



Administrative Circular AC/HR/65

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Managed Mobility Programme

Background

1. A structured, well-organized and managed mobility process at the Organizational level is essential for broadening the skills and career experiences of staff. The resulting benefits will support the development of an agile and multi-faceted workforce which is necessary to effectively respond to the demands of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
2. The UNESCO Global Staff Survey 2018 reported that a majority of staff viewed mobility favourably and were desirous of undertaking new geographical and/or functional assignments. For a majority of the respondents, mobility is important for the effectiveness of UNESCO.
3. HRM has undertaken a review of the policy and processes, supported by consultations held with the Staff Associations and the Advisory Council on Personnel Policies (ACPP). Between March and June 2018, meetings of an inter-Sectoral Working Group were also convened to review the provisions of the draft Policy.
4. As a result, a managed mobility programme which supports Programme delivery and career growth and development has been developed. In addition, functional mobility has been introduced as an additional feature.
5. The reassignments that will be undertaken under the mobility exercises will be at equal grade. This will not preclude the opportunity for staff to be promoted via the standard competitive recruitment process when vacant posts are advertised.
6. The purpose of this Administrative Circular is to introduce the new [HR Manual Item 5.10 – Mobility](#), as approved by the Director-General. These changes necessitated a revision of the related provisions of HR Manual Item 5.3 and HR Manual 5.8.

Key features of the updated policy

7. The key features are set out below:

Geographical Mobility

8. Geographical mobility is the reassignment of international Professional and higher categories staff from one duty station to another.
9. Geographical mobility is applicable to all internationally recruited staff in the Professional and higher categories (P/D), on fixed-term appointments, including staff of Category I UNESCO Institutes and Centres, irrespective of the source of funding of the post held.
10. The following groups are not eligible to participate in geographical mobility exercises:
 - Junior Professional Officers
 - Staff members on secondment to the Organization
 - Staff members on Project Appointments

- Staff members who are within three years of retirement, except if posted in C, D, E duty stations and in non-family duty stations, in which case those staff members can voluntarily opt into the geographical mobility exercise.

Standard Duration of Assignment (SDA) and the minimum time-in-post principles

11. The SDA, which is the maximum period of time that internationally recruited staff members are expected to serve in a duty station based on its hardship classification by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), has been revised to be more aligned with other UN Agencies, as follows: Headquarters: 6 years, H and A duty stations: 5 years, B and C Duty stations: 4 years, D and E duty stations: 3 years; non-family duty stations: 2 years. The list of duty stations and their classification is available in the HR Manual.
12. Eligible staff members on posts subject to geographical mobility who have reached or exceeded their Standard Duration of Assignment (SDA) will be automatically considered for reassignment as part of the geographical mobility exercise.
13. Additionally, a minimum duration of time to be spent at the duty station by internationally recruited fixed-term staff members has been introduced. The minimum time in post is: 3 years for Headquarters, 2,5 years for H and A duty stations, and 2 years for the other duty stations. This will minimize instances of operational disruption caused by the early and unforeseen departure of staff, which could adversely impact programme delivery and knowledge retention.
14. Eligible staff members may voluntarily opt into the geographical mobility exercise after they have achieved the applicable time-in-post at their duty station.

Posts not subject to geographical mobility

15. Certain posts, owing to the specificity of the duties and the required profile of the incumbent, as well as limitations in the number of comparable posts in other duty stations, may be exceptionally designated as not subject to geographical mobility by the Director-General.
16. The approved list of posts not subject to geographical mobility will be published via an Information Circular in January 2019 and updated every 2 years.
17. Newly created posts shall be reviewed for inclusion in the list at the time of creation.
18. Staff members occupying posts not subject to geographical mobility may also express an interest in voluntarily participating in the geographical mobility exercise.

Operation of the Geographical Mobility Exercises

19. There will be one geographical mobility exercise at the beginning of each year.
20. There will be 5 phases involved in the reassignment of eligible staff members under the geographical mobility exercise:

I. Planning phase

- Annual mobility projections will be prepared by Sectors/Bureaux/Institutes, in collaboration with HRM, in support of the mobility exercise for the following year. Directors/Heads of Field Office will also be consulted as part of the process.
- HRM will play an integral role in supporting this phase in order to ensure objectivity and consistency across Sectors/Bureaux/Institutes.
- The projections will take into account: new posts, vacant posts, posts becoming vacant due to retirement in the next 12 to 24 months and staff members who have reached or have exceeded their SDA.

II. Advertisement phase

- Posts included in the geographical mobility pool will be advertised internally for a period of 1 month every year.
- A description of each post, outlining the main responsibilities, required and desired skills/competencies, language requirements and the hardship classification of the duty station, will be provided.
- Staff members will be required to submit an updated CV via the appropriate HR tool.
- Preferences for a maximum of 3 posts in the pool can be indicated by eligible staff members. These posts should be at the current grade of the incumbent. Staff members may also indicate one post, other than their own, within the same duty station among their preferences.
- Staff members may indicate if they have special circumstances which they wish to be considered by the Organization regarding a reassignment decision, when filling or updating their CVs/profiles or expressing interests in the advertised positions.

III. Review phase

- Review sessions will take place within each Sector/Bureau/Institute as soon as possible upon closure of the advertisement phase, chaired by the respective ADG/Director, including the Chief of the Executive Office (or other designated senior staff at the P-5 level and above), and an HRM representative.
- Staff members' profiles will be matched to positions in accordance with the established criteria (i.e. job-related skills/competencies, language skills, length of service, mobility history).
- The Sector ADGs and Directors of Bureaux/Institutes shall ensure that receiving managers, including Directors/Heads of Field Offices, as applicable, are duly consulted on the proposals.
- Should there be no suitable matching position, the Sector ADG and Director of Bureau/Institute may recommend a continuation-in-post option for the staff member concerned until the next geographical mobility exercise, for a maximum period not exceeding 2 years.
- Sector ADGs and Directors of Bureaux/Institutes will submit proposals for reassignment or for continuation-in-post to the Geographical Mobility Review Panels.

IV. Geographical Mobility Review Panels

Mandate of the Geographical Mobility Review Panels

- The Senior Mobility Review Panel will advise the Director-General on the reassignment and continuation-in-post of staff members to P-5 and Director posts at Headquarters and to Director/Head of Field Offices posts.
- The Mobility Review Panel will focus on reassignments and the continuation-in-post for staff members in the P-1 to P-4 range and make recommendations on the same to ADG/ADM.
- The recommendations of the Geographical Mobility Review Panels would normally be reached by consensus, having considered the proposals submitted by Sectors/Bureaux/Institutes with guidance from HRM.

Composition of the Geographical Mobility Review Panels

- The structure of the Geographical Mobility Review Panels has been streamlined to be leaner, less top-heavy and more inclusive.
- The Senior Mobility Review Panel will be chaired by ADG/ADM and its membership has been reduced from 7 members to a maximum of 3 members (or their alternates): DIR/HRM, ADG/PAX and 1 ADG from a Programme Sector.

- DIR/HRM will serve as the Chair of the Mobility Review Panel and there will be 5 members as opposed to 6. All members (and their alternates) will be appointed for a period of 2 years and they will include: 1 Director/Head of Field Office, 1 representative of a Programme Sector (P-5 or D-1), 1 representative from a Corporate Service (P-5 or D-1) and one representative from each Staff Association, preferably at the Professional level.

V. Decisions on reassignment

- The Director-General will take the decision on reassignment to P-5 and Director posts at Headquarters and to Director/Head of Field Offices posts.
- For P-1 to P-4 posts, the reassignment decision will be taken by ADG/ADM.

The inclusion of functional mobility

21. All fixed term staff¹ in the international Professional and higher (P/D), National Officer and General Service categories will be eligible to voluntarily participate in an annual functional mobility exercise.
22. Functional mobility involves a lateral appointment to a different post. It can occur within the same Sector/Bureau/Field Office/Institute or across these entities.
23. This will facilitate the acquisition of new skills and new experiences, particularly amongst staff on posts not subject to geographical mobility.

Operation of the Functional Mobility Exercises

24. There will be one functional mobility exercise each year.
25. There will be 3 phases: planning phase, advertisement phase and the decision on reassignment. There will be no review panels for the functional mobility process.

I. Planning phase

- An annual call for expressions of interest to all staff members eligible to participate in the functional mobility exercise will be launched by HRM. The call for expressions of interest will last for one month.
- Staff members, via their immediate supervisors, will submit requests to participate for the approval of the concerned ADG/Director of Bureau/Office/Institute. DIR/HRM, considering the justification provided, will make the final decision in instances where the request of a staff member is not approved.
- The pool of posts in the functional mobility exercise will include: occupied posts where there is mutual agreement on their inclusion between the supervisors and supervisees, and designated vacant posts.

II. Advertisement phase

- The advertisement procedure described for geographical mobility will also be applied for functional mobility.
- Staff members will be able to express an interest in a maximum of 3 posts advertised in the functional mobility pool and they will be reassigned to a post which best matches their profile.

¹ Except Junior Professional Officers, Project Appointments, Staff on secondment.

III. Decisions on reassignment

- DIR/HRM, in consultation with the concerned ADG/Directors of Bureaux, will decide on all functional mobility reassignments at Headquarters, and on those concerning staff in the Professional category in the Field.
- Directors/Heads of Field Office/Institutes will decide on all functional mobility reassignments in the Field/Institutes.
- HRM will notify the Sector ADGs, Directors of Bureaux/Institutes, Directors/Heads of Field Offices and the staff members concerned of the decision taken by DIR/HRM.
- Directors/Heads of Office/Institutes will notify HRM and the staff members concerned of their decision.

Promotional incentives linked to staff mobility

26. Effective 1 January 2021, promotion to P-4 and above, for staff members on posts subject to geographical mobility, will require the completion of at least one geographical assignment for a minimum duration equal to the applicable time-in-post.
27. In the case of staff occupying posts not subject to geographical mobility, one functional mobility assignment will be considered as an asset for promotion to P-4 and above.
28. Similarly, for staff in the General Service category, the completion of one functional mobility assignment will be an asset for promotion to the G-6 level and above.

Improved staff installation and spousal and family support

29. New measures have been added to ease the transition of staff members (and their families) moving to new duty stations.
30. A special leave of 5 working days with full pay will be granted to relocating staff to assist with installation at the new duty station.
31. HRM will provide assistance in the form of information and guidance on spousal employment and will, to the extent possible, facilitate the assignment in the same duty station of staff members who are spouses.

Detailed criteria on deferments

32. Postponed inclusion in annual geographical mobility exercises for all eligible staff will be exceptional and based on compelling justification.
33. There are two types of deferment requests: personal deferments and operational deferments.
34. Personal deferments will be evaluated on the basis of medical and family circumstances and will be subject, for medical circumstances, to the review and advice by the Chief Medical Officer, and for family circumstances by the Staff Counsellor. The decision shall normally be made within three weeks after reviewing the relevant justification provided. Personal deferments may be granted for a defined period normally not exceeding two years.
35. Personal deferments must be submitted before the year in which the staff member is required to move to a different duty station or as soon as the compelling reasons, justifying the request for deferment, are known.
36. Operational deferments will be considered in relation to Organizational priorities and the need for adequate staffing capacity to effectively implement activities and projects. Operational deferments shall not exceed a period of two years, non renewable.
37. Deferments will be approved by ADG/ADM upon recommendation by Director HRM.

Implementation and effective date

38. HRM will conduct a communication campaign to sensitize all staff members on the details of the new policy from December 2018, in preparation for the geographical mobility exercise to be launched in the first quarter of 2019.
39. This Administrative Circular enters into force on 7 December 2018.
40. For any question, please contact the mobility team in HRM at mobilityteam@unesco.org

For the Director-General:

Hong Kwon
Director
Bureau for Human Resource Management

Annexes

- Annex 1 – HR Manual 5.10
- Annex 2 – HR Manual 5.3 (extract)
- Annex 3 – HR Manual 5.8 (extract)

Annex 1

HR Item 5.10. Mobility

- A. Geographical Mobility
- B. Implementation of Geographical Mobility
- C. Functional Mobility
- D. Implementation of Functional Mobility
- E. Roles and Responsibilities
- F. Support Measures
- G. Monitoring and Reporting

A. Geographical Mobility

Definition

1. Geographical mobility is the reassignment of international Professional and higher categories staff (P/D) from one duty station to another.

Legal framework

2. The legal basis for geographical mobility is to be found in Staff Regulation 1.2.:

"Staff Members are subject to the authority of the Director-General, and to assignment by him or her, with due regard to their qualifications and experience, to any post in the Organization. They are responsible to him or her in the exercise of their functions."
3. In accepting an appointment with the Organization, staff members in the international Professional and higher categories accept to serve the Organization in any post to which they are assigned at Headquarters or in the field.

Scope of application

4. Geographical mobility is applicable to all internationally recruited staff in the Professional and higher categories (P/D), on fixed-term appointments, including staff of Category I UNESCO Institutes, irrespective of the source of funding of the post held.
5. Geographical mobility is not applicable to:
 - (a) Junior Professional Officers
 - (b) Staff members on secondment
 - (c) Staff members on Project Appointments
 - (d) Staff members who are within three years of retirement, except if posted in C, D, E duty stations and in non-family duty stations, in which case those staff members can voluntarily opt into the geographical mobility exercise.

Objectives

6. Geographical mobility allows the Organization to achieve the following objectives:
 - (a) Being able to respond effectively to operational needs and priorities by ensuring that international Professional and higher categories of staff members with the appropriate competencies, skills and qualifications can be assigned to all duty stations, as and when required.
 - (b) Providing staff members with enriching and diverse opportunities which can contribute to their career development and professional growth.

- (c) Ensuring that UNESCO has a mobile, versatile and flexible workforce, with complementary operational experiences at both Headquarters and in the Field operations.

Basic Principles

7. The principles underpinning geographical mobility in UNESCO are as follows:
 - (a) Geographical mobility is driven by operational needs and organizational priorities, i.e. by the need to ensure an effective delivery of UNESCO's programmes.
 - (b) Geographical mobility is mandatory and is applicable to internationally recruited staff in the Professional and higher categories holding fixed-term appointments.
 - (c) Geographical mobility is an important element of the Organization's Human Resources Strategy, including HR planning. It is also an integral part of internationally recruited staff members' career development.
 - (d) Due consideration is given to the assignment preferences expressed by staff members and to their personal and family circumstances assessed on a case-by-case basis.
 - (e) Due consideration is given to the need to promote geographical and cultural diversity, as well as gender balance at Headquarters and in the Field.
 - (f) Under the geographical mobility programme, Headquarters and Field experience shall be important criteria for the promotion of staff in the international Professional and higher categories. For a promotion to P-4 and above, a staff member on a post subject to geographical mobility will be required to have completed at least one geographical assignment for a minimum duration equal to the applicable time-in-post^[1].

B. Implementation of Geographical Mobility

Standard Duration of Assignment and Time-in-Post

8. The Geographical mobility review exercise will be guided by the standard duration of assignment (SDA) in place for each location, normally corresponding to a continuous period of time that staff members would be expected to spend at the duty station. SDAs vary according to the conditions of life and work in the duty station and are based on the classification of the duty stations established by the [United Nations International Civil Service Commission \(ICSC\)](#).
9. The time-in-post principle will also be considered. This is the minimum period of time that a staff member is required to stay in an appointed position.
10. Eligible staff members may voluntarily opt into the geographical mobility exercise after they have achieved the applicable time-in-post at their duty station.
11. The [Standard Duration of Assignment and the time-in-post](#) shall be as follows:

Table 1: Standard Duration of Assignment and Time-in-Post for duty stations

Classification of Duty Stations	SDA (Years)	Time-in-Post (Years)
Non-family duty stations	2	2
D and E duty stations	3	2
B and C duty stations	4	2
A and H duty stations	5	2.5
Headquarters	6	3

The list of UNESCO duty stations with the ICSC classification and the applicable SDA is updated by HRM and available [here](#).

12. When initially appointed at Headquarters, staff members at P-1/P-2 grade, including Young Professionals, shall be considered for reassignment to the Field (including H duty stations) after 3 years of service at Headquarters in the P-1/P-2 grade level.
13. A staff member undertaking a new functional assignment in the same duty station prior to reaching the applicable SDA, will have his/her time at the duty station extended by the number of years equivalent to the applicable SDA. The staff member will be expected to move to another geographical assignment prior to the end of the second SDA cycle.
14. Whenever the classification of a duty station changes, the SDA shall be determined in accordance with the new classification established by ICSC.
15. When a staff member in the General Service category is appointed to an international Professional post, the starting date of the SDA shall be the date of his/her appointment to this post.

Posts not subject to geographical mobility

16. The Bureau of Human Resources Management (HRM), in consultation with Sectors/Bureaux/Field Offices/Institutes, shall establish the list of posts not subject to geographical mobility. This list shall be approved by the Director-General and published every two years.
17. Certain posts where geographical mobility is not possible due to the technical or specialized nature of their functions or due to the limited number of posts in the field, shall be designated as "posts not subject to geographical mobility".
18. Posts not subject to geographical mobility shall meet the following criteria:
 - (a) The duties of the post necessitate specialized competencies and/or experience, qualifications and/or advanced levels of expertise in a technical field that are unique to the particular post and that cannot easily be transferred to another post within the Organization.
 - (b) Comparable posts are all located at the same duty station making geographical mobility impractical.
19. Newly created posts shall be reviewed for inclusion in the list at the time of creation.
20. Staff members occupying posts not subject to geographical mobility are also encouraged to express their interest in voluntarily participating in the geographical mobility exercise, if they so wish.

Procedures for geographical mobility (see [HR Appendix 5 J](#))

There will be one geographical mobility exercise at the beginning of each year, which shall be implemented in five steps:

I. Planning phase

21. Each year, Sectors/Bureaux/Institutes, in collaboration with HRM, prepare geographical mobility projections for the upcoming year. The Sector ADGs/Directors of Bureaux ensure that Directors/Heads of Field Offices are consulted in the process.
22. Geographical mobility projections are based on:
 - (a) Current / anticipated vacancies:
 - i. New posts established in the C/5 for the next biennium.
 - ii. Vacant posts (i.e. not yet open to recruitment).
 - iii. Posts to become vacant due to retirement (all P/D posts and Directors/Heads of Field Offices) in the next 12 to 24 months.

- (b) Staff members who are due to move to new duty stations (i.e. staff who have reached their SDA).

II. Advertisement of Mobility Opportunities

- 23. HRM will issue a list of the posts to be included in the mobility exercise as identified during the planning phase. For the purpose of this policy, the list of posts will be issued internally for one month every year.
- 24. The description of each position includes main responsibilities, job-related skills/competencies, language requirements and the hardship classification of the duty station.
- 25. Staff members will be required to submit or update their CVs/profiles and to indicate preferences for up to 3 posts. These posts should be at the current grade of the incumbent. Staff members may also indicate one post, other than their own, within the same duty station among their preferences.
- 26. When filling or updating their CVs/profiles or expressing interests in the advertised positions, staff members may indicate if they have special circumstances, which they wish to be considered by the Organization regarding a reassignment decision.

III. Review Exercise

- 27. Upon closure of the advertisement, HRM shall provide Sector ADGs and Directors of Bureaux/Institutes with the following information:
 - (a) The list of staff members who expressed interest in the posts in the Sector/Bureau/ Field Office/Institute concerned.
 - (b) The up-dated CVs/profiles provided by staff members, as well as their performance reports covering the last two years.
- 28. Review sessions will take place within each Sector/Bureau/Institute as soon as possible upon closure of the advertisement phase, chaired by the respective ADG/Director, including the Chief of the Executive Office (or other designated senior staff at the P-5 level and above), and an HRM representative. Staff members' profiles will be matched to positions in accordance with the established criteria (i.e. job-related skills/competencies, language skills, length of service, mobility history).
- 29. Staff members, who have reached or exceeded their SDA and have not expressed interest in any post, will automatically be included in the pool of candidates for the mobility review exercise.
- 30. On the basis of competencies and operational needs of the Organization, a staff member may be considered for and assigned to a post, for which he/she has not expressed interest.
- 31. Staff members, who have reached or exceeded their SDA (at Headquarters and in the Field), will be given priority for reassignment in the geographical mobility exercise. All other staff members who have voluntarily opted into the mobility exercise and have expressed interest in advertised post(s), will be considered for geographical reassignment if no eligible staff members, due to be reassigned, are identified.
- 32. Current service in D, E or non-family duty stations will be given priority for re-assignment to H, A, B or C duty stations.
- 33. The Sector ADGs and Directors of Bureaux/Institutes shall ensure that receiving managers, including Directors/Heads of Field Offices, as applicable, are consulted on the proposals.
- 34. Should there be no suitable matching position, the Sector ADG and Director of Bureau/Institute may recommend a continuation-in-post option for the staff member concerned until the next geographical mobility exercise, for a maximum period not exceeding 2 years.
- 35. Sector ADGs and Directors of Bureaux/Institutes will submit proposals for reassignment or for continuation-in-post to the Mobility Review Panels.

IV. Geographical Mobility Review Panels

36. There shall be two Mobility Review Panels:

- (a) The Senior Mobility Review Panel
- (b) The Mobility Review Panel

The Senior Mobility Review Panel

37. The Senior Mobility Review Panel makes recommendations to the Director-General on the reassignment or continuation-in-post of staff members to P-5 and Director posts at Headquarters and to Director/Head of Field Offices posts.

Composition of the Senior Mobility Review Panel

38. The Senior Mobility Review Panel is chaired by the ADG/ADM and it consists of the following members (or their alternates): DIR/HRM, ADG/PAX and one ADG representing a Programme Sector, designated by the Director-General. HRM acts as Secretary of the Senior Mobility Review Panel.

Table 2 : Composition of the Senior Mobility Review Panel

Posts Concerned	Chair	Members
P-5 and Director posts at Headquarters & Director/Head of Field Office posts	ADG/ADM	Director HRM ADG/PAX 1 ADG from a Programme Sector

39. HRM convenes the Senior Mobility Review Panel and is responsible for the preparation and distribution of the agenda and related documentation for the meeting (i.e. lists and description of posts advertised, list of staff members who are due to move, list of staff members for whom deferments have been rejected, proposals for reassignment or continuation-in-post and CVs/profiles, as provided by staff members). The performance and mobility history of the staff members will also be included for consideration.

40. The Senior Mobility Review Panel reviews the proposals submitted by Sectors/Bureaux/Institutes. Priority consideration, on the basis of equal competence, will be given to staff who are due to move, then to staff who have expressed interest in posts advertised but who have not yet reached their SDA. The classification of the staff member's current and previous duty stations will also be taken into account to ensure a balance between successive assignments.

41. The recommendations of the Panel are normally reached by consensus. The Panel recommendation, including any dissenting opinions, is prepared by the Chair and signed by him/her and the members before being transmitted to the Director-General for decision.

Mobility Review Panel

42. The Mobility Review Panel makes recommendations to ADG/ADM on the reassignment or continuation-in-post of staff members to P-1 to P-4 posts.

Composition of the Mobility Review Panel

43. The Mobility Review Panel is chaired by DIR/HRM and it consists of the following members: one Director/Head of Field Office (P-5 or D-1), one member from a Programme Sector (P-5 or D-1), one member from a Corporate Service (P-5 or D-1). The Panel also includes one representative from each Staff Association, preferably, at the Professional level. There is one alternate for each member of the Mobility Review Panel. HRM acts as Secretary of the Mobility Review Panel.

44. Members of the Mobility Review Panel and their alternates are appointed by the Director-General for a period of two years. In the absence of one or more members, DIR/HRM appoints alternate members from the list of alternates.

Table 3: Composition of the Mobility Review Panel

Posts Concerned	Chair	Members
P-1 to P-4 posts	DIR/HRM	1 Director/Head of Field Office 1 representative of a Programme Sector 1 representative of a Corporate Service 2 representatives from the Staff Associations (1 from each), preferably, at the Professional level

45. HRM convenes the Mobility Review Panel and is responsible for the preparation and distribution of the agenda and related documentation for the meeting (i.e. lists of posts advertised and their descriptions, list of staff members who are due to move, list of staff for whom deferments have been rejected, proposals for reassignment or continuation-in-post and CVs/profiles, as provided by staff members). The performance and mobility history of the staff members will also be included for consideration.
46. The Mobility Review Panel reviews the proposals submitted by Sectors/Bureaux/Institutes. Priority consideration, on the basis of equal competence, will be given to staff who are due to move, then to staff who have expressed interest in posts advertised but who have not yet reached their SDA. The classification of the staff member's current and previous duty stations will also be taken into account to ensure a balance between successive assignments.
47. The recommendations of the Panel are normally reached by consensus. The Panel recommendation, which may include alternative views stemming from dissenting opinions, is prepared by the Chair and signed by him/her and the members before being transmitted to ADG/ADM for decision.

V. Decision on reassignment

48. The Director-General and ADG/ADM will take the final decision on the recommendations made by the Senior Mobility Review Panel and the Mobility Review Panel, respectively. The decision will normally be made within one month following the conclusion of the concerned Review Panel.
49. HRM will notify the Sector ADGs, Directors of Bureaux/Institutes, Directors/Heads of Field Offices and the staff members concerned of the reassignment decisions made by the Director-General and ADG/ADM, respectively.

Vacancies during the biennium

50. Posts that fall vacant in between two mobility exercises will be filled through the established competitive recruitment procedures. Priority consideration, on the basis of equal competence, will be given to those staff members who were not able to be reassigned to a post in another duty station as part of the last mobility exercise.

Deferments

51. Deferments for inclusion in the geographical mobility exercise are exceptional and will be reviewed and approved considering the compelling personal circumstances of staff members and the best interests of the Organization.

52. Two types of deferments will be considered: **personal deferments** and **operational deferments**.

Personal deferments

53. Staff members, in some specific situations, may have their reassignment deferred for a defined period, normally not exceeding two years. Personal deferment requests should be submitted in writing to DIR/HRM and should be supported by valid and documented reasons which prevent inclusion in the geographical exercise at that time.
54. A personal deferment may be granted in the following situations:
- (a) If a staff member or his/her recognized spouse or dependent child has a medical condition which requires immediate and/or periodic treatment which is not readily available at another duty station.
 - (b) If a staff member has a disability or a spouse with a disability or a child with a disability.
 - (c) If a staff member has a child that is within 2 years of graduating from high school in the current duty station.
 - (d) If a staff member has other compelling family/personal circumstances.
55. DIR/HRM will review each personal deferment request and prepare a recommendation to ADG/ADM for his/her decision. For personal deferment requests based on medical grounds, related to the staff member and/or his/her dependants, DIR/HRM shall request a review and evaluation of special constraints by the Chief Medical Officer (CMO). For requests based on personal/family issues, the review and evaluation shall be requested to the Staff Counsellor. When reviewing requests, the CMO will also advise on the duty stations where a staff member may be reassigned.
56. Personal deferment requests must be submitted before the year in which the staff member is required to move to a different duty station or as soon as the compelling reasons, justifying the request for deferment, are known.
57. DIR/HRM will inform staff members of the decision taken on their personal deferment requests.

Operational deferments

58. Based on operational requirements and organizational priorities, each Sector/Bureau will review its staffing needs in terms of skills and competencies required for Programme delivery. The Sector ADGs/Directors of Bureaux may request an operational deferment in the case where the reassignment of a staff member in the upcoming mobility exercise would be detrimental for Programme delivery or where the simultaneous departures of staff from the same Sector/Bureaux/Field Office/Institute would negatively impact operations. Directors/Heads of Field Offices/Institutes shall submit operational deferment requests to the concerned Sector ADG/Director of Bureau.
59. Sector ADGs/Directors of Bureaux shall provide a timeline and succession plan as part of the required justification to support an operational deferment request.
60. An operational deferment shall not exceed two years and is non-renewable.
61. Each operational deferment request shall be reviewed by DIR/HRM, who will make consultations where needed and prepare a recommendation for ADG/ADM who will approve or reject operational deferment requests. If approved, the reassignment of the staff member concerned shall be deferred and his/her post will not be advertised until the next mobility exercise.
62. DIR/HRM will notify Sector ADGs/Directors of Bureaux/Field Offices/Institutes of the decision taken on their operational deferment requests.

C. Functional Mobility

Definition

63. Functional mobility is defined as the assignment of staff members in the international Professional and higher, National Professional Officer and General Service categories to a different position within the same duty station for a period of at least one year.

Scope of application

64. Functional mobility is applicable on a voluntary basis to staff members on fixed term appointments in the International Professional and higher (P/D), National Officer and General Service categories, irrespective of the source of funding of the post held.
65. Functional mobility is not applicable to:
- (a) Junior Professional Officers
 - (b) Staff members on secondment
 - (c) Staff members on Project Appointments.

Objectives

66. Functional mobility aims at achieving the following objectives:
- (a) Supporting the career development of staff members through the acquisition of new skills, expertise and experience at both Headquarters and in the Field to respond to the operational and strategic priorities of the Organization.
 - (b) Increasing the level of exposure and familiarity of staff members to different activities across the Organization.

Basic Principles

67. The principles underpinning functional mobility in UNESCO are as follows:
- (a) Functional mobility will be voluntary and driven by the operational needs of the Organization, as well as the career development goals of staff.
 - (b) Functional mobility can occur within the same Sector/Bureaux/Field Office/Institute or across different Sectors/Bureaux and it will involve a lateral appointment to a different post. Supervisors should encourage and support functional mobility.
 - (c) For staff members in the International Professional category and higher occupying posts not subject to geographical mobility, one functional mobility assignment will be an asset for promotion to P-4 and above.
 - (d) For staff members in the General Service category, one functional mobility assignment will be an asset for promotion to G-6 and above.
 - (e) There shall be a maximum desirable time spent on the same post at HQs, which shall be 6 years. In other duty stations, this target shall be flexible and depend on the staffing and structure of the Office. Supervisors, in consultation with each of their supervisees and in support of career planning, should hold career review discussions and review how functional mobility assignments should be pursued. This target would not apply to posts which are highly specialized and technical in nature and for which there are no comparable posts.

D. Implementation of Functional Mobility

Procedures for functional mobility

68. There will be one functional mobility exercise each year.

Planning

69. HRM will launch a call for expressions of interest encouraging all eligible staff members to participate in the functional mobility exercise. The duration of the call for expressions of interest will be one month.
70. Eligible staff members shall submit requests for participation in the voluntary mobility exercise to the concerned ADG/Director of Bureau/Office/Institute, via their immediate supervisor.
71. In cases where the request of a staff member is not approved, the ADG/Director of Bureau/Office/Institute shall provide a justification to DIR/HRM who will then make the final decision.
72. Sectors/Bureaux will compile and submit to HRM the list of posts at Headquarters to be included in the functional mobility exercise.
73. The pool of posts in the functional mobility exercise will include:
 - (a) Occupied posts where the supervisor and the incumbent mutually agree on its inclusion in the pool.
 - (b) Vacant posts (i.e. not yet open to recruitment) which have been designated by the supervisor to be filled by functional mobility.
74. Sectors/Bureaux should establish a minimum percentage target of functional mobility per biennium in consultation with HRM or ensure that a minimum number of posts are included in the pool in order to effectively provide opportunities for reassignment.

Advertisement of Mobility Opportunities

75. The advertisement process described above in paragraphs 23 – 26 will also apply to posts at Headquarters included in the functional mobility exercise.

Decision on reassignment

76. Upon closure of the advertisement, HRM shall provide Sector ADGs and Directors of Bureaux with the following information:
 - (a) The list of staff members who expressed interest in the posts in the Sector/Bureau concerned.
 - (b) The up-dated CVs/profiles provided by staff members, as well their performance reports covering the preceding two years.
77. DIR/HRM, in consultation with the concerned ADG/Directors of Bureaux, will decide on all functional mobility reassignments at Headquarters, and on those concerning staff in the Professional category in the Field.
78. Directors/Heads of Field Office/Institutes will decide on all functional mobility reassignments in the Field/Institute.
79. HRM will notify the Sector ADGs, Directors of Bureaux/Institutes, Directors/Heads of Field Offices and the staff members concerned of the decision taken by DIR/HRM.
80. Directors/Heads of Field Offices/Institutes will notify HRM and the staff members concerned of their decision.

E. Roles and Responsibilities

81. Staff members are responsible for:
 - (a) Abiding by the mobility policy.
 - (b) Submitting or updating their CVs/profiles.

- (c) Indicating posts for further reassignment with order of preferences.
- (d) Discussing their expressed preferences with managers in order to receive advice and guidance.
- (e) Making use of available career development opportunities.
- (f) Ensuring that they take the necessary measures to reach their new duty station or functional mobility assignment within the given period once the reassignment has been approved.

82. The **Bureau of Human Resources Management** is responsible for:

- (a) Ensuring a smooth implementation of the mobility policy, in close collaboration with Sectors/Bureaux/Field Offices/Institutes.
- (b) Establishing a list of posts not subject to geographical mobility, in close collaboration with Sectors/Bureaux/Field Offices/Institutes, and submitting this list for the approval of the Director-General. HRM will ensure that it is published every two years and updated.
- (c) Notifying all staff members concerned, particularly those who have attained or exceeded their SDA, of the launch of the Geographical Mobility Exercise.
- (d) Launching the call for expressions of interest to all staff who are eligible to participate in the functional mobility exercise.
- (e) Publishing for a period of one month, the list of posts included in the mobility exercises.
- (f) Providing Sector ADGs and Directors of Bureaux/Institutes with the list, profiles and performance appraisals of staff members who have expressed interest in posts.
- (g) Provide guidance and recommendations in the review/matching exercise carried out within Sectors/Bureaux/Institutes.
- (h) Ensuring the Secretariat of the Mobility Panels; convening the geographical mobility Review Panels, preparing and distributing the agenda and related documentation for the meeting.
- (i) Notifying Sector ADGs, Directors of Bureaux/Field Offices/Institutes and all staff members concerned of the decisions made by the Director-General and ADG/ADM on geographical mobility reassignments, as well as the decisions of DIR/HRM on functional mobility reassignments.
- (j) Monitoring the implementation of the Mobility Policy.
- (k) Submitting a report on the implementation of mobility to the Director-General, as required.
- (l) Developing support measures for staff to facilitate mobility.

83. Sectors/Bureaux/Field Offices/Institutes are responsible for:

- (a) Ensuring the smooth implementation of the mobility policy, in close collaboration with HRM.
- (b) Providing recommendations and justifications for posts to be identified as not subject to geographical mobility.
- (c) Preparing mobility projections for the upcoming year, in collaboration with HRM.
- (d) Requesting an operational deferment of geographical mobility for staff whose mobility in the upcoming year would be detrimental to Programme delivery, as necessary. Such an exceptional request must be fully justified and submitted via DIR/HRM for the decision of ADG/ADM.

- (e) Undertaking review/matching sessions of staff members' profiles to positions, in accordance with the established criteria and taking into account HRM recommendations on career development and potential.
- (f) Ensuring that receiving managers are consulted on proposals concerning staff members whose profiles are suitable for positions under their supervision.
- (g) Submitting proposals for re-assignments or, under exceptional circumstances for continuation-in-post, to the geographical mobility Review Panels.

84. **Geographical Mobility Review Panels** are responsible for:

- (a) Reviewing reassignment or continuation-in-post proposals submitted by Sectors/Bureaux/Institutes.
- (b) Making recommendations to the Director-General and ADG/ADM.

F. Support Measures

Financial measures

85. Staff members are entitled to financial incentives under the UN common system (see [HR Manual Item 4.5](#)).

Timing of the Reassignment

86. Following the notification of reassignment, the date of transfer(s) is agreed upon between the releasing and receiving managers, as well as with the staff member(s) concerned. The transfer should take place within three months of the notification. In the event of disagreement, the final decision will be taken by the ADG/ADM in the case of reassignments through geographical mobility and DIR/HRM will decide in relation to functional mobility.

Pre-assignment travel

87. To facilitate their initial installation, staff assigned to D or E duty stations will be granted a one-week pre-assignment mission in order to travel to the new duty station in advance of their assignment.

Special leave with full pay in relation to relocation

88. To assist staff upon their departure from a duty station and their arrival to a new duty station located in another country, 5 (five) working days' special leave with full pay will be granted.

Spousal and family support

89. UNESCO will, to the extent possible, assist spouses of geographically mobile international Professional staff members seeking employment in UNESCO or other UN agencies in accordance with [Staff Rule 104.2 \(a\) bis](#) and [Staff Rule 104.2 \(a\) ter \(i\)](#).

90. HRM will designate a spousal support focal point for staff members who wish to move to different duty stations and who are seeking information/advice on spousal employment.

91. Staff members who have their recognized spouses working in the current duty station and are required to move geographically will be given priority consideration for positions in the duty stations that allow spouses to work, to the extent possible, subject to the availability of suitable posts matching staff members' qualifications.

92. In the event that both spouses are UNESCO staff members, the Organization will endeavor to assist them with securing assignments in the same duty station, subject to the availability of staff members' qualifications.

93. Receiving Sectors/Bureaux/Field Offices/Institutes shall provide information and support to staff arriving in new duty stations. Advice on settling in and job search assistance can be facilitated through the work of UN Local Expatriate Spouse Associations.

G. Monitoring and Reporting

94. The Bureau for Human Resources Management will monitor the implementation of mobility.
95. HRM will submit a report on the implementation of the mobility policy to the Director-General on an annual basis.

[1] Until 1 January, 2021, a promotion to P-4 level can take place with an appointment to a Field or Headquarters position, without having previously completed a geographical assignment.

Staff Regulations

1. [Staff Regulation 1.2](#)

Links

1. [ICSC: Hardship classification of duty stations](#)

Appendices

1. [Appendix 4 C - UNESCO Field Duty Stations \(including Liaison Offices, Category 1 Institutes, Antennas\)](#)
2. [HR Appendix 5 J – Geographical Mobility](#)

Annex 2

HR Item 5.3. Recruitment for International Professional posts and above (extract)

57. In evaluating the candidates, the Interview Panel shall take into account.

- (c) ~~prior field assignments: in the case of promotions to the P-4 and above level, priority consideration should be given to staff who have undertaken a successful field assignment. Flexibility and mobility, demonstrated by an assignment in different duty stations and/or Sectors/Bureaux/Offices, should also be a recognized asset for promotions to P-5 and above~~ a staff member on a post subject to geographical mobility will be required to have completed at least one geographical assignment for a minimum duration equal to the applicable time-in-post¹;

¹ See HR Manual Item 5.10. Until 1 January, 2021, a promotion to P-4 level can take place with an appointment to a Field or Headquarters position, without having previously completed a geographical assignment.

Annex 3

HR Item 5.8. Promotion (extract)

C. Promotion criteria

3. To be eligible for promotion a staff member must:

- (d) ~~Field experience shall be an important criterion for the promotion of International Professional staff; in particular, priority consideration for appointments and promotions to posts at P-4 level and above shall be given to staff who have undertaken a successful field assignment (for one year or more);~~ **prior field assignments: in the case of promotions to the P-4 and above a staff member on a post subject to geographical mobility will be required to have completed at least one geographical assignment for a minimum duration equal to the applicable time-in-post¹;**

¹ See HR Manual Item 5.10. **Until 1 January, 2021, a promotion to P-4 level can take place with an appointment to a Field or Headquarters position, without having previously completed a geographical assignment.**