

Policy Title	Policy and Procedures for Special Post Allowance
Document identifier	PPM/SPECIAL-POST/2024
Previous title (if any)	<i>addressed in</i> Recognition and Rewards Policy
Policy objective	To prescribe the conditions under which staff members are compensated for performing functions above their normal grade level.
Target audience	All staff members
Risk control matrix	Control activities that are part of the process are detailed in the Risk Control Matrix
Checklist	N/A
Effective date	18 April 2024
Revision History	Issued: 1 January 2010 Revision 1: 1 September 2022 Revision 2: 18 April 2024
Mandatory review date	18 April 2027
Policy owner unit	Division for Human Resources
Approval	Link to signed approval template

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Policy for Special Post Allowance

I. Purpose

1. The purpose of the present policy is to define the conditions for the payment of a Special Post Allowance (SPA).

II. Policy

2. Further to United Nations [staff rule 3.10](#), this policy sets out the conditions under which a staff member is eligible to receive a SPA.
3. The SPA is a non-pensionable allowance that is equivalent to the salary increase, including post-adjustment (if applicable) and any dependency allowances that a staff member would have received had the staff member been promoted to the next higher level.
4. In general, staff members are expected to assume the duties and responsibilities of higher-level positions temporarily as a normal part of their duties and without extra compensation.
5. Payment of a SPA is limited to cases where vacant posts cannot be filled within three (3) months under the established procedures for recruitment or placement and promotion, and where successful program and/or operational delivery requires temporary assignment to vacant posts for longer than three (3) months. An SPA is not payable to staff members who temporarily assume functions of a vacant post under a developmental assignment. A developmental assignment provides a learning opportunity for staff members whereas a SPA is paid to compensate staff members who effectively perform the full functions and responsibilities of higher-level posts.

Eligibility

6. UNFPA staff members holding a fixed-term, continuing or permanent appointment are eligible for a SPA.
7. A staff member who has been temporarily assigned the full functions of a higher-level post including through the direct assignment by the Executive Director, may be eligible for a SPA if they:
 - a. have discharged the full functions and responsibilities of a post which has been classified at a higher level than the post they otherwise encumber for a period exceeding three (3) months; and

- b. have demonstrated the ability to fully meet performance expectations of the higher-level post during the initial three (3) months of their temporary assignment.
8. Exceptionally, a SPA may be paid immediately from the first day of service at the higher-level post when:
 - a. a staff member is required to serve in a post which is classified more than one (1) grade level above the grade level of the post they otherwise encumber; or
 - b. a staff member in the General Service category is assigned to a post in the International Professional or National Professional Officer category; or
 - c. the temporary assignment to a higher-level post is immediately preceded by a period during which the staff member was in receipt of a SPA in relation to another post.
9. Perceived discrimination (any unfair treatment or arbitrary distinction based on, including but not limited to, a person's race, sex, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, language, social origin or other status) in assigning the duties of a higher level post without consideration for a SPA, could be considered to be prohibited conduct as per the [UNFPA Policy for the Prohibition of Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Abuse of Authority and Discrimination](#). A formal complaint of prohibited conduct should be reported to the Director, Office of Audit and Investigation Services.

Duration and extensions of SPA

10. A SPA is normally payable from the first day of the fourth month following the assignment to the acting appointment of the duties of a higher-level post. A SPA may be paid from the first day of the first month on an exceptional basis under the conditions established in paragraph 8.
11. In the case of a reclassification of a post, which results in the acting incumbent serving in a higher-level position, a SPA will only be paid as of three (3) months after the reclassification decision.

Request

12. The payment of a SPA must be requested by the first-level supervisor in agreement with the head of the business unit.
 - a. The first level supervisor is responsible for confirming that the staff member fully met performance expectations of the higher-level post during the initial three (3) months of their temporary assignment.

- b. A request to exceptionally pay the SPA from the first day of service at the higher-level post, as allowed under paragraphs 8 and 10 above, must be expressly included in the request submitted by the first-level supervisor.
13. The first-level supervisor must submit a request to the respective Human Resources Business Partner, who verifies eligibility criteria are met.

Approval

14. A request for SPA can be granted by the Human Resources Business Partner for up to six (6) months.
15. A SPA may be prorated to account for an assignment that begins or ends in the middle of the month.
16. Payment of a SPA beyond six (6) months is to be submitted by the head of the business unit to the Director, DHR through the respective Human Resources Business Partner.
17. The Director, DHR will advise whether the functions of the acting position could be filled through other means, including providing an opportunity to other suitable staff members for career development. Only if circumstances exist that are beyond the control of the business unit will a SPA be approved beyond six (6) months.

Discontinuation of SPA

18. The SPA will be discontinued under the following circumstances:
 - a. once the acting appointment expires or the acting incumbent has been notified of the end of their assignment;
 - b. upon discontinuation of the acting appointment when the staff member is selected for a higher graded post;
 - c. upon discontinuation of the acting appointment when the staff member ceases to perform the functions of the higher graded post at the staff member's request;
 - d. the staff member is separated from UNFPA;
 - e. the post of the acting position is reclassified to a lower grade; or
 - f. the post of the acting position is abolished.
19. The acting appointment can be foreshortened by the Head of Unit¹ for any reason at any time. The decision to end an acting appointment must be communicated to the acting incumbent in writing.

¹ Head of unit refers to the representative, division director, regional or sub regional 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.

20. Should the acting assignment be discontinued in the middle of the month, the SPA shall be prorated.
21. An acting incumbent shall continue to receive a SPA while on annual leave, sick leave or on duty travel.

Computation of SPA

22. The SPA shall be computed in the same manner as in the case of a promotion, under United Nations [staff rule 3.10](#).
23. The elements affected by an SPA, where applicable, are:
 - a. base salary,
 - b. staff assessment,
 - c. post adjustment,
 - d. dependency allowance,
 - e. mobility and hardship allowance,
 - f. medical and dental insurance premiums and subsidies,
 - g. language allowance,
 - h. overtime compensation,
 - i. night differential,
 - j. daily subsistence allowance, and
 - k. rental subsidy.
24. The SPA is not taken into consideration for purposes of:
 - a. pensionable remuneration;
 - b. contributions to and benefits payable by the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund;
 - c. life insurance premium;
 - d. compensation for service-incurred illness, injury or death;
 - e. separation payments, including commutation of annual leave, death benefit, termination indemnity, repatriation grant, surviving dependents' benefits under United Nations [staff rule 9.9](#).
25. A staff member in the General Service category receiving a SPA in respect of duties assigned at the International Professional or National Professional Officer category is not entitled to overtime payments.

III. Procedures

26. Requests for payment of a SPA will only be considered when accompanied by:

- a. indication of when the staff member first assumed the functions of the higher-level post on a continuous basis;
 - b. certification by the first-level supervisor that the acting incumbent fully meets the performance expectations of the position's functions;
 - c. justification for the selection of the acting incumbent, including why an acting incumbent holding a lower-level position than the acting position was selected;
 - d. statement by the head of the business unit clarifying the continued need for the functions of the acting position; and
 - e. current status of finding a permanent solution to carry out the functions without relying on an acting appointment that is incurring a SPA.
27. Requests for exceptional payment of a SPA from the first day of service at the higher-level post will only be considered when the conditions established in paragraph 8 are met and accompanied by:
- a. indication of when the staff member first assumed the functions of the higher-level post for service on a continuous basis;
 - b. justification for the selection of the acting incumbent, including why a staff member from a different category or more than one level below the acting position was selected;
 - c. statement by the head of the business unit clarifying the continued need for the functions of the acting position; and
 - d. current status of finding a permanent solution to carry out the functions without relying on an acting appointment that is incurring a SPA.
28. The approving Human Resources Business Partner shall communicate the decision in writing to the acting incumbent, the first level supervisor and the head of unit. If a SPA has been granted, the Human Resources Business Partner shall inform the UNDP Benefits and Entitlements Section or the Human Resources Focal Point as appropriate, in writing to proceed with payment of the allowance. The information provided should include the name and index number of the acting incumbent and the beginning and end date of the period for which a SPA is to be paid.
29. It is incumbent upon the first level supervisor and the head of unit to submit requests for payment of a SPA in a timely manner. Retroactive payments may be made only when a written claim is made within one year following the date on which the staff member would have been entitled to the initial payment of a SPA, in accordance with United Nations [staff rule 3.15](#).
30. Further to paragraph 16, a request for continued payment of a SPA must be submitted at least one (1) month before the six (6) month limit has been reached.
31. The request must include:

- a. a report on the performance of the acting incumbent in the position; and
- b. actions taken to fill the vacant post without relying on an acting appointment that is incurring a SPA.

IV. Other

Roles and Responsibilities

32. Staff member:

- a. Signs undertaking of commitment and assumption of roles of acting position.
- b. Demonstrates the competencies expected of the higher graded position and delivers the expected outputs.
- c. Holds regular performance discussions with their first-level supervisor.

33. First-level supervisor:

- a. Requests a SPA for the acting incumbent.
- b. Provides acting incumbents with all necessary assistance to enable them to perform duties efficiently.
- c. Holds regular performance discussions with the acting incumbent and provides feedback in particular when the acting incumbent does not demonstrate the competencies expected of the higher graded position or deliver the expected outputs.
- d. Offers professional development opportunities, if required.
- e. Ensures that the workload for the acting incumbent is reasonable and will discuss and agree the prioritization of the work.

34. Head of unit:

- a. Endorses requests for a SPA before they are forwarded to the Human Resources Business Partner.
- b. Reports actions taken to fill the vacant position when requesting payment of a SPA beyond six (6) months.
- c. Requests discontinuation of SPAs.

35. Human Resources Business Partner:

- a. Reviews staff member's eligibility for a SPA.
- b. Approves or denies a SPA as appropriate.
- c. Informs payroll unit when a SPA has been granted.
- d. Reviews requests for discontinuation of a SPA.
- e. Submits requests for a SPA beyond six (6) months to the Director, DHR for consideration.

36. Director, DHR:

- a. Reviews and approves or denies requests for extensions of a SPA beyond six (6) months.

Definitions

37. For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

- a. **Acting appointment:** A non-permanent appointment to a position to maintain the functions of a vacant post or of an encumbered post to backfill for a staff member who is temporarily absent.
- b. **Acting incumbent:** A staff member who is designated to perform the principal duties of another position on a non-permanent basis.
- c. **Acting position:** A position with functions that are carried out on a non-permanent basis by a staff member who otherwise encumbers another post.
- d. **Business unit:** The division, regional office or country office requiring an acting appointment.
- e. **First-level supervisor:** The person the acting incumbent is reporting to.
- f. **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.
- g. **Post:** a job that is classified to determine the appropriate category and grade level for compensation and budget purposes.
- h. **Special Post Allowance:** A non-pensionable allowance designed to compensate staff members, who assume the duties and responsibilities of another post at a higher grade level than that of the post they encumber.

V. Process Overview Flowchart(s)

No overview flow chart applicable.

VI. 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
Ineligible staff member receives SPA	Relevant information on eligibility must be provided	26 - 27	First-level supervisor	Eligibility is reviewed	35 a	Human Resources Business Partner
SPA is paid for an excessive period of time	SPA can only be granted up to six (6) months.	14	Human Resources Business Partner	Requests for SPA beyond six (6) months are presented to higher authority	16	Director, DHR
Acting incumbents does not perform their duties satisfactorily	‘Fully meeting performance expectations’ must be certified Regular performance discussions are held	26 b 33 c	First-level supervisor	Acting appointment can be foreshortened at any time	19 34 c	Head of Unit

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Vacant position not filled in a timely manner	Requests for payment of SPA must provide current status of finding a permanent solution	26 e 27 d	First-level supervisor	Request for SPA beyond six (6) months must include actions taken to fill vacant position	31 b 34 b	Head of Unit
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