



23 December 2015

Administrative instruction

Sabbatical leave programme

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin [ST/SGB/2009/4](#), and for the purpose of defining the conditions under which staff members may be granted sabbatical leave, promulgates the following:

Section 1 General provisions

1.1 The objectives of the sabbatical leave programme are:

(a) To provide an opportunity for staff members to bring added value to the Organization and enhance their professional growth through the pursuit of projects of study or research on issues related to the work of the United Nations and to promote the spirit of continuous learning as stipulated in the Secretary-General's bulletin on the learning and development policy ([ST/SGB/2009/9](#));

(b) To enhance dialogue and build contacts between the United Nations and other organizations and institutions engaged in related work worldwide, as well as to expose United Nations staff members to state-of-the-art research and practices.

1.2 Sabbatical leave may be approved for eligible staff members seeking to pursue projects of study and research in:

(a) Universities that are recognized, accredited or otherwise sanctioned by competent national authorities of the country in which the university is based;

(b) Independent institutions worldwide;

(c) Participating research and training centres of the United Nations University;

(d) Institutions that are members of the Academic Council on the United Nations System.

1.3 Sabbatical leave shall not be approved for projects of study or research aimed at preparing the staff member for examinations for employment or promotion in the United Nations or elsewhere (e.g. the young professionals programme and equivalent examinations in other international organizations, competitive language examinations).



1.4 Staff members shall be responsible for undertaking the following before applying for the sabbatical leave programme:

(a) Identifying the institution in which they propose to carry out their studies;

(b) Securing their acceptance by that institution for the purpose of carrying out the proposed studies at a specified time during the year for which the sabbatical leave is requested;

(c) Ascertaining the type of support services and facilities that the institution is prepared to provide during the period of sabbatical leave.

Section 2

Eligibility

2.1 The programme is open to United Nations Secretariat staff members who meet the criteria in sections 2.2 to 2.5.

2.2 At the time of application, staff members must have completed five years of continuous service with the Secretariat under continuing, permanent or fixed-term appointments under the Staff Rules and Staff Regulations of the United Nations. For the purpose of the present section, the five years of continuous service shall include periods of special leave with full pay or special leave with partial pay or without pay of one month or less. Continuous periods of special leave with partial pay or without pay exceeding one month or service on a loan or secondment outside the Secretariat shall not be considered as breaking the continuity of service but shall not be counted towards the five-year continuous service requirement.

2.3 At the time of application, staff members must hold a fixed-term, continuing or permanent appointment with the Secretariat and undertake not to resign before completing two years of service following sabbatical leave.¹

2.4 From the time of application until the end of the sabbatical leave, a staff member must continuously serve the Secretariat, subject to staff rule 4.13 (c). A staff member who, following the time of application, has been loaned or seconded outside the Secretariat or placed on special leave with partial pay or without pay exceeding one month shall not be eligible.

2.5 Staff members who have previously completed a sabbatical leave shall not be eligible to apply or be selected for another such leave for five years from the end of their previous sabbatical leave.

Section 3

Duration

Sabbatical leave may be approved for a period not exceeding four months, subject to release of the staff member by the head of department or office. Additional time in the form of flexible working arrangements, accrued annual leave or special leave without pay may be granted by the head of department or office in

¹ The period of service will exclude special leave with partial pay or without pay exceeding one month.

accordance with section 5.3 of the present instruction. If service is interrupted by periods of special leave without pay authorized under staff rule 5.3 during sabbatical leave for reasons other than completion of the project of study or research, the sabbatical leave shall end on the day preceding such special leave without pay for the staff member without application of section 5.8.

Section 4

Application and selection process

4.1 An information circular on the sabbatical leave programme shall be issued every year, inviting staff members to apply for the programme and stipulating the application deadline, procedures and additional conditions for the relevant cycle, including the format and standard of the report on the project of study or research.

4.2 Eligible staff members interested in the programme shall submit an application in accordance with the provisions contained in the information circular.

4.3 Applications shall be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

(a) Relevance of the project of study or research to the Organization and to the current functions or potential career path of the staff member;

(b) Potential benefit to and impact on the Organization's work;

(c) Feasibility of the project of study or research, including whether it can be completed within the proposed period;

(d) Appropriateness of the planned methodology;

(e) Quality of the proposal, including demonstrating awareness of the latest developments in the area of the project of study or research;

(f) Suitability of the staff member and the proposed institution to carry out the project of study or research.

4.4 Applications shall be endorsed by the respective head of department or office and submitted to the Office of Human Resources Management. Applications not containing the required information in accordance with the information circular will not be considered.

4.5 The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management shall make a final selection on the basis of the recommendations of the selection committee. The committee shall be composed of representatives of the Academic Council on the United Nations System and senior United Nations staff members with experience in the substantive areas of the proposals submitted for consideration. The committee shall evaluate applications in a competitive manner in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3 and shall recommend a maximum number of 30 applications. In making its final recommendations, the committee shall endeavour to ensure diversity with regard to the functions, levels, locations, nationalities and gender of the endorsed candidates, as well as the subject matter of the project.

4.6 Staff members shall be informed in writing of the decision regarding their application.

4.7 Staff members shall accept in writing within 20 working days of having been informed of their selection the terms and conditions specified in the present instruction, as complemented by the information circular for the applicable sabbatical leave programme cycle, and in the declaration annexed to the present instruction. Should the selected staff members not accept the terms and conditions within 20 working days, the selection for sabbatical leave will be withdrawn.

Section 5

Terms and conditions of sabbatical leave

5.1 Staff members shall commence sabbatical leave within one year of selection. Under exceptional circumstances, such as exigencies of service or illness, staff members may make a request to the Office of Human Resources Management for the deferral of sabbatical leave to the subsequent year. Such requests shall be made in writing with the endorsement of the head of department or office. Requests that do not meet these conditions shall not be considered. The Office of Human Resources Management may authorize the deferral of sabbatical leave, taking into consideration the circumstances of the staff member, as well as the requirements for the coordination of the overall sabbatical leave programme. In the absence of such an authorization, the Office of Human Resources Management shall withdraw the approval of sabbatical leave of staff members who are unable to commence sabbatical leave within one year of selection.

5.2 The staff member shall be placed on special leave with full pay for the sabbatical leave period. Staff members on sabbatical leave shall continue to receive salary, post adjustment and all related entitlements, such as rental subsidy and education grant, applicable to their regular duty station. No additional payments shall be made by the United Nations to the staff member to cover the expenses of sabbatical leave.

5.3 Staff members shall complete the project of study or research within the period approved for sabbatical leave. A staff member requiring additional time may request the approval of flexible working arrangements, annual leave or special leave without pay for the purpose of completing the project of study or research. Such additional time must be requested at least two weeks prior to the end of the sabbatical leave and, if approved, shall take effect immediately following the end of sabbatical leave for a total period of less than two months. Additional time may be requested only once.

5.4 Flexible working arrangements approved under section 5.3 shall not entail any reduction of the regular number of working hours and shall be instituted in compliance with the relevant policy on flexible working arrangements. Work on the project of study or research may not be undertaken during working hours. The time limit on flexible working arrangements for the purpose of completing the project of study or research under section 5.3 above shall not affect the decision to approve such arrangements for reasons unrelated to the project of study or research.

5.5 Within two months of the end of sabbatical leave or two months of the end of any additional time approved under section 5.3, staff members shall submit to their head of department or office and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management a report on the project of study or research that they have undertaken according to the format and standard prescribed in the applicable

information circular. The report is accepted if the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management determines that it is in conformity with the prescribed format and standard.

5.6 If the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management finds that the report does not conform to the prescribed format and standard, the staff member shall revise the report and submit it by a date specified by the Office of Human Resources Management. If the resubmitted report fails to meet the expected format or standard, section 5.8 shall apply.

5.7 The report submitted following sabbatical leave may be shared within the Organization by the Office of Human Resources Management as deemed appropriate. To assess the impact of the sabbatical leave programme, during the year after the completion of the programme the Office of Human Resources Management may require staff members and their supervisors to provide more information to determine the benefits of the programme to the Organization and the staff member.

5.8 Sabbatical leave with full pay shall be converted to annual leave to the extent possible and thereafter to special leave without pay if a staff member:

(a) Fails to complete the project of study or research set out in the proposal approved according to section 4.5;

(b) Fails to submit the report as required in sections 5.5 and 5.6;

(c) Resigns from the Organization during sabbatical leave;

(d) Resigns before completing two years of service following sabbatical leave;¹ or

(e) Fails to comply with any other terms and conditions specified in the present instruction, as complemented by the information circular for the applicable sabbatical leave programme cycle, and in the declaration annexed to the present instruction.

5.9 Staff members may be required to relinquish all rights, including title, copyright and patent rights, of the work performed as part of sabbatical leave in favour of the United Nations.

Section 6

Cash or in-kind benefits from entities other than the United Nations

6.1 Staff members may receive scholarships or stipends for room, board or travel expenses to support their sabbatical leave from an entity other than the United Nations with the pre-approval of the Office of Human Resources Management.

6.2 Receiving benefits from an entity other than the United Nations shall not be approved if:

(a) It is not generally in line with the amount that would have been payable by the United Nations for accommodation, travel and subsistence allowance for similar official travel;

(b) It is conditional on the staff member's performance of such occupational activities as teaching or researching for an entity other than the United Nations;

(c) It may adversely reflect on the status of staff members as international civil servants or on the integrity, independence and impartiality required by that status; or

(d) It is against the interest of the Organization.

6.3 To be considered for approval under the present section, staff members shall apply in writing to the Office of Human Resources Management at least four weeks before the beginning of the sabbatical leave period. The request must include:

(a) The identity of the entity offering to grant the benefits;

(b) The cash value of the benefits, or the estimated cash value for benefits in kind with an explanation of the calculation of the estimate;

(c) The nature, purpose and conditions of the benefits;

(d) Any other benefits that the staff member is approved to receive under the present section.

Section 7

Final provisions

7.1 The present administrative instruction shall enter into force on the date of its issuance.

7.2 Administrative instruction [ST/AI/2011/1](#) of 23 March 2011 is hereby abolished.

(Signed) Yukio **Takasu**
Under-Secretary-General for Management

Annex

United Nations



Nations Unies

HEADQUARTERS • SIEGE NEW YORK, NY 10017

TEL.: 1 (212) 963.1234 • FAX: 1 (212) 963.4879

DECLARATION

I have read and understood the policies and terms and conditions applicable to the sabbatical leave programme in administrative instruction [ST/AI/2015/5](#) as complemented by the information circular issued for the sabbatical leave programme for which I applied. I hereby agree to all the terms and conditions of the administrative instruction and the information circular, including but not limited to the following:

1. I understand that sabbatical leave is contingent upon my continuous service with the United Nations until the end of the sabbatical leave and subject to my release from duties by the head of office or department where I currently serve or will be serving at the time of the sabbatical leave.
2. I will complete the project of study or research that I proposed and based on which I was selected (the "Project") during the period approved by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management. If additional time is granted according to section 5.3 of [ST/AI/2015/5](#), I will complete the Project within that time period.
3. I understand that I will be placed on special leave with full pay for the sabbatical leave period not exceeding four (4) months as approved by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management. I understand that additional time approved to complete the Project according to section 5.3 of [ST/AI/2015/5](#) may take the form of flexible working arrangements, accrued annual leave or special leave without pay. I understand that during periods of special leave without pay I will be responsible for any and all insurance and pension contributions.
4. I will submit a report on the Project within two months of the end of sabbatical leave or two months of the end of any additional time approved under section 5.3 of [ST/AI/2015/5](#). The report will be accepted if the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management determines that it is in conformity with the format and standard prescribed in the relevant information circular. I understand that I may be asked to give presentations of any findings or other research results to officials of the Organization.
5. Should I fail to complete the Project or to submit the report on the Project, or resign from the Organization during sabbatical leave or without completing two (2) years of service following sabbatical leave, I understand and agree that the entire period of sabbatical leave with full pay will be charged against

annual leave to the extent possible and any remainder converted to special leave without pay, with applicable recovery of overpayment of monies or restitution in accordance with paragraph 6 below.

6. I will make restitution for the salaries, allowances or other benefits received by me for the period of sabbatical leave with full pay which is converted to special leave without pay. I understand that such amounts will be deducted from my salaries, wages and other emoluments as authorized under staff rule 3.18 and section 2.2 of [ST/AI/2009/1](#) on recovery of overpayments made to staff members, unless alternate means of payments or deductions are authorized by the Organization. In case I separate from the Organization before the full amount is returned or recovered, I will make a cash refund, failing which the remaining debt will be offset against any monies owed to me by the Organization.
7. I understand that I may be required to relinquish all rights, including title, copyright and patent rights, in any work performed by me as part of my sabbatical leave (the "Work") in favour of the United Nations. I warrant that: (a) the Work will not infringe the copyright or other proprietary right of any other persons or entities; (b) the Work will contain no libellous, defamatory or unlawful content; and (c) the Work will not invade the privacy or other personal rights of anyone. In the event that I retain all rights on the Work, I warrant that I will seek prior authorization for any publication of the Work, in accordance with [ST/AI/2000/13](#) on outside activities.

Name of staff member

Date
