



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# A Guide to Staff Benefits Locally recruited Staff



**Bureau of Human Resources Management**

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# Introduction

The United Nations and its Specialized Agencies, like UNESCO, all apply a common system of salaries, allowances and benefits.

The following guide provides an overview of those salary structures, allowances and benefits available to locally recruited National Professional Officers (NPO) and General Service (GS) categories staff under this common system, recruited on a Fixed Term Appointment.

Staff members recruited on temporary or project appointments may not be eligible for some of the allowances described in this guide.

However, **actual employment contracts of staff are based on the [UNESCO Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, and Human Resources Manual](#), which remain the definitive source of any legal and administrative interpretation.**

## How to use the Guide

The guide has been divided into three sections:

- **upon their first appointment to the duty station;**
- **during their employment at the duty station;**

Within each section, entitlements are grouped under broad headings. Under each of these broad headings, the individual entitlements are described in more detail: what they are and how they work.

## Further information

Further information about salaries, allowances and other benefits will be made available to those potential candidates called for an interview for a post in UNESCO.



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## Upon Appointment

Locally recruited staff will, on first appointment to UNESCO, be entitled to the salary, allowances and other benefits for which they are eligible under the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules. Their eligibility for particular allowances will depend, in many cases, on their personal circumstances such as dependency status.

### Dependency Status

Staff members may, upon initial appointment, but also at various stages of their career, be eligible for a range of allowances and benefits. While these may be linked to their grade or their duty station, eligibility may also be linked to the **dependency status** of members of the staff member's family.



#### **Who can be considered a dependant?**

A **spouse** may be a wife/ husband or a domestic partner, provided that the domestic partnership is legally recognized by a competent national authority and having the same effects as a marriage. In order for a staff member's spouse to be recognized as dependant, the spouse's annual gross earnings should not exceed the lowest entry gross salary level of the UN salary scale in effect in the area of the duty station on 1 January of that year. **Children under 18** are considered as dependants (**or under 21 if in full-time education**). In both cases, the staff member must be providing main and continuing support to the child. The age limit does not apply to children incapacitated by disabilities.

#### **What entitlements are associated with dependency status?**

Locally recruited staff members with a dependant spouse and/or child may be eligible for a **spouse allowance** and for each dependant child, a **child allowance**, according to the practice in the duty station.

## **Salary**

A single country-wide salary scale is normally established for General Service (GS) and National Professional Officer (NPO) staff in each country. Local salary scales are differentiated by grade and step and usually expressed in local currency.



## **Starting Salary**

Unless otherwise decided by the Director-General, staff will be placed on appointment on the first increment step of the salary scale corresponding to the grade of their post.

Details of current NPO and GS salary levels can be found on the following site:

[http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/salaries\\_allowances/salaries/gs.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/salaries_allowances/salaries/gs.htm)

## **Staff Assessment (Income Tax)**

The salary scale is expressed in both gross and net terms. Gross salaries are subject to staff assessment, a form of internal tax administered by UN organizations.

### **How does it work?**

Net salary is derived by applying staff assessment to the gross salary level. Staff members are paid on the basis of net salary.

Most Member States grant UN Organization staff members exemption from national income taxes on their UN salary. However, some Member States may tax the earnings of their nationals. In such cases, organizations reimburse the income tax to the staff member.

## Other Allowances and Benefits

### Special Education Grant

A Special education grant is payable to General Service (GS) and National Professional Officer (NPO) staff members in respect of a disabled dependent child. A child will be considered disabled if he/she is unable, because of physical or mental disability as certified by the UNESCO Chief Medical Officer, to attend a regular educational institution and, as a result, the child needs special teaching or training on a full-time or part-time basis. The grant is payable at the rate of 100% admissible expenses related to the special education needs of the child, subject to a maximum ceiling established for each duty station.



### Language Allowance

UNESCO's General Conference has six official working languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The language allowance recognises a staff member's proficiency in a working language of the General Conference which is not their principal language.

#### Who is eligible?

The language allowance is only payable to staff in the General Service category, not to staff members in the National Professional Officer category.

#### How does it work?

GS staff members receive a language allowance if they pass the prescribed test in a working language of the General Conference which is not their principal language. Staff members may qualify for a maximum of two language allowances.

#### How much is it worth?

The amount of the first language allowance in Headquarters is equal to 5 per cent of the net salary of a staff member at G-5, Step 1, and the second language allowance in Headquarters is equal to half that amount. Other amounts are payable in other duty stations.

## **Danger Pay**

Danger pay applies in extraordinary situations where staff are at high risk of becoming collateral damage (namely, locations where very dangerous conditions prevailed) and in situations where they may be the direct targets of violence (namely, in acts of terror committed against staff precisely because of their employment by an organization of the United Nations common system).

### **How much is it?**

The amount of danger pay is calculated at the rate of 30% of the net mid-point of the GS salary scale applicable at the duty station in 2012.

## **Social Security**

UNESCO operates a system of social security for all of its staff members, including provisions for pensions and for the preservation of health.

## **Medical Benefits**

UNESCO's Medical Benefits Fund (MBF) provides medical insurance benefits to all staff holding an appointment of more than six months (providing that their participation was not excluded by the terms of their appointment). Participants are free to choose their own qualified physician.



The dependant spouse and children of the staff member may also be admitted to the MBF.

### **How does it work?**

Staff members contribute a percentage of their salary to the MBF. The percentage varies according to the number of dependants admitted to the scheme.

| <b>Number of protected persons</b> | <b>Contributions</b> |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| -                                  | 3.16%                |
| 1                                  | 4.75%                |
| 2                                  | 5.54%                |
| 3                                  | 6.33%                |
| 4 or more                          | 6.50%                |

### **What benefits does the Medical Benefits Fund provide?**

The MBF reimburses a proportion of eligible expenses incurred for a range of treatments, including medical expenses, hospitalisation, pharmaceutical expenses, optical lenses, surgical and maternity expenses and dental and orthodontic treatments. Reimbursement of dental and orthodontic treatment and optical lenses is subject to an annual maximum.

## **Pension (UNJSPF)**

The United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund is a fund established by the UN General Assembly to provide retirement, death, disability and related benefits for UN staff.

## **Who is eligible to join?**

Staff members holding an appointment of six months or more become participants in the scheme, provided that participation is not excluded by their terms of appointment.

## **Contributions**

Staff contributions to the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) are deducted at 7.9% of the pensionable remuneration scale. Lower rates apply to staff recruited before that date. The scale is agreed by the UN General Assembly and is reviewed annually.

UNESCO contributes to the UNJSPF at twice the staff member's rate.

## **Benefits**

Normal retirement age for new appointees is 65. Their retirement benefit for the first 5 years of contributory service is payable at 1.5% of final average remuneration; the next 5 years at 1.75% and the next 25 years at 2%. Years of service over 35 years are payable at 1%, subject to an overall maximum accumulation of 70%.

The UNJSPF also provides disability, early retirement and survivors' benefits, as well as the possibility for lump sum withdrawal settlements.

It may be possible to validate periods of past service within the UN system.

For further information, consult the United Nations Joint Pension Fund website: [www.un.unjspf.org](http://www.un.unjspf.org)

## **Staff Compensation Plan**

The Staff Compensation Plan (SCP) is designed to provide financial compensation to a staff member or his/her beneficiaries in the event of his/her death, illness or injury which is considered related to the performance of official duties.

## **Malicious Acts Global Insurance Policy**

### **What is it?**

All staff are covered by a special insurance policy which covers injury or death resulting from a malicious act. This global policy is provided free by UNESCO.

## **Voluntary Life Insurance**

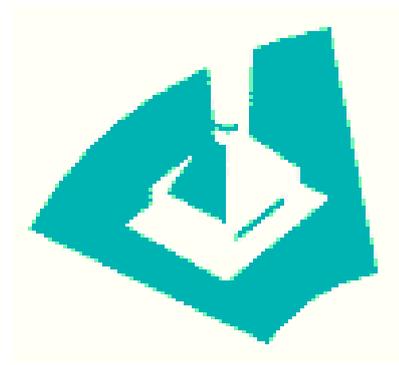
Staff members holding appointments of at least six months or having completed six months of continuous service may join a group life insurance scheme on a voluntary basis. The full amount of the premiums is paid by the insured person.

## **Necessary Clearances**

### **Medical Clearance and Vaccinations**

All appointments are subject to medical clearance by the Chief Medical Officer of UNESCO. He/she will inform the staff member at that time which vaccinations and other health precautions are necessary for their assignment.

Medical examinations should be undertaken as quickly as possible to avoid delays in the authorization of travel. No official travel can be undertaken unless medical clearance has been obtained.



## Induction / Orientation

All staff members are invited to take advantage of the “Welcome to the UN – A UN system induction course”. This e-learning course assists new staff members of the United Nations in becoming familiar with the objectives, values and work of the UN Common System.

The course includes the following topics of interest: UN core competencies, career development, security, the UN organizational structure and core working programmes, as well as the UN reform. The course also incorporates links to other e-learning courses, access to the UN directory and acronyms of UN agencies and main bodies. At the end of each module, learners can test their knowledge and apply for a certificate of completion.



## During Employment

In addition to the entitlements paid to staff upon appointment which continue to apply during their stay at UNESCO (for example, **salary; allowances and benefits; social security**), other entitlements will also become available, depending on their personal circumstances.

### Salary Updates

#### Increments (Steps)

Within-grade salary increments are normally awarded annually, subject to satisfactory performance.



#### Special Post Allowance

Staff may occasionally be asked to assume all or most of the duties and responsibilities of higher-grade posts in their field of work, where the incumbents are absent on leave or mission or where a post is vacant. If the arrangement is for more than 3 months, a special post allowance is payable from the fourth consecutive month of such service.

## Leave

### **Annual Leave**

Annual leave is granted to staff at the rate of 2½ working days per month of service. This may be taken in day or half-day units, in accordance with a leave plan to be established in the light of work requirements within the unit. Staff are expected to take their annual leave in the leave year in which it is earned.



Annual leave may be accumulated, up to a maximum of 60 days which can be carried forward from one calendar year to the next. Accumulated annual leave in excess of 60 days is forfeited on 1<sup>st</sup> January of each year.

### **Sick Leave**

Staff members are granted sick leave to cover periods when they are unfit for work, the amount depending upon the length of their previous continuous service and the unexpired period of their present contract.

### **Maternity Leave**

Staff members are entitled to 16 weeks maternity leave with full pay, normally from 6 weeks before the probable date of confinement and until 10 weeks after. However, the maternity leave may start later, at the choice of the expectant mother, if her state of health allows her to discharge her duties satisfactorily, although it shall in no case end less than 8 weeks after the actual birth.

### **Paternity Leave**

Staff members are eligible for 4 weeks paternity leave, to be taken during the first year of the child. Paternity leave is 8 weeks when the staff member is working in a non family duty station.

### **Adoption Leave**

If a staff member legally adopts a child, who is recognized as dependant, he/she may be eligible for 8 weeks special leave with full pay, normally starting on the date of the adopted child's arrival in the adoptive parent's home.

## Services for Staff

### Medical Care

#### Reimbursement of Medical Expenses

As a staff member, your medical coverage is insured by the Medical Benefits Fund of UNESCO (MBF).

This medical insurance, which is operated on UNESCO's behalf by Vanbreda International, will reimburse your expenses according to specific ceilings that have been established.

#### Voluntary Medical Insurance (Mutuelle) – Headquarters

At Headquarters, in order to supplement reimbursements from the UNESCO Medical Benefits Fund, you may wish to contribute voluntarily to a complementary medical insurance-mutuelle, for all medical expenses. This generally covers the difference between the expenses incurred and the expenses reimbursed from UNESCO's Medical Benefits Fund).

### Social Services

Social Services can assist you and your family in day to day life in Paris, (housing, child care, school system, legal and notarial advice etc.)

The service is designed to help staff and their families organize their daily lives in Paris, by providing practical information on accommodation, staff members' children education, socio-cultural associations, and childcare facilities.

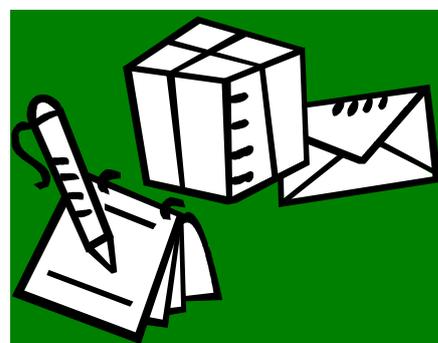
The Social Service organizes and supervises free consultations on:

- Notary matters: the second and fourth Thursday of each month.
- Legal matters: once each month.

### Staff Savings and Loan Services

The UNESCO Staff Savings and Loan Service ([USLS/SEPU](#)) provides to its members the possibility of:

- Investing their savings and
- Borrowing money.



USLS/SEPU is established as a trust fund whose accounts are separate from those of the Organization. It is not a banking institution, nor is it able to offer the full range of services normally provided by banks.

USLS/SEPU allows its members the opportunity to invest part of their savings in Euros and/or US dollars for 2 years at a guaranteed fixed interest rate over the period.

UNESCO staff members can open a US dollar account with the United Nations Federal Credit Union: further details are available from USLS/SEPU (UNFCU).

## **Childcare**

### **The Nursery**

The UNESCO Day Nursery (UNC) provides onsite care for 30 children, ranging from 12 months (provided they can walk unaided) to 3 years.

### **The Children's Club**

The club currently hosts around 20 children onsite every Wednesday and during the school holidays. The children are organised into 2 groups: 3-5 year olds and 6-8 year olds.

We hope you found this guidebook useful and informative.



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Policy & Compensation Section**