

Spouse Employment



GUIDELINES

UNICEF

Division of Human Resources (DHR)

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I. Employment of Spouses within UNICEF

Introduction

1. UNICEF offices will, to the extent possible, assist spouses of international staff members seeking employment in UNICEF or other UN agencies.
2. Two situations deserve particular priority:
 - a) the spouse of a staff member serving in an emergency duty station covered by the Special Operations Approach, elects to remain in another duty station in order to be nearby his/her spouse, and seeks employment in a UNICEF or UN office at that location; *and*
 - b) the spouse is already serving as a staff member and either resigns or takes special leave in order to accompany his/her spouse, and now seeks to continue his/her employment in UNICEF or another UN agency.

Employment of Spouses of International Staff as International Staff

3. **Vacant Posts.** A spouse of an international staff member may be recruited to fill a vacant post provided that:
 - a) his/her qualifications meet the requirements of the vacant post;
 - b) his/her qualifications are substantially equal to those of competing external candidates;
 - c) **the fullest regard has been given to the qualifications and experience of staff already in service;**
 - d) he/she will not be assigned to serve in a position:
 - which is superior or subordinate in line of authority to his/her spouse; *and/or*
 - where it could be perceived that there is a conflict of interest because of the nature of the work; *and*
 - e) he/she is not the spouse of the Head of Office (see paragraphs 32 and 33 below on When the Spouse of a Head of Office Seeks Employment).
4. Normal selection procedures should be followed.

5. No UNICEF staff member, in any capacity, may recommend or approve the employment of his/her spouse.
6. When the qualifications of a spouse match the requirements for a vacant post and the office recommends an external candidate, the recommendation must indicate how the qualifications and experience of the recommended external candidate, when compared to the core requirements of the post, are clearly superior to those of the spouse who was not recommended. When an internal candidate has been recommended, no special justification by the office is required.
7. Appointments of international professional staff are normally reviewed by a Selection Advisory Panel (SAP) and an Appointment and Promotion Committee (APC). No special approval of spouse candidates by Director, DHR, is therefore required.
8. **Temporary Assignments.** A spouse of an international staff member may be recruited on a temporary basis; for example, pending the filling of a vacant national or international post, or against temporary assistance for a specific short-term need provided that:
 - a) his/her qualifications meet the requirements of the temporary assignment;
 - b) his/her qualifications are substantially equal to those of competing external candidates;
 - c) he/she has not been given preference by virtue of his/her relationship with his/her spouse;
 - d) he/she will not be assigned to serve in a position:
 - which is superior or subordinate in line of authority to his/her spouse; *and/or*
 - where it could be perceived that there is a conflict of interest because of the nature of the work; *and*
 - e) he/she is not the spouse of the Head of Office (see paragraphs 32 and 33 on When the Spouse of a Head of Office Seeks Employment).
9. Normal selection procedures should be followed.
10. No UNICEF staff member, in any capacity, may recommend or approve the employment of his/her spouse.
11. When the qualifications of a spouse match the requirements for a temporary assignment and the office recommends another external candidate, the recommendation must indicate how the qualifications and experience of the recommended candidate, when compared to the core requirements of the temporary assignment, are clearly superior to those of the

spouse who was not recommended.

12. The approval of the Director, DHR, must be obtained before appointing a spouse to an international or national temporary assignment.

Employment of Spouses of International Staff as General Service Staff

13. **Vacant Posts.** The provisions of paragraphs 3 to 6 also apply for the employment of a spouse of an international staff member as a UNICEF general service (GS) staff member.
14. The approval of the Director, DHR, must be obtained before any contract is undertaken.
15. **Temporary Assignments.** The provisions of paragraphs 8 to 12 also apply for the employment of a spouse of an international staff member as a UNICEF temporary GS staff member.

Employment of Spouses of International Staff as National Professional Officers in the Field

16. **Vacant Posts.** The provisions of paragraphs 3 to 6 may only apply for the employment of a spouse of an international staff member as a UNICEF National Professional Officer (NPO) if the spouse:
 - a) is a national of the country; *and*
 - b) has spent a considerable number of years of his/her career in that country and is fully familiar with its economic and social conditions.¹
17. The approval of the Director, DHR, must be obtained before any contract is undertaken. In addition, as with other appointments of national officers, approval of the Regional Director must be obtained.
18. **Temporary Assignments.** The provisions of paragraphs 8 to 12 may only apply for the employment of a spouse of an international staff member as a UNICEF temporary NPO:
 - a) if the spouse is a national of the country; *and*
 - b) if he/she has spent a considerable number of years of his/her career in that country and is fully familiar with its economic and social conditions.²

¹ See Chapter 4, Section 4, paragraph 4.4.2 of the HR Manual.

² See Chapter 4, Section 4, paragraph 4.4.2 of the HR Manual.

Employment of Spouses of International Staff as Individual Contractors/Consultants

19. A spouse of an international staff member may be recruited as an individual contractor/consultant provided that:
- a) his/her qualifications meet the requirements of the individual contract/consultancy;
 - b) his/her qualifications are substantially equal to those of competing external candidates;
 - c) he/she has not been given preference by virtue of his/her relationship with his/her spouse;
 - d) he/she will not be considered for an individual contract/consultancy:
 - which is subordinate in line of authority to his/her spouse; *and/or*
 - where it could be perceived that there is a conflict of interest because of the nature of the work; *and*
 - e) he/she is not the spouse of the Head of Office (see paragraphs 32 and 33 below on When the Spouse of a Head of Office Seeks Employment).
20. Normal selection procedures should be followed.
21. No UNICEF staff member, in any capacity, may recommend or approve the employment of his/her spouse.
22. When the qualifications of a spouse match the requirements for an individual contract/consultancy and the office recommends another external candidate, the recommendation must indicate how the qualifications and experience of the recommended candidate, when compared to the core requirements of the contract/consultancy, are clearly superior to those of the spouse who was not recommended.
23. The approval of the Director, DHR, must be obtained before any contract is undertaken.

Employment of Spouses of Local General Service (GS) Staff Members and National Professional Officers (NPOs)

24. These guidelines deal primarily with the employment of spouses of international staff members. The same basic guidelines and principles will apply, where appropriate, to the employment of spouses of general service and national professional staff members.

Rotation when Both Staff Members are UNICEF International Staff Members

25. When both staff members are UNICEF international staff members, the couple will be asked by DHR to confirm, in writing, one year prior to the due rotation date of the spouse first due to rotate, whether:
- a) each spouse wishes to be rotated independently, without expectation that both will be assigned to the same duty station; *or*
 - b) both spouses wish to be rotated together.
26. If both spouses wish to be rotated together, they will be asked to designate the Lead Partner; *i.e.* the partner to whom they have decided first priority should be given in the placement process.
27. The Lead Partner's applications will be considered in the first instance when rotation is due. Then, to the extent possible, the other spouse will be considered for all other suitable posts at the same duty station. If two posts are identified, the couple will be reassigned to the same duty station, provided that they will not be serving in positions which are superior or subordinate in the line of authority to the other.
28. If a posting at the same duty station is not possible:
- a) the spouse who is not the Lead Partner can be considered for other posts at other duty stations for which he/she has applied, and for which he/she qualifies; *or*
 - b) if the spouse does not wish to be considered for a posting at a different duty station from the Lead Partner then, provided at least one year of his/her tour of duty has been completed, he/she may request Special Leave Without Pay (SLWOP) for up to a maximum period of four years. SLWOP will be granted one year at a time.
29. Staff members on SLWOP may not take up paid employment with any other organization (UN or non-UN) without first obtaining the approval from the Director, DHR.³ Approval for employment with:
- a) **a UN system organization**, will normally result in cancellation of the SLWOP followed by the inter-agency transfer, secondment or loan of the staff member to the receiving organization; *or*
 - b) **a non-UN body**, will not affect the conditions and provisions governing SLWOP.

³ See Chapter 1, Section 7, paragraph 1.7.5 of the HR Manual.

Rotation when One Spouse is an International Staff Member and the other is a General Service (GS) or National Professional Officer (NPO)

30. When an international staff member has a spouse who is employed as a GS or NPO, the requirements of the normal UNICEF rotation policy will continue to apply to the international staff member.
31. SLWOP may be granted to a UNICEF locally-recruited staff member to accompany his/her spouse to the new duty station for up to two years with a lien on his/her post. At the end of the two years, the UNICEF locally-recruited staff member must decide whether to return to his/her post or resign.

When the Spouse of a Head of Office Seeks Employment

32. When the spouse of a Head of Office seeks employment, he/she may not be assigned to, or offered a position in any office where the staff member is the Head of Office, nor may he/she be offered a consultancy, a temporary fixed-term contract, or an assignment through a temporary employment agency.⁴
33. In all other instances, the guidelines and principles of this policy apply to the employment of spouses of Heads of Offices. They may be employed in any other duty station, as well as seek employment in other UN agencies, whether at, or outside the duty station.

⁴ See Chapter 4, Section 4, paragraph 4.1.15 of the HR Manual.

II. Employment of Spouses within the UN System

General

34. DHR continues to promote co-operative measures to improve opportunities for the employment of spouses by UN agencies.
35. Heads of Offices should:
 - a) work within the UN Country Team to establish and maintain a roster of UN spouses seeking employment at the duty station; *and*
 - b) ensure that all interested and eligible spouses - including spouses of staff serving in another country under the Special Operations Approach - are listed on the roster and kept aware of both long and short term work opportunities as they arise.
36. Spouses of internationally-recruited staff members who are seeking employment within the UN system are responsible for applying directly for suitable vacancies, but Heads of Offices, if requested, should transmit the curriculum vitae of the spouse to UN agencies. The organization can give references for spouses only when they have been staff members or individual contractors/consultants.

Both Staff Members are UNICEF International Staff Members

37. In the case of international dual-career UNICEF couples, if one spouse finds employment with another UN Organization at the duty station where the other spouse is located, UNICEF will favourably consider any request from the receiving organization for an inter-agency:
 - a) loan (on a reimbursable basis);
 - b) secondment; *or*
 - c) transfer.

Special Leave Without Pay to Accompany a Spouse Employed within the UN System

38. If a UNICEF staff member wishes to take SLWOP for the purpose of accompanying a spouse who has been employed at a different duty station by another UN organization, this will be granted for the same period and under the same conditions as a SLWOP for the purpose of accompanying a UNICEF staff member (see paragraphs 28 b) and 31).

UNICEF Funds

39. UNICEF funds may not be channelled to other UN organizations for the primary purpose of facilitating the employment of the spouse of a UNICEF staff member.

III. Employment of Spouses outside UNICEF/UN

Employment Authorization

40. The UN General Assembly (GA) has, on various opportunities, renewed its call to Governments in host countries to grant work permits for spouses accompanying internationally-recruited staff members. Nonetheless, there are currently few countries where spouses are granted work permits.
41. In countries where spouses are not yet granted work permits, Heads of Office should advocate – when and where appropriate – before the host government and national authorities for a more liberal granting of work permits to spouses of international staff.
42. In countries where spouses are granted work permits, the Human Resources or Operations Officers should provide information to spouses on the appropriate procedure to be followed in obtaining a work permit.

Special Leave Without Pay to Accompany a Spouse Employed Outside UNICEF/UN

43. If a UNICEF staff member wishes to take SLWOP for the purpose of accompanying a spouse who has been employed at a different duty station by a non-UN body, this will be granted for the same period and under the same conditions as a SLWOP for the purpose of accompanying a UNICEF staff member (see paragraphs 28.b) and 31).

UNICEF Funds

44. UNICEF funds may not be channelled to non-UN bodies for the primary purpose of facilitating the employment of the spouse of a UNICEF staff member.

IV. Support Services

General

45. Local Human Resources/Operations Officers are responsible for:
- a) collecting information about employment-related subjects such as:
 - work permit conditions;
 - employment situation; for example, pay levels and working languages;
 - potential employers; for example, UN Agencies, NGOs, institutes of education, hospitals, contracting and consulting firms, multinational corporations and travel companies;
 - cultural attitudes toward networking and marketing oneself;
 - licensure;
 - employment-related activities; information about private organizations/clubs working with employment-related issues; *and*
 - information about local volunteer opportunities.
 - b) informing and counselling UNICEF spouses about the subjects in a) above;
 - c) contributing to and maintaining an inter-agency roster of spouses seeking employment in the duty station;
 - d) investigate actively employment opportunities for UNICEF spouses accompanying internationally-recruited staff members through liaison with NGOs, embassies, multinationals, etc.; *and*
 - e) opening and maintaining employment channels with potential employers.

Language Training

46. **Local Language Training.** Spouses of internationally-recruited staff members who do not speak the official language of the country or that of the duty station are, where feasible, eligible for up to 60 hours of group language training at UNICEF's expense, at the duty station, within the first 12 months of arrival. If group training is not possible, individual training may be approved. Approval for language training for spouses will be granted by the Head of Office.
47. The cost of the language training will be charged to the same funding source to which the staff member's training would be charged.
48. **Other Languages.** When and where appropriate, spouses of staff members in the duty station should be allowed and offered the opportunity to participate in any language training that UNICEF provides at the duty station for staff members, at the same negotiated cost as for staff. Staff members must pay the cost in advance.

Computer Training

49. When and where appropriate, spouses of staff members in the duty station should be allowed and offered the opportunity to participate in any local computer training that UNICEF provides at the duty station for staff members, at the same negotiated cost as for staff. Staff members must pay the cost in advance.

Training Packages and Material

50. When and where feasible, spouses of staff members should be allowed and offered the opportunity to borrow UNICEF training packages and material. Staff members will be responsible for the packages and material.

Participating Agencies Mobility System

51. The Participating Agencies Mobility System (PAMS)⁵ is a communication system that allows eligible individuals to electronically submit their curriculum vitae (CV) to participating UN organizations.
52. PAMS can be visited from any computer with access to internet. Whenever spouses of internationally-recruited staff members do not have access to internet, arrangements may be made locally to allow them to use PAMS from an office computer workstation. Staff members should contact the local Human Resources/Operations Officer to make the arrangements.

Other

53. DHR is actively working at the inter-agency level to develop material for spouses accompanying internationally-recruited staff members assigned outside their home country. The material will include an orientation package to assist spouses in their career search and will cover topics such as:
 - a) assessing career options;
 - b) searching for a job (for example, how to use the internet in the job search, how to write a resume, etc);
 - c) networking;
 - d) evaluating and developing portable careers and skills; *and*
 - e) exploring volunteer opportunities.

⁵ See CF/AI/2000-004 of 28 April 2000 on the Participating Agencies Mobility System (PAMS).

V. Other

Responsibilities

54. **DHR.** DHR is responsible for:
- a) the overall implementation of the policy;
 - b) monitoring the execution of the policy;
 - c) reporting to the Executive Director annually on the implementation of the policy;
 - d) making efforts to obtain cooperation from other UN agencies for employment opportunities for spouses;
 - e) assisting spouses who are seeking employment in New York, as well as assisting and working closely with other offices in supporting the employment of spouses who are seeking employment in international posts in these offices; *and*
 - f) approving requests for the employment of spouses of staff members.
54. **Heads of Offices.** Heads of Offices are responsible for:
- a) reporting annually to the Director, DHR, on the number and types of contracts issued to spouses as well as any problems encountered (see Annex A);
 - b) making efforts to obtain cooperation from other UN agencies and NGOs for employment opportunities for spouses; *and*
 - c) assisting spouses who are seeking employment in their regions/countries.

Annex A
Annual Report on Employment of Spouses

(See attached)



**ANNUAL REPORT ON EMPLOYMENT OF SPOUSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDING: _____**

Duty Station _____ / _____
City/Country

Head of Office: _____
Name (Please print)

Total number of spouses employed by your office for this year: _____

Name	Type of Contract ¹	Duration of Contract	Functional Area	General Comments

Head of Office's Signature: _____

Date: _____

¹ Fixed Term (FT) Appointment, Temporary Fixed Term (TFT) Appointment, or Special Service Agreement (SSA).