



**Administrative Guidelines for Offices  
on the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)  
pandemic**

**Framework for the management of staff members in  
United Nations Common System Headquarters and Field  
Duty Stations**

**CEB Human Resources Network  
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## Administrative Guidelines for Offices on the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

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## **INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATORY NOTES**

### **Rationale for the Guidelines**

These guidelines are intended for Heads of Entities and administrative staff, including human resources, who oversee the administrative arrangements of staff members and their recognized family members. They are meant for information only and do not take the place of the Staff Regulations and Rules of the relevant Organizations and their duly promulgated administrative issuances. To the extent that the below provisions are in conflict with the Staff Regulations and Rules of the relevant Organizations and their duly promulgated administrative issuances, the Staff Regulations and Rules of the relevant Organizations and their duly promulgated administrative issuances are applicable.

These guidelines are meant to provide information applicable to all staff members serving in the UN Common System Organizations and have been prepared to adopt a common approach on the most important aspects of managing staff members during the current outbreak.

It is recognized that not all the provisions of the Guidelines may be applicable to all duty stations, especially where they need to consider the provisions of national authorities (e.g. regarding permits and visas). Therefore, organizations at each duty station are encouraged to adapt the provisions to their local requirements as necessary.

All UN Country Team members are expected to implement the provisions of these guidelines.<sup>1</sup>

These guidelines will be reviewed periodically, as necessary, by the Chief Executive Board (CEB) Human Resources Network and amended accordingly.

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines and provisions that differ from organization to organization at the same duty station should be carefully reviewed as they would lead to difficulties and further disruption at a time of a potentially severe crisis.

## I. General

### Novel Coronavirus Virus Disease (COVID-19)

1. On 30 January 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a “public health emergency of international concern” (PHEIC). The outbreak spreads by person-to-person contact and the potential public health threat posed is high. On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization, declared COVID-19 a pandemic.

### Applicability

2. These Guidelines are intended for administrative staff (including human resources) who manage staff in the UN common system organizations worldwide. They are applicable to all staff members and recognized family members.

3. The Guidelines mainly address the issues which are likely to emerge during the COVID-19 outbreak. They may be up-dated as necessary.

### Critical functions

4. For purposes of these Guidelines, staff members are grouped into:

- a) **Critical staff.** Staff members who would be required to perform critical functions in the event of a closure of offices for normal operations due to a COVID-19 outbreak, to ensure continuity of work. These staff members may be requested to carry out such critical functions on premises, in an alternate location or from home; *and*
- b) **Non-critical staff.** Staff members who would not be required to work during an office closure due to a COVID-19 outbreak. Staff members who are not identified as critical but volunteer to work from home or another location will still be considered as non-critical.

5. **Criteria for selecting critical staff.** Heads of Entities are required to designate critical staff. The list of names and respective contact information must always be up to date.

6. When selecting staff members as critical staff, Heads of Entities should ensure the following:

- a) Physical security of staff and facilities;
- b) Medical care of staff;
- c) Maintenance of telecommunications and information technology services;
- d) Ability to communicate with other Organizations and Governments;
- e) Maintenance of utilities (electricity, water and sanitation); *and*
- f) Ability to make important technical, operational and policy decisions related to critical aspects of the operations and programme continuity<sup>2</sup> as well as staff welfare.

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<sup>2</sup> Heads of Entities may refer to the Programme Criticality Framework for guidance on the implementation of programme and business continuity plans.

7. **Critical functions at the duty station.** Heads of Entities should ensure that critical staff are equipped to assume critical functions and have delegated decision making/signing authority.

8. The number of critical staff should be kept to an absolute minimum, noting the recommended percentage is ten per cent of the total number of staff members in the duty station.<sup>3</sup> Critical staff include the following:

- a) Executive Heads or Heads of Offices;
- b) Local Security Management Team;
- c) Medical staff;
- d) Security staff;
- e) Human Resources staff (including counsellors);
- f) Payroll/Finance;
- g) Information and communications; *and*
- h) Any other staff required to carry out critical functions, if necessary and as determined by Heads of Entity.

9. To the extent possible, critical staff should be designated on a voluntary basis. In cases where the number of volunteers is insufficient to guarantee the continued operation during a closure of office, the official with delegated authority may designate additional staff members to report for duty.

10. Staff members designated as critical staff must be notified and informed of the implications of such designation and that they could be required to remain in quarantine for 14 days to limit their possible exposure. Critical staff may be required to submit to the Medical Service, prior to or upon assuming the critical function, information about their health either through a statement or a form provided for this purpose.

### **Closure of Offices –Officials with delegated authority**

11. UN offices may be closed at the instruction of the host government. UN headquarters offices may also be physically closed by the Secretary-General or the Executive Head of the relevant UN System Organization, following coordination with all Organizations in a duty station. The Resident Coordinator, guided by WHO and following consultation with the UN Country Team, may recommend to the Secretary-General, closure of the country office or offices when deemed necessary. Upon authorization by the Secretary-General or the Executive Head for the closure of such UN offices, the Resident Coordinator or other official with delegated authority will notify the host government and local authorities.

### **Offices virtually open during a physical closure**

12. For the purpose of ensuring continuity of operations, UN offices may be virtually open during a physical closure. In such instance, staff members will be requested to work from an alternative site, such as their home. The Secretary-General or the Executive Head of the relevant UN System Organization in accordance with the host country precautionary measures and WHO guidance, and in coordination with all Organizations in a duty station may decide to keep UN offices open virtually. The Secretary-General or the Executive Head or other official with delegated authority will notify the host government and local authorities on the virtual opening of the offices.

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<sup>3</sup> Minimum presence, preferably working from home when internet connectivity is available.

## Information for staff and queries

13. UN system staff members and their families may find:

- the latest information related to COVID-19 at:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

- Situation reports at:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports>

- Latest available information on travel restrictions, please refer to this link from IATA<sup>4</sup>:

<https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/international-travel-document-news/1580226297.htm>

14. For further information, staff members at the duty station may contact:

Insert contact details of medical services, executive officers, etc. of all organizations at the duty station

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<sup>4</sup> Please be advised that this information is only as reported to IATA by the countries and may not reflect the absolute latest information. Therefore, travelers should still ensure that they check with the relevant authorities for any countries they plan to travel to and ensure that they would not face any issues as it relates to their specific situation.

## II. Leave and attendance

### Attendance

15. **When offices are physically open.** All staff members are required to report for duty. Unauthorized absence will be dealt with in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules and duly promulgated administrative issuances. Heads of Entities may authorize flexible working arrangements or prescribe alternate work arrangements for non-critical staff including the possibility of working from home or alternate location to limit the possible exposure to COVID-19.

16. **When offices are open virtually during a physical closure.** At the request of the Organization staff members will be required to continue working from an alternative work site, including from home. Heads of entity shall to the extent possible, provide staff members, including critical and non-critical, with the necessary office equipment to discharge their official functions from an alternative work site, including from home. Those staff members who have been provided with the necessary equipment will be required to perform their functions remotely. Unauthorized absences by such staff will be dealt with in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules and duly promulgated administrative issuances.

17. Those staff members who do not possess the necessary equipment or who cannot work remotely due to the nature of their functions and who cannot temporarily be assigned to other functions may be placed on special leave with full pay (SLWFP) until an alternate solution is found. These staff members will not be required to exhaust annual leave before being placed on SLWFP.

18. **When offices are entirely closed, i.e. both physically and virtually.** Only critical staff shall have access to the offices. Critical staff will be required to report for duty to perform the critical functions either at the offices or from an alternate location or from home.

19. Unauthorized absences by critical staff will be dealt with in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules and duly promulgated administrative issuances.

20. Non-critical staff who are instructed not to report for duty and who do not voluntarily work from home or another location, will be placed on special leave with full pay (SLWFP) until an alternate solution is found. These staff members will not be required to exhaust annual leave before being placed on SLWFP.

### Compensatory time-off

21. **When offices are open virtually during a physical closure.** Staff members will not receive compensatory time-off (CTO) for the time they are required to perform functions remotely during their normal working schedule.

22. **When offices are both physically and virtually closed.** Critical staff may receive compensatory time-off (CTO) for the time they are requested to report to duty be it ***within premises, in an alternate location or from home, in line with applicable policies and subject to decision to be made at the time of office closure. Compensation maybe granted in the form of time.***

23. Heads of Entities will be accountable for ensuring that CTO accrued during the closure period:

- a) is taken during the twelve months following the month in which the offices are reopened; *and*
- b) at least five consecutive CTO days are taken during the first six weeks following the day in which the offices are reopened.

24. Under no circumstances, will compensation accrued during the closure period take the form of additional cash payment.

### **Flexible working arrangements and alternate work arrangements**

25. Flexible working arrangements, such as telecommuting from within or outside the duty station, are voluntary and at the request of the staff member. In the context of COVID-19, in duty stations where offices remain physically open, an increased use of telecommuting may be encouraged in order to reduce staff footprint in UN premises and/or in duty stations, as applicable. Staff members may be authorized to telecommute on a full-time basis at the duty station or away from their duty station. Although flexible working arrangement should be implemented at no cost to the Organization, staff members may be authorized to utilize their home leave/family visit/reserve education grant entitlement to travel to their home country or an alternate place of home leave.

26. Alternate work arrangements are implemented at the request of the Organization and are therefore different from flexible working arrangements although both may involve working from a location within or outside the duty station. The authority to implement alternate work arrangements rests with the Executive Heads of the Organizations, as per the recommendation of the Designated Official for Security.

27. In an effort to contain the spread of COVID-19, the Secretary-General and Executive Heads in several duty stations across the world have decided to restrict physical access to UN premises while keeping offices open virtually. In all entities at all duty stations where such decisions have been made, staff members are required to work remotely, unless their physical presence on the premises is necessary to carry out essential work. This is neither an optional or a voluntary telecommuting arrangement between managers and staff members but a mandatory requirement by the Organization.

28. Staff members who are telecommuting away from their duty station under flexible working arrangements or working remotely under alternate work arrangements and left their duty station at their own initiative, must:

- a) Update their security clearance profiles whether they arrived at the location on a personal or official travel (see section below on Travel on official business). This will ensure that staff remain informed of security updates and supported by local security arrangements;
- b) be aware of the fact that enrolment in medical insurance plans are made based on their duty station so medical expenses in a different location, particularly outside the country of the duty station might result in out of pocket medical expenses;
- c) understand that the payment of any benefits and entitlements that require the physical presence of staff members at their official duty station (for instance danger pay), may be suspended for the period that they are outside of their official duty station.



29. In light of the growing numbers of universities, schools and day care closures and other disruptions to family support services, managers should be encouraged to exercise maximum flexibility. In return, staff members are expected to demonstrate professionalism, and continue to contribute on their assigned tasks.

### Adjustment to duties

30. In order to address the needs of the United Nations Organizations in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Heads of Entities may request a staff member to temporarily carry out different functions than the ones normally assigned to them.

### Annual leave

31. **When offices are open.** Taking into consideration the local health advisories and the WHO guidelines, managers are encouraged to exercise flexibility in authorizing annual leave and advance annual leave to staff members that request leave to limit their possible exposure to COVID-19. Staff members who travel outside the duty station during annual leave must be aware that, re-entry into the duty station or departure from the countries to which they travel may not be possible. When staff members are unable to return:

- a) at the request of the staff member, he/she may be authorized to carry out his/her duties on a telecommuting/remote working basis. No DSA will be payable;
- b) at the request of the staff member, he/she may report to duty at a UN system office in the travel destination. No DSA will be payable;
- c) if possible, the staff member may be required to report to duty at a UN system office in another location. Travel to the location and DSA will be payable; *or*
- d) if neither option a), b) or c) is possible, the staff member may request annual leave, advance annual leave or special leave without pay. In exceptional circumstances, SLWFP may be granted for a limited period of time on a case by case basis. For example, a staff member who has exhausted all annual leave balance and who initiated travel before travel restrictions were put in place.

32. **When offices are entirely closed, i.e. both physically and virtually.** Staff members who are on annual leave at the time the offices are closed, will be placed on SLWFP, provided that they are not considered critical staff, as from the day they were due to report for duty.

33. **Carry-over of annual leave:** An exception to established policies on annual leave may be authorized to allow staff members to carry forward annual leave in excess of the maximum allowed beyond the regular leave cycle. Should the staff member separate from service, any payment of annual leave that may be due shall not exceed the maximum allowed under the applicable staff regulations and rules.

## Medical evacuation, sick leave & inability to perform duties

34. Medical evacuation of staff members and their eligible family members may be authorized under the applicable provisions. Relevant information can be found at:

<https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/reference-documents-administrators-and-managers>

35. If a staff member has been in contact with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case, staff/family members must immediately notify their supporting medical service.

36. Staff members may be authorized, under conditions established by Organizations, to use their entitlement of uncertified sick leave for COVID-19 related absences.

37. Staff members are encouraged to make use of the telehealth solutions offered by their medical insurance plan. For additional information, please consult:

<https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/telehealth>

38. **When offices are open.** Staff members who are unable to physically report for duty:

- a) ***because of illness***, and in particular staff members with flu-like symptoms including for COVID-19, should not report for duty and should seek appropriate medical attention. Such absences will be recorded as certified sick leave within the applicable policy; or
- b) ***because of isolation***<sup>5</sup> on the recommendation of the medical service or at the request of local authorities, staff members will be placed on sick leave;
- c) ***because of quarantine*** on the recommendation of the medical service or at the request of local authorities, will be authorized to telecommute on a full-time basis for the duration of the quarantine.

39. **When offices are entirely closed, i.e. both physically and virtually.** Staff members who are on sick leave at the time the offices are closed, will be placed on SLWFP as from the day they were expected to report for duty following exhaustion of their approved certified/uncertified sick leave.

## Maternity, paternity and adoption leave

40. **When offices are entirely closed, i.e. both physically and virtually.** Staff members who are on maternity, paternity or adoption leave at the time the offices are entirely closed, will be placed on SLWFP as from the day they were due to report for duty.

## Special leave without pay

41. **When offices are open.** Flexibility will be exercised in authorizing special leave without pay (SLWOP) to staff members except for critical staff.

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<sup>5</sup> In medical terms isolation refers to confinement of a person who is sick, while quarantine refers to a person who is well and free of symptoms but must be confined in order to reduce risk.

42. **When offices are entirely closed, i.e. both physically and virtually.** Staff members who are on SLWOP at the time the offices are entirely closed, will be placed on special leave with full pay (SLWFP) as from the day they were due to report for duty.

### III. Travel

43. The Medical Service Director (local UN Medical Doctor or designate), may require an "exit medical examination" prior to leaving an affected duty station or country.

44. Staff members who are working remotely or stranded at a location outside of their normal duty station, must update their security clearance profiles whether they arrived at the location on a personal or official travel. This will ensure that staff remain informed of security updates and supported by local security arrangements. Where possible, staff members should download any travel advisory apps offered by the respective Organizations and enable geolocation and notifications on their phones.

45. For purposes of information, the link below prepared and maintained by colleagues in the World Food Programme shows world travel restrictions. It is available to all and is interactive and updated regularly.

<http://unwfp.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/db5b5df309ac4f10bfd36145a6f8880e>

#### Official business travel

46. **Planned travel.** The decision as to whether to travel to or from an affected duty station should be made in accordance with the national travel advisory set by the host country and taking into consideration WHO guidelines. This should be in conjunction with the local Senior Crisis Management Structure relevant to the duty station.

47. Planned travel on official business to or from an affected duty station that has not been initiated and which is considered non-critical should be deferred. Travel on official business to or from an affected duty station should be planned and authorized in accordance with the needs of the Organization as determined by the Head of Entity in line with all current security measures in place.

48. **Initiated travel.** In the event that the authorized itinerary must be changed for reasons related to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the following will apply:

- a) **Departure from official business destination not possible.** If during the authorized travel on official business, local authorities or UN guidelines do not allow departure, DSA will remain payable until departure is authorized and up until the first available flight.
- b) **Re-entry into duty station not possible.** If authorities at the duty station or UN guidelines do not allow re-entry, DSA will continue to be payable until re-entry to the duty station is possible and up until the first available flight.

Where required due to operational and/or medical reasons, staff members travelling on official business could be sent to an alternative location. DSA for that location will be payable.

- c) **Staff member falls sick.** If the staff member falls sick while on travel on official business, including with COVID-19, DSA, if applicable, would continue to be payable. However, if hospitalized, DSA will be reduced to one third.

- d) **Staff member is quarantined.** If the staff member is quarantined while on official business, DSA will remain payable under the same conditions as c) above.
- e) **Staff member dies.** In the unfortunate event that a staff member dies while on travel on official business, DSA will stop as from the date of death. The UN system office where he/she was working (or the nearest UN/UNDP office) will assume the responsibility for coordinating the actions required and serve as the link between the parent office and the family of the deceased, providing the family assistance throughout the difficult period following the death.

### Home leave and family visit travel

49. Flexibility should be exercised to authorize advance and deferred home leave (HL) and family visit (FV), and to allow separate HL travel of staff members and eligible family members, particularly in a duty station where a reduction of the staff footprint is deemed desirable. Flexibility should also be granted to exercise HL/FV at an alternate location, if local authorities of the HL/FV country do not authorize entry or medical facilities are not adequate, and subject to the maximum cost of travel to the duty station-recognized place of HL/FV duty station.

50. Staff members must be aware that local authorities or UN/Organization guidelines may at any time prevent either departure from the HL/FV destination or re-entry to the duty station. In such cases, staff members should take this into consideration when accepting the lump sum option, as in such cases they agree to waive all entitlements relating to HL and FV travel that would otherwise have been payable, i.e. there shall be no reimbursement of lost tickets when the staff member has availed of the lump sum option. Staff members are encouraged to purchase travel insurance when travelling under the lump sum option. When the organization purchases the tickets for HL and FV travel, the organization assumes the liability for changes in itinerary due to travel restrictions.

51. **When offices are open.** When staff members are not authorized by the local authorities or UN/Organization Guidelines to depart from the HL/FV destination and they or any of their household members are not sick with suspected COVID-19:

- a) if feasible, at the request of the staff member, he/she may be authorized to carry out his/her duties on a telecommuting basis. No DSA will be payable;
- b) if possible, at the request of the staff member, he/she may report to duty at a UN System Office in the same HL/FV location. No DSA will be payable;
- c) if possible, they may be required to report to duty at a UN System Office in another location. Travel to the location and DSA will be payable; *or*
- d) if neither option a), b) or c) is possible, they may request additional annual leave, or advance annual leave. In exceptional circumstances, SLWFP may be granted for a limited period of time. For example, a staff member who has exhausted all annual leave balance and who initiated travel before travel restrictions were put in place.

52. Staff members who fall sick, including COVID-19, during HL/FV will, subject to the applicable provisions, be granted certified sick leave upon submission of a medical certificate to the Medical Director or designate.

53. Staff members who are unable to return by reason of COVID-19 affecting a member of his/her household, or because of quarantine affecting the household/area, will be authorized to carry out his/her duties on a telecommuting basis. If telecommuting is not feasible staff members may be placed on SLWFP, upon evidence for the necessity of this measure, acceptable to the Medical Director or designate.

54. **When offices are closed (i.e. both physically and virtually).** Staff members who are on HL/FV travel at the time the offices are closed, may be placed on SLWFP provided that they are not considered critical staff, as from the day they were due to report for duty. No DSA will be payable.

### **Education grant travel**

55. During a recognized COVID-19 outbreak, flexibility will be exercised to authorize advance and defer education grant travel (EGT).

56. Staff members must be aware that respective local authorities may at any time prevent either departure from the EGT destination or re-entry to the duty station. In such cases, staff members should take this into consideration when accepting the lump sum option (where applicable), as in such cases they agree to waive all entitlements relating to EGT that would otherwise have been payable.

### **Rest and recuperation travel**

57. During a recognized COVID-19 outbreak, flexibility will be exercised to authorize advance or to defer rest and recuperation travel (R&R).

58. Staff members must be aware that respective local authorities may at any time prevent either departure from the duty station or re-entry to the duty station or travel to and from a designated R&R location or other location. In such cases, staff members should take this into consideration when accepting the lump sum option. Staff members are encouraged to purchase travel insurance when travelling under the lump sum option.

59. The HR network field group is actively issuing updates regularly to address this matter.

60. For ease of reference, a link to the guidance from the HR network Field Group follows:

[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/covid\\_001\\_guidance\\_for\\_duty\\_stations\\_in\\_covid-19-affected\\_countries\\_entitled\\_to\\_rr\\_ra\\_e.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/covid_001_guidance_for_duty_stations_in_covid-19-affected_countries_entitled_to_rr_ra_e.pdf)

## IV. Recruitment and appointments

### Recruitment and reassignment

61. The decision as to whether to initiate recruitment and reassignment of staff should be made in accordance with the national travel advisories set by the host country and taking into consideration WHO guidelines. This should be done in conjunction with the Senior Crisis Management Structure relevant to the duty station.

62. Recruitment and reassignment of staff:

- a) will be carried out in accordance with interests, needs and priorities of the Organization;
- b) initiated in direct support of critical functions and in connection with COVID-19 will be given priority and the process will be expedited to the extent possible; and
- c) will be decided upon on a case-by-case basis by Heads of Entities, for individuals who are not envisaged to perform critical function or in support of COVID-19.

63. In the event of an initiated recruitment where it is determined that the services of the candidate can be performed remotely at the place of recruitment, the post adjustment and related entitlements to be paid would be determined by the Organization depending on the totality of circumstances, including but not limited to the length of the period of remote working. If this is not possible, onboarding should be delayed.

64. In the event a staff member is unable to travel to a duty station following a reassignment decision, the post adjustment and related entitlements to be paid would be determined by the Organization depending on the totality of circumstances, including but not limited to the length of the period of remote working.

### Extension of appointment

65. Every effort should be made to renew staff members' appointments one month in advance. Conversely, staff members should be informed of non-renewal of their appointments at least one month prior to expiry dates when possible. When a staff member's appointment is extended solely if the separation cannot be processed due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions and/or office closure, such extension shall not give rise to any further entitlement to salary increment, annual leave, sick leave, maternity leave, paternity leave or home leave, although credit towards repatriation grant may continue to accrue if the staff member has not returned to his or her home country.

66. The heightened alert situation shall not be a factor in deciding on renewal and non-extension of appointments, including extension beyond retirement age.

### Staff members holding permits/visas

67. **Repatriation travel and shipment.** If a staff member holds a visa/permit and is not requesting residency status, he/she should be repatriated upon the expiration of his/her contract, and as soon as practicable. If a staff member chooses to remain in the duty station for a longer period, this will not give rise to additional entitlements or further responsibility by the Organization. The two-year time limit for submission of a claim for repatriation grant upon separation will be suspended during any office closure period due to an COVID-19 outbreak.

68. If departure from the duty station is possible, but entry to the repatriation destination is not, a staff member can opt to be repatriated to a third location. In such cases, the cost of repatriation should not exceed the amount normally payable.

69. **Extension of appointment.** Depending on the circumstances, an appointment of an international staff member holding a permit/visa in the duty station and who is not requesting residency status in the host country, could be extended until departure/entry is possible and up until the first travel opportunity or flight is available to the staff member. Such extension would be solely for administrative reasons and would not give rise to any further entitlement to salary increment, annual leave, sick leave or home leave, but credit towards repatriation grant may continue to accrue. In the event of death during the period of the extension, the period prior to the staff member's death may be considered in the determination of the death benefit, if applicable.

## V. Salary, benefits and entitlements

### Payroll and salary advances

70. **When offices are open.** Organizations may authorize, under conditions established by Organizations, salary advances in such amount as the official with delegated authority may deem appropriate. Salary advances shall be liquidated at a rate as determined by the Comptroller's (payroll) office. As far as feasible, the recovery start date and rate should be communicated to the staff member at the time the advance is individually authorized.

71. **When offices are closed.** Organizations should consult with the Controller's (payroll) office to determine the relevant arrangements when payments are not made through wire transfer.

### Payment of entitlements that require original supporting documentation

72. **When offices are closed.** When payment of entitlements is dependent on submission of the appropriate support documentation, the time limits for presentation of supporting documentation will be suspended during any office closure period due to an COVID-19 outbreak.

### Danger pay

73. Where authorized by the Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), staff members performing medical functions in non-protected environments where they are specifically at risk to their life when deployed to deal with public health emergencies as declared by the WHO, as defined in Annex II of the 2011 report of the ICSC (A/66/30), are entitled to danger pay. On an exceptional basis, Danger Pay may be approved for non-medical staff who are involved in the handling of potentially hazardous specimens or work directly with communities in designated isolation zones specified by WHO.

74. **Amounts.** The current rates are:

a) ***International Staff members:***

- i) *monthly, US\$1600; and*
- ii) *daily, US\$52.60; and*

b) ***Locally-recruited staff members:***

- i) *Applicable monthly amount as calculated by the ICSC; and*
- ii) *Applicable daily amount as calculated by the ICSC.*

### Health insurance

75. Staff members and their eligible family members who are enrolled in the UN insurance programmes are covered for expenses incurred for qualified medical treatment of COVID-19 according to their insurance plan benefits. Staff members and their family members not enrolled in a medical plan indicated herein should ensure that their insurance plans cover sickness associated with COVID-19.



76. Staff members should be aware of the fact that enrolment in medical insurance plans are based on their official duty station. Medical expenses in a different location, particularly outside the country of the duty station, might therefore result in out of pocket medical expenses.

77. **When offices are closed.**

a) ***Staff members newly recruited or reassigned and eligible for health insurance:***

- i) *who arrive during closure of offices due to an COVID-19 outbreak:* applications will be accepted within 31 days (where such time limit applies) of the date offices re-open; insurance will be effective from the first day of the qualifying contract; and
- ii) *who arrive before closure of offices due to an COVID-19 outbreak:* every effort should be made to file applications as soon as possible. Should the offices close due to an COVID-19 outbreak within the 31-day time limit (where such time limit applies), applications will be accepted within 31 days of the date the offices re-open; insurance will be effective from the first day of the qualifying contract.

b) ***Retiring staff members and eligible for ASHI***

- i) *who separate during closure of offices due to an COVID-19 outbreak:* ASHI applications will be accepted within 31 days of the date the offices re-open; active service coverage will be continued in the interim; and
- ii) *who separate before closure of offices due to an COVID-19 outbreak:* every effort should be made to file ASHI applications as soon as possible. Should the offices close due to an COVID-19 outbreak within the 31-day time limit, ASHI applications will be accepted within 31 days of the date the offices re-open; active service coverage will be continued in the interim.

**Life insurance**

78. Staff members who are enrolled in the United Nations Group life insurance are covered for death as a result of COVID-19, in accordance with the existing policy.

## VI. Death of a staff member

79. It cannot be over-emphasized that all staff involved in making the various arrangements must use their utmost discretion, tact and sensitivity, particularly when dealing with the family of the deceased. In case of queries from the family or insurance companies, it is recommended that complete documentation on the procedures followed should be kept in a confidential file.

80. When a staff member, or his/her accompanying spouse or dependent child dies, the Human Resources Office will assume responsibility for coordinating the actions required and serves as the link between the office concerned and the family of the deceased, providing the family assistance throughout the difficult period following the death.

### Death benefit

81. In the case of death **of a staff member**, a death benefit shall be paid in accordance with the staff regulations and rules.

### Payments

82. Priority will be given to arrange for the survivors/designated beneficiaries to receive any payment (or an advance) against any salary, allowances and benefits standing to the credit of the staff member as of the date of death.

### After-service health insurance

83. **When offices are closed.** Family members who are eligible for ASHI must normally make application for ASHI within three months of staff member's death. If:

- a) **staff member dies during closure of offices due to an COVID-19 outbreak:** ASHI applications will be accepted within three months of the date the offices re-open; active service coverage will be continued in the interim; *and*
- b) **staff member dies before closure of offices due to an COVID-19 outbreak:** every effort should be made to file ASHI applications as soon as possible. Should the offices close due to an COVID-19 outbreak within the three-month time limit, ASHI applications will be accepted within three months of the date the offices re-open; active service coverage will be continued in the interim.

### Life insurance

84. **When offices are closed.** There is no prescribed time frame for submitting claims.

### Compensation for service-incurred illness/injury/death

85. Compensation will be provided to eligible staff members in the event of death, injury or illness considered to be attributable to the performance of official duties in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules.

## Pension Fund benefits

86. **When offices are closed.** The UNJSPF has offices in New York and Geneva and would therefore be able to provide services to participants and beneficiaries from both offices. In an extreme situation the UNJSPF would be able to implement its disaster recovery policy for payroll payments to beneficiaries.

## Permits and visas

87. A family member's authorized stay at the duty station normally expires upon staff member's death. The same applies to any household employee whose visa is derived from the status of the staff member.

88. Most national authorities allow staff members and their families a certain period (e.g. 30 days) after the date of separation in which to leave the country or adjust their status. If additional time is required, the family members should contact the relevant personnel responsible for permits/visas at the duty station for guidance in requesting extension of the normal grace period.

## Education grant

89. When a staff member dies while in service **after** the beginning of the school year, no prorating or disqualification will take place in respect of any element of the education grant (EG) to which the staff member would have been entitled had he/she lived to the end of the school year, including boarding expenses or a flat sum for board and EGT.

90. As a result, no recovery from prorating the amount of the grant based on a period of service shorter than the normal school year will be initiated when processing the separation of the deceased staff member. The EG related forms may be completed by the surviving spouse, the legal representative of the child for whom the EG or EGT is paid, or by the child for whom the claim is requested, if 18 years of age or older. If the school year ends when the final payment has already been processed, settlement will be made as a direct payment to the survivor.

91. **When offices are closed.** The time limit to file EG claims will be suspended during any office closure period due to an COVID-19 outbreak.

## Repatriation grant<sup>6</sup>

92. **When offices are closed.** Family members who are eligible for payment of repatriation grant, must normally claim and provide evidence of relocation within two years of the staff member's death. This time limit will be suspended during any office closure period due to an COVID-19 outbreak.

## Repatriation travel and shipment<sup>7</sup>

93. Family members who are entitled to repatriation should initiate travel and/or shipment of personal effects as soon as practicable. If a family member chooses to remain at the duty station for a longer period, this will not give rise to additional entitlements or further responsibility by the Organization. The two-year time limit will be suspended during any office closure period due to an COVID-19 outbreak.

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<sup>6</sup> International staff members only.

<sup>7</sup> International staff members only.

### **Repatriation of remains or local interment**

94. Before making any arrangements, it is necessary that the family be consulted whether they wish: local burial; cremation and repatriation; *or* embalming and repatriation. In all instances, the local regulations and laws and international health regulations shall apply while the specific instructions of the family of the deceased should be observed as closely as possible. However, during an COVID-19 outbreak, the repatriation of a deceased staff member (or his/her family member) could be delayed or not authorized.