

Policy Title	Policy for Inter-organization Mobility
Previous title (if any)	Partially addressed in FIXED-TERM AND CONTINUING APPOINTMENTS: OTHER CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURES
Policy objective	The objective of this policy is to establish the terms and conditions under which staff members may be released from service with UNFPA on transfer, secondment or loan to another United Nations organization while maintaining continuity of service in the United Nations system.
Target audience	All staff members
Risk control matrix	Control activities that are part of the process are detailed in the <a href="#">Risk Control Matrix</a>
Checklist	N/A
Effective date	17 August 2023
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Mandatory review date	17 August 2026
Policy owner unit	Division for Human Resources
Approval	<a href="#">Link to signed approval template</a>

## Policy for Inter-organization Mobility

### I. Purpose

1. The purpose of this policy is to establish the terms and conditions under which staff members may be released from service with UNFPA on transfer, secondment or loan to another United Nations organization while maintaining continuity of service in the United Nations system.

### II. Policy

2. Inter-organization mobility affords staff members an opportunity to acquire skills or experience which will provide career development opportunities to the individual staff member as well as benefit UNFPA upon the staff member's return.
3. This policy establishes the modalities for the movement of a staff member from one organization to another organization within the United Nations common system, identifies control actions to mitigate potential risks and establishes the following:
  - a. Definitions;
  - b. General provisions;
  - c. Eligibility;
  - d. Conditions governing loan arrangements;
  - e. Conditions governing secondment arrangements;
  - f. Conditions governing transfer arrangements;
  - g. Approving authority;
  - h. Return rights;
  - i. Recall of a UNFPA staff member;
  - j. Unsatisfactory conduct or performance; and
  - k. Roles and responsibilities.

#### A. Definitions

4. The following definitions apply for the purposes of the present policy:
  - a. *General Return Right*: the right of a staff member to be employed by the releasing organization upon their return from secondment or loan, without keeping a lien against a specific post. The staff member is given priority consideration for a suitable post in order to be reabsorbed after the secondment or loan period. This right is limited to the original duty station for locally recruited staff.
  - b. *Loan*: the movement of a staff member between UNFPA and another United Nations system organization for a limited period during which the staff member will be subject to the administrative supervision of the receiving organization but will continue to be subject to the staff regulations and rules of the releasing

organization. Staff members on loan will retain their rights of employment in the releasing organization.

- c. *Position*: a role within the organization as defined in a job description that includes the level of responsibility, accountability and nature of work that is performed.
- d. *Post*: a job that is classified to determine the appropriate category and grade level for compensation and budget purposes.
- e. *Receiving organization*: an organization which accepts a staff member on transfer, secondment or loan from another United Nations organization.
- f. *Releasing organization*: an organization which transfers, seconds or loans a staff member to another organization.
- g. *Secondment*: the movement of a staff member between another United Nations system organization and UNFPA for a fixed period of time during which the staff member will be subject to the administrative supervision of the receiving organization. The staff member will normally be paid and be subject to the staff regulations and rules of the receiving organization. Staff members on secondment will retain their rights of employment in the releasing organization.
- h. *Specific Return Right*: the right of a staff member to be employed by the organization whereby the staff member returns to a specified post at the end of the agreed period on loan. The post is normally the one occupied prior to being released to a receiving organization.
- i. *Transfer*: the movement of a staff member between organizations without any return rights to the releasing organization.

## **B. General provisions**

5. A UNFPA staff member does not have an entitlement to be released on transfer, secondment or loan.
6. Transfer, secondment or loan of staff between organizations of the United Nations Common System are guided by the provisions of the [Inter-Organization Agreement concerning Transfer, Secondment or Loan of Staff among the Organizations applying the United Nations Common System of Salaries and Allowances](#). The Inter-Organization Agreement itself is not binding on UNFPA. It is a framework UNFPA refers to when determining responsibility of the releasing and the receiving organizations for payments of salaries, allowances and other benefits and entitlements. The agreement can only be

- enforced to the extent that both organizations and the staff member have accepted to apply it in the individual case.
7. The conditions of an individual's transfer, secondment or loan are subject to negotiation between the releasing and receiving organization, taking into account the procedure of the organization and the requirements of the position in question.
  8. A transfer, secondment or loan must be based on mutual agreement between the staff member, releasing organization and receiving organization.
  9. The Director, Division for Human Resources (DHR) on behalf of UNFPA may approve the release of staff members on secondment or loan to other organizations when doing so is mutually beneficial to the staff member and the organization.
  10. In addition to the personal benefits for the staff member involved, the secondment or loan of a staff member must further UNFPA's interest. A staff member who is seconded or loaned to another organization is expected to continue employment with UNFPA after the expiration of their initial term of the secondment or loan period.
  11. Secondments are considered for:
    - a. staff members who are selected by the United Nations Secretariat<sup>1</sup> to serve as resident coordinators;
    - b. reciprocal arrangements with other organizations for projects undertaken in collaboration; and
    - c. staff members who will enhance their skill set under the mentorship of senior leaders in the receiving organization.
  12. A secondment of a UNFPA staff member may be approved by the authority identified in section G below, subject to the Director, DHR determination of the ability to employ the staff member on a vacant post upon expiration of the secondment period.
  13. UNFPA will accept a staff member on secondment from another organization.
  14. A loan of a UNFPA staff member may be approved subject to the Director, DHR determination of the ability to place the staff member on a vacant post upon expiration of the loan period. The decision to loan a staff member must be taken with due regard to the need for enhancing the staff member's relevant skills and knowledge.
  15. When UNFPA agrees to the release of a staff member on transfer, secondment or loan as the releasing organization, the release shall normally take effect no sooner than four (4) calendar weeks and no later than eight (8) calendar weeks after the date of approval. This

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<sup>1</sup> <https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/leadership/the-resident-coordinator-assessment-centre>

timeline may be extended by the Director, DHR to accommodate any delays in obtaining government clearance for international assignments.

16. A UNFPA staff member who is released on secondment or loan retains their fixed-term or permanent appointment with UNFPA.
17. A staff member maintains continuity of service time and accrued service credits upon their release on transfer, secondment or loan.

### ***C. Eligibility***

18. Only staff members with fixed-term or permanent appointments are eligible for release on transfer, secondment or loan. UNFPA will not release or receive a staff member with a temporary appointment on transfer, secondment or loan.
19. Staff members with five (5) or more years of continuous service with UNFPA may be released on secondment or loan to another United Nations system organization, subject to:
  - a. satisfactory record of performance in the latest completed performance cycle;
  - b. satisfactory conduct understood as no administrative or disciplinary measures taken against the staff member over the past five (5) years;
  - c. completion of one (1) year of service following reassignment to a new position and/or duty station; and
  - d. an appointment end date that covers the entire period of the secondment or loan.
20. Staff members who do not meet the criteria established in paragraph 19 or who have less than five (5) years of continuous service in UNFPA may only be released on transfer.

### ***D. Conditions governing loan arrangements***

21. A loan is the preferred modality of exchange for assignments of less than one (1) year in the receiving organization, i.e., a minimum period of one day and maximum period of 364 days.
  - a. When UNFPA is the releasing organization, UNFPA will normally not agree to a loan that exceeds a total combined period of one (1) year less one (1) day.
  - b. When UNFPA is the receiving organization, a loan is the appropriate modality for candidates who are selected for temporary job openings in UNFPA and have a fixed-term, continuing or permanent appointment in the releasing organization.
22. A staff member on loan is subject to the supervision of the receiving organization, including performance management and assessment. However, the staff member remains

subject to the regulations and rules of the releasing organization. In addition, their salary, entitlements and benefits continue to be administered by the releasing organization during the loan period.

23. A loan is normally granted with specific return rights provided the staff member's expected return date precedes the staff member's appointment end date with UNFPA.
24. The period of a staff member's appointment may be extended to cover the period of the loan when such extension is in the interest of UNFPA and the staff member.
25. A staff member serving in a post identified for abolition can be loaned to other entities within the United Nations system prior to the abolition of the post encumbered by the staff member, with general return rights to UNFPA. A loan under these conditions is subject to the approval of the Executive Director.
26. Should a loaned staff member and the receiving organization wish to extend the term beyond one (1) year, the staff member should be transferred.
27. These conditions apply to reimbursable<sup>2</sup> and non-reimbursable<sup>3</sup> loans.

***E. Conditions governing secondment arrangements***

28. A secondment is the preferred modality of exchange for assignments that exceed one (1) year in the receiving organization.
29. When UNFPA approves the secondment of a staff member, it shall normally be for a maximum duration of two years.
  - a. This duration will not normally be extended unless the staff member is on secondment for purposes of serving as a resident coordinator.
  - b. Should a seconded staff member who is not serving as a resident coordinator and the receiving organization wish to extend the term beyond two (2) years, the staff member should be transferred.
30. When approved, a secondment is normally granted with general return rights provided the staff member's expected return date precedes the staff member's appointment end date with UNFPA.

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<sup>2</sup> Under a reimbursable loan, the receiving organization bears the cost of the staff member's salary and allowances and of the employer's Pension Fund contribution. This is paid by the receiving organization back to the releasing organization given that the loaned staff member remains on the payroll of the releasing organization.

<sup>3</sup> Under a non-reimbursable loan, the releasing organization agrees to bear the cost of the loaned staff member's salary and allowances and the employer's Pension Fund contribution.

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31. The period of a staff member's appointment may be extended to cover the period of the secondment when such extension is in the interest of UNFPA and the staff member.
32. A staff member who is released on secondment is subject to the staff regulations, staff rules and administrative policies of the receiving organization as from the date of secondment but retains their rights of employment with UNFPA.

***F. Conditions governing transfer arrangements***

33. A staff member who is transferred is subject to the staff regulations, staff rules and administrative policies of the receiving organization as from the date of transfer.
34. Upon transfer a staff member ceases to have any contractual relationship with, or return rights to, the releasing organization.
35. A staff member who transfers to another organization retains their continuity of service. This is not considered to be a resignation or separation from service under United Nations Staff Rule 9.1.

***G. Approving authority***

36. UNFPA staff members who would like to be released on transfer, secondment or loan, are required to discuss their intention to accept a job offer from the receiving organization with their supervisor prior to submitting a request to DHR.
  - a. A preliminary discussion will allow a supervisor to discuss the prioritization of deliverables in the event a transfer, secondment or loan is approved, and prepare for consultations with DHR.
  - b. A supervisor does not have the unilateral authority to approve or deny a transfer, secondment or loan.
37. UNFPA staff members who would like to be released on secondment for purposes of accepting a position as resident coordinator, are required to discuss their intentions with their respective Deputy Executive Director (Deputy Executive Director for Management or Deputy Executive Director for Programme).
38. A staff member must submit their request to be released on a secondment or loan to the Director, DHR. The Director, DHR or delegated officer, will consult with:
  - a. the division director, head of office, or country or regional representative for a staff member in the General Service or National Officer categories;
  - b. the respective Deputy Executive Director for a staff member in the International Professional category P1 to P5 grade levels;

- c. the Executive Director for staff members in the P6, D1 and D2 grade levels; and
  - d. the Executive Director for staff members who request a secondment for purposes of accepting a position as resident coordinator.
39. Prior to taking a decision for the proposed loan of a UNFPA staff member, the Director, DHR in consultation with the respective manager identified in paragraph 38 above, shall consider:
  - a. the impact on the business unit the staff member serves in,
  - b. the ease with which UNFPA will be able to fill the subsequent vacant post, and
  - c. the ability of the organization to place the staff member upon their return to UNFPA.
40. Requests for approval of a secondment for purposes of serving as a resident coordinator, must be addressed to the Director, DHR who will consult with the staff member's respective Deputy Executive Director and the Executive Director.
41. A staff member must submit their request to be released on transfer to the staff member's respective Human Resources Business Partner.
42. When UNFPA is amenable to the release of a staff member on transfer, secondment or loan as the releasing organization, all negotiations between UNFPA and the other United Nations organization shall be facilitated by DHR on behalf of the releasing division or office.
43. A secondment or loan shall be in the form of a written agreement that sets out details of the relationship between the two organizations and the staff member and specifies the terms of the secondment or loan.
44. Any modifications to the duration of a secondment or loan, may only be approved by the Director, DHR in consultation with the managers identified in paragraph 38 and the staff member.
  - a. A staff member who wishes to return prior to the initial end date must submit a written request to the Director, DHR indicating the reason/circumstances for the request.
  - b. Managers must give serious consideration to any request for the extension of a loan. An extension may be denied by the Director, DHR when in the interest of the organization, including:
    - i. the total loan period would exceed 364 calendar days,
    - ii. inability to re-distribute work among existing staff in the unit,
    - iii. detrimental impact on team performance,
    - iv. difficulty in recruiting staff to fill vacancy, and

- v. planned structural changes that would limit placement opportunities for the staff member upon their return.

#### ***H. Return rights***

45. When a staff member is being released on loan, the Director, DHR must decide on the extent of the right of return that will be granted.
46. A staff member who is released on loan may either be granted a lien with specific return rights to a post to which the staff member can encumber or a lien with general return rights to UNFPA without any guarantee of return to a specific post.
47. A staff member who is released on secondment may only be granted a lien with general return rights to UNFPA without any guarantee of return to a specific post.
48. In the event a staff member is granted a lien with specific return rights to a post and that post is abolished, the staff member will be granted a lien with general return rights to UNFPA. The head of unit<sup>4</sup>, in consultation with DHR, must ensure that the staff member is informed of any developments in a timely manner, including the sharing of information about the realignment process, the abolition of the post, and an invitation to apply for available vacancies in UNFPA to facilitate the staff member's placement upon their return.
49. When a staff member is granted a lien with general return rights there is an inherent risk that the staff member may be assigned to undertake functions different than those of the post they previously encumbered prior to their secondment or loan.
50. Staff members with general return rights who wish to return to UNFPA should notify the Director, DHR at least six (6) months in advance of their intent to return to enable the organization to assign them to a suitable position.
  - a. Staff members are encouraged to apply to specific posts that are available for competitive selection.
  - b. The Executive Director may directly place a staff member on a vacant post without undergoing a competitive selection process regardless of whether or not the staff member applied to the available post.
  - c. DHR may add a staff member to a list of applicants or shortlist for an available post even if the staff member has not submitted an application.
  - d. When not directly placed on a vacant post, the staff member is required to participate in the competitive selection process. The interview panel and hiring manager are required to consider in good faith whether the available post is

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<sup>4</sup> The head of unit refers to the representative, division director, regional or subregional director, country representative or director, or head of office in countries without a UNFPA representative. This task can be undertaken by the delegated officer as appropriate.

suitable, paying due regard to the relative competence and length of service of the staff member concerned.

51. Staff members with general return rights who serve in the International Professional category may be reassigned to any UNFPA office worldwide; there is no guarantee of return to the same duty station. If the returning staff member encumbered a rotational post immediately prior to their release, the staff member will continue to be considered part of the leadership pool and eligible for placement in suitable vacant rotational posts.
52. Upon their return to UNFPA, staff members will be placed at the same grade level they had prior to their release. Staff members shall accrue seniority in grade as if they had remained in service of UNFPA. If a staff member is placed in a post at a lower grade upon their return to UNFPA, the staff member will retain their personal grade on an exceptional basis, for the duration of their assignment to that post.
53. A staff member who was granted a higher grade in the receiving organization, does not retain the higher grade upon their return to UNFPA. A staff member may only be granted a higher grade if they have been competitively selected for a vacant post in UNFPA at a higher grade level or assigned to a higher grade by the Executive Director.

#### ***I. Recall of a UNFPA staff member***

54. In exceptional circumstances, when in the interest of the organization, a staff member may be asked to return to UNFPA due to organizational needs at any time prior to the end date of the secondment or loan period.
  - a. Any such request may only be made by the Director, DHR on behalf of the organization.
  - b. The request must specify the proposed date of the staff member's return to UNFPA.
55. Upon the agreement of all parties (UNFPA, the receiving organization and the staff member), the secondment or loan arrangement may be terminated.
56. If the staff member chooses to not return, UNFPA may initiate the transfer of the staff member to the receiving organization. In such instances, the staff member forfeits their right of return to UNFPA.

#### ***J. Unsatisfactory conduct or performance***

57. If the staff member's conduct or performance is deemed unsatisfactory further to a staff member's performance appraisal and UNFPA [Disciplinary Framework](#), the secondment or loan may be terminated. A decision to this effect must be taken jointly by the receiving organization and the releasing organization, with due regard to the performance assessment results.

58. In the event of any alleged wrongdoing by a UNFPA staff member on secondment to another organization, the receiving organization assumes responsibility for investigating any wrongdoing unless otherwise specified in the secondment agreement. If the staff member returns to UNFPA after disciplinary action has been taken by the receiving organization, OAS may also consider disciplinary action arising from the same facts.
59. In the event of any alleged wrongdoing by a UNFPA staff member on loan to another organization, UNFPA assumes responsibility for investigating any wrongdoing.
60. UNFPA reserves the right to carry out the investigation provided this is specified in the written agreement terms and conditions at the outset of the secondment or loan.
61. When a UNFPA staff member is transferred, the investigative body of the receiving organization assumes responsibility for investigating any wrongdoing occurring after the transfer.
62. In the event of substantiated wrongdoing following an investigation, UNFPA will be guided by the relevant provisions of the Inter-Organization Agreement.

### **III. Procedures**

#### ***Roles and Responsibilities***

63. There is a mutual obligation on the staff member and the releasing organization to maintain communication during the period of the secondment or loan.
64. DHR is responsible for:
  - a. providing advice, support and guidance to managers and staff members regarding their role(s) in managing the transfer/secondment/loan approval process;
  - b. negotiating the release of staff members;
  - c. communicating with interested parties in a timely manner;
  - d. explaining the implications of return rights to UNFPA, if any, prior to a staff member's release on transfer, secondment or loan;
  - e. consulting the respective Deputy Executive Director for the placement of staff in the International Professional category who are returning to UNFPA from a secondment or loan; and
  - f. consulting with the respective head of unit for the placement of staff in the National Professional or General Service categories who are returning to UNFPA from a loan.
65. Heads of unit are responsible for:

- a. determining whether the loan provides the staff member with experience that will be beneficial to UNFPA;
  - b. determining whether the releasing office has the capacity to absorb a staff member in the National Professional or General Service categories, at the same grade level if the staff member is released on loan;
  - c. ensuring the timely release of a staff member who is approved for release on transfer, secondment or loan;
  - d. ensuring business continuity following a staff member's transfer, secondment or loan;
  - e. informing staff members with specific return rights of any significant changes to their releasing business unit or post they previously occupied;
  - f. facilitating the placement of a staff member in the National Professional or General Service categories, on a suitable post upon their return; and
  - g. facilitating knowledge transfer upon return of the seconded or loaned staff member.
66. Staff members are responsible for:
- a. ascertaining their eligibility prior to requesting their release;
  - b. negotiating a release date that accommodates a handover period in addition to any annual leave requested or approved;
  - c. prioritizing the completion of any assigned tasks prior to their release;
  - d. transferring their work projects and activities to their supervisor, or colleague identified by the supervisor, prior to their release date.

#### **IV. Other**

67. A staff member from another United Nations organization serving at UNFPA on secondment or loan, who receives a different offer of employment from within the United Nations Common System, may request for the curtailment of their secondment or loan to return to their releasing organization. UNFPA will not process the transfer, secondment or loan of a staff member to a third organization.
68. The provisions of this policy do not apply to staff members retroactively. Staff members who were released on secondment or loan prior to the issuance of this policy, are subject to the conditions stipulated in their letter of agreement.

#### **V. Process Overview Flowchart(s)**

No overview flow chart applicable

#### **VI. Risk Control Matrix**

Figure 1: Risk Control Matrix

Risk Description	First Line of Defense Controls			Second Line of Defense Controls		
	Control Activity Description	Reference (Policy section, paragraph or Control #)	Who performs	Control Activity Description	Reference (Policy section, paragraph or Control #)	Who performs
The organization is unable to place staff members with return rights to the organization .	Staff members are released on loan, typically with return rights to a specific post.	23	Head of Unit	Consideration is given to ease with which the organization can place the staff member upon their return.	39c	Director DHR
Approval for release on secondment or loan is arbitrary.	Eligibility criteria for release is defined in the policy	10, 11, 14, 18, 19, 66a	Staff member ascertains eligibility before proceeding with request	Only the Director of DHR can approve the release of staff members for consistency in application.	44	Director DHR
The organization does not utilize the correct modality for the exchange of a staff member.	The duration of assignment guides the use of modality.	21, 28	The receiving organization indicates the duration of the assignment	DHR provides advice and guidance on modalities.	64	HRBP or Director DHR
The organization is not able to place the staff member with general return rights on a suitable	Staff members may be considered for posts that are available for competitive selection.	50	Hiring manager	To ensure continued employment, the staff member may be assigned to undertake functions different than those of the	49	Director, DHR

post upon the end of a secondment or loan.				post they previously encumbered prior to their secondment or loan.		
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