

UNITED NATIONS

SECRETARIAT

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ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General
for Personnel Services

Subject: EMPLOYMENT OF SPOUSES

1. The purpose of this administrative instruction is to introduce, with effect from 1 January 1980, greater flexibility in the application of staff rule 104.10 with regard to the employment of spouses and to provide guidelines in regard to the assignment of married couples to the same duty station, with a view to fostering equal employment and career development opportunities for women in the United Nations Secretariat. The instruction also outlines the effect of the marriage of two staff members on their contractual status and entitlements.

Conditions for recruitment and service of spouses

2. The limitation in staff rule 104.10 on the appointment of persons related to a staff member shall no longer apply to the appointment of a spouse of a staff member provided that (a) the spouse is fully qualified for the post for which he or she is being considered, (b) the spouse is not given preference by virtue of the relationship and (c) under no circumstances shall either spouse be assigned to a post which is supervised or administered by the other. Furthermore, staff members whose official functions would involve them in the process of reaching or reviewing any decision affecting their spouses, shall disqualify themselves from undertaking or participating in such process.

Assignment or transfer of spouse

3. Where both husband and wife are employed in the United Nations Secretariat at the same duty station and one of them is assigned temporarily to another duty station for a specific period of not less than one year, or the staff member's assignment for a shorter period is extended so that the total anticipated period is not less than one year, the other spouse may be granted special leave without pay for the purpose of accompanying the assigned spouse to the new duty station. Subject to the availability of a post and to relevant qualifications, every effort

will be made to assist the accompanying spouse in securing employment with the United Nations at the new duty station.

4. When both spouses are serving with the Organization and one of them is transferred indefinitely to another duty station, every effort will be made to assist the other spouse in securing employment with the United Nations at the new location, subject to the availability of a post and to relevant qualifications. Depending on the circumstances of the case, such employment will be effected on the basis of a transfer, a reinstatement or a new appointment under staff rule 104.3. If the accompanying spouse is granted an appointment at the new duty station at the General Service level, such appointment will be made at the appropriate level of the local General Service salary scale with due regard, in establishing the grade, to the experience gained by the spouse at the previous duty station and the functions to be performed at the new duty station. The spouse will be granted international or local status, depending on the nature of the available posts at the new duty station and on his or her qualifications, provided, however, that, upon return, he or she will revert to his or her former grade and status at the original duty station.

5. Assistance in securing employment, as specified in paragraph 4 above, will be extended, where possible, to spouses working with another organization participating in the United Nations common system. Assistance to the accompanying spouse may also include securing employment with another organization of the common system. The United Nations, in its turn, will be prepared to offer similar assistance, where possible, to cases in which both spouses are working in other organizations of the common system.

Effect on contractual status and entitlements

6. The marriage of one staff member to another shall not affect the contractual status of either spouse, but their entitlements and other benefits shall be modified as provided in the relevant staff regulations and rules. The same modifications shall apply in the case of a staff member whose spouse is a staff member of another organization participating in the common system.

7. The provisions of the staff regulations and rules which apply in cases where both spouses are staff members of the United Nations Secretariat or where one of them is a United Nations staff member and the other is a staff member of another organization participating in the United Nations common system are indicated below. With regard to the entitlement to home leave, a change is introduced concerning travel time. A change is also introduced with regard to the entitlement to installation grant.

(a) Staff assessment

Where both husband and wife are staff members whose salaries are subject to the staff assessment rates specified in staff regulation 3.3 (b) (i), staff assessment shall apply to each at the single rate. If they have a dependent child or children, the dependency rate shall apply to the spouse having the higher salary level and the single rate to the other, in accordance with staff rule 103.17 (c).

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(b) Dependency allowances

Where both husband and wife are staff members, one of the spouses may claim dependency allowances for a dependent child or children, while the other spouse may claim only a dependency allowance for either a dependent parent, a dependent brother or a dependent sister, as defined in staff rule 103.24 (c).

(c) Post adjustment

Where both husband and wife are staff members in the Professional category or above, post adjustment shall be paid to each at the single rate, unless they have a dependent child or children. In that case, the dependency rate of post adjustment shall be paid to the spouse having the higher salary level and the single rate of post adjustment to the other, in accordance with staff rule 103.7 (b) (ii).

(d) Assignment allowance and mission subsistence allowance

Where both husband and wife are staff members entitled to assignment allowance or mission subsistence allowance in accordance with staff rules 103.22 and 103.21, respectively, the allowance will be paid at the single rate to each of them. If they have a dependent child or children, the allowance will be paid at the dependency rate to the spouse having the higher salary level and at the single rate to the other spouse.

(e) Installation grant

Where both husband and wife are staff members travelling at United Nations expense to a duty station, installation grant shall be paid to each in respect of himself or herself. If they have a dependent child or children, installation grant in respect of such child or children will be paid to the staff member on whom each child is recognized to be dependent. With regard to the lump sum provided for in staff rule 107.20 (c) (iii), the amount payable to both spouses jointly shall not exceed the maximum of \$1,200.00.

(f) Home leave travel

Where both husband and wife are staff members eligible for home leave, in accordance with staff rule 105.3 (k):

(i) each staff member may either exercise his or her home leave entitlement or accompany the spouse, and

(ii) the dependent child or children, if any, may accompany either parent,

provided that the frequency of travel does not exceed once in every two years. A staff member who chooses to accompany his or her spouse shall be granted travel time appropriate to the travel involved.

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(c) Travel expenses on separation from service

Where both husband and wife are staff members and either or both are entitled to the payment of travel expenses on separation from service, in accordance with staff rules 107.2 (c) and 107.3 (b) travel expenses shall be paid for each only in respect of their own separation from service.

(h) Removal costs on separation from service

Where both husband and wife are staff members serving at the same duty station and each is entitled to removal of personal effects and household goods, in accordance with staff rule 107.27 (f), the maximum weight and volume that may be removed at United Nations expense for both of them shall be that provided for a staff member with a spouse or dependent child residing at the official duty station.

(i) Repatriation grant

Where both husband and wife are staff members and each is entitled, on separation from service, to payment of a repatriation grant, in accordance with staff rule 109.5 (k), payment shall be made to each at the single rate, according to their respective entitlements, unless they have a dependent child or children. In that case, the first staff member to be separated may claim payment at the rate applicable to a staff member with a spouse or dependent child, and the other staff member, on separation from service, may opt for payment at the single rate for the period of qualifying service subsequent to the separation of the first staff member, or, if eligible, at the rate applicable to a staff member with a spouse or dependent child for the whole period of the qualifying service of the second spouse, less the amount of the repatriation grant paid to the first staff member.

(j) Loss of entitlement to repatriation grant and to return travel expenses and removal costs on separation from service

In accordance with staff rules 107.4 (b), 107.28 (c) and 109.5 (e), entitlement to return travel expenses and removal costs on separation from service and to repatriation grant shall cease, respectively, if travel has not commenced within six months, removal within one year and a claim for payment of the repatriation grant has not been submitted within two years of the date of separation. However, where both husband and wife are staff members, these time-limits shall begin to run with respect to both staff members from the date of separation of the spouse who separates later.

8. Without prejudice to the provisions of paragraph 7 above, where both husband and wife are staff members and maintain separate households because they are assigned to different duty stations, the Secretary-General may decide to maintain such separate entitlements and benefits, provided that this is not inconsistent with any staff regulation or other decision of the General Assembly.

9. Staff rule 104.10 and other relevant staff rules will be amended as appropriate.
