly with senior managers, oversight officials and subject-matter experts from across the United Nations system.

This direct involvement allows JPOs and interns to rapidly acquire a solid understanding of the governance frameworks, risk management practices, internal control systems and accountability mechanisms in place across United Nations organizations. At the same time, they strengthen their competencies in evaluation, audit and research methodologies, while further developing their analytical and drafting skills. The competencies developed during JPO assignments and internships are highly transferable. Participants strengthen their systems thinking, comparative research and analysis, policy evaluation, governance, stakeholder engagement, diplomacy and drafting for decision makers - skills that are increasingly sought across the United Nations system and the wider international public sector.



An Immersive Experience at the Core of the JIU's Mandate

Working under the supervision of the Executive Secretary or the Evaluation and Inspection Officers and in close collaboration with Inspectors, JPOs and interns are involved throughout the entire lifecycle of JIU reviews.

A Tangible Contribution to the Effectiveness of the United Nations System

Beyond its training dimension, the JPO and internship presence at the JIU generates clear added value for the work of the Unit. Through their recent academic training, familiarity with digital and analytical tools and fresh perspectives on institutional practices, JPOs and interns help raise the quality of analysis and support methodological innovation within review teams. Invariably, they also bring a range of individual strengths and specialized skills that can be of significant benefit to the JIU.

They also contribute to the JIU's communication and outreach efforts, including the preparation of executive summaries, web articles and other dissemination products, thereby supporting greater visibility of the Unit's work and improved uptake of its recommendations by participating organizations.

Junior Professional Officers at the JIU

Within the Joint Inspection Unit, JPOs play a particularly strategic role. Appointed for a period of one to two years and based at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, they are fully integrated into review teams and contribute directly to system-wide oversight activities.

Since 2014, the JIU has regularly benefited from the support of Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) funded by several Member States, including Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the United States. These assignments, reflect the sustained commitment of donor countries to strengthening system-wide oversight within the United Nations.

Through this long-standing partnership, successive JPOs have contributed to a broad range of reviews and analytical activities, bringing specialized expertise and diverse professional experiences to the Unit's work. Their continued presence has fostered the exchange of knowledge across cohorts and enriched the Unit's multidisciplinary approach, reinforcing its capacity to address complex governance and management issues across participating organizations.

Internships: A First Step into Multilateral Oversight

Alongside its Junior Professional Officers, the JIU regularly welcomes interns drawn from the United Nations internship programme. Open to students in the advanced stages of their post-secondary studies and to recent graduates, internships at the JIU are also based at the Palais des Nations in Geneva and typically last between two and six months.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, provisions have increasingly been made to allow for hybrid arrangements whereby interns can also work remotely from their country of residence at least for part of the internship, thereby significantly reducing the associated cost burden.

They contribute to ongoing reviews through background research, literature and document analysis, the compilation and verification of data, support to the preparation of interview guides and surveys, and other analytical tasks that support the Unit's evidence-based reviews and recommendations.

Beyond these day-to-day responsibilities, the internship provides an immersive introduction to independent oversight and the functioning of the United Nations system. Interns gain first-hand experience of comparative research across organizations, policy analysis, evidence synthesis, stakeholder engagement, report drafting and strategic communication of oversight findings to diverse audiences - core competencies that underpin evaluation and, inspection and governance work across the international public sector. They also develop a unique understanding of how evidence is translated into recommendations that support organizational learning, accountability and institutional improvement.



"Contributing to a system-wide review has offered me valuable insight into how evidence-based research, evaluation and oversight support governance and accountability across the UN system."

Former Intern

An Investment in the Future

Good governance depends on evidence, informed decision-making and strong accountability mechanisms. Independent oversight plays a vital role in helping organizations learn, improve and adapt by providing objective analysis, identifying opportunities for improvement and promoting transparency and accountability.

As the United Nations system faces increasingly complex global challenges and reform efforts, there is a growing need for professionals with expertise in evaluation, inspection, audit, governance, risk management and organizational performance who can help strengthen institutions and support effective multilateral cooperation.

Over the past two decades, the Unit has welcomed more than 300 interns, many of whom have subsequently gone on to enjoy successful careers in, among others, non-profit institutions, the private sector and inter-governmental organizations, including United Nations system entities at the global and regional level, with some having successfully passed the highly-competitive United Nations Young Professionals Programme (YPP) examinations. Against this backdrop, the Joint Inspection Unit contributes not only through its system-wide oversight work, but also by helping to develop the next generation of UN professionals.

Interested in joining the JIU?

The Joint Inspection Unit is currently recruiting interns to support JIU reviews. If you are looking for an opportunity to develop your analytical and professional skills while gaining first-hand experience of the United Nations system, we encourage you to apply.

[🔗 Internship Job Opening](#) (applications can be submitted at any time until 21 January 2027)

[🔗 More information on the JIU Internship Programme](#)



JIU Interns - June 2026