



unesco

United Nations
Educational, Scientific
and Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

42 C

General Conference

42nd session, Paris 2023

42 C/44 Add.2

7 November 2023

Original: French

Item 10.1 of the agenda

STAFF REGULATIONS AND STAFF RULES

ADDENDUM 2

COMMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION OF UNESCO (ISAU)

OUTLINE

In accordance with Item 9.2.7 of the UNESCO Human Resources Manual, the International Staff Association of UNESCO (ISAU) submits its comments on the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules (document 42 C/44).

1. The document presented by the Administration on the subject of Staff Regulations and Staff Rules (42 C/44) is a regular report, mandated by the legal texts and required as an obligation of accountability and transparency towards the Organization's governing bodies. It also serves to remind us that there are rules that must be respected. Circumventing or even violating them leads to out-of-court settlements and many lost cases before the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT), resulting in unnecessary expense for the Organization.
2. The Staff Regulations and Staff Rules set out the general framework, which is then further developed in the provisions and policies contained in the Human Resources Manual. We must therefore ensure that this general framework meets the requirements of legality, equity and justice, so that the particular rules that derive from it are less likely to generate negative situations for staff and the Organization.



Job: 202303954

3. The first item addressed in document 42 C/44 concerns flexible working arrangements. In this area, the new flexible working arrangements policy, which includes, inter alia, so-called flexible or staggered working hours, does not reflect what the Administration considers to be “a broader well-being initiative”. Imposing core working hours of 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 2 to 5 p.m. is not likely to “support employees in managing the demands of working life”. In this context, it is important to remember that staff well-being is “the area which had made the least amount of progress” in recent years, according to the Division of Internal Oversight Services (IOS) evaluation of the former Human Resources Management Strategy (IOS/EVS/PI 207, p. 28), which was conducted after the publication of the flexible working arrangements policy.

4. Agile and flexible ways of working are also included in the strategic objectives of UNESCO’s Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029. Staff therefore have a legitimate right to expect the Administration to honour its commitments and take into account the conclusions of the IOS evaluation in order to make improvements to the current policy.

5. A policy needs to be able to evolve and adapt to the future. Adapting in this way would, for instance, involve implementing working hours that are truly flexible. Additionally, staff members should not have undue arrival or departure times imposed on them on the grounds that this is in line with the way their team operates. Teamwork should not be used as an excuse to render the reform of working arrangements meaningless, whether it concern staggered working hours or telecommuting. Lastly, the Administration should consider introducing other working arrangements, such as compressed work schedules, which are already being implemented by many United Nations organizations.

6. The second topic addressed in the document is geographical mobility. We welcome the changes made in this area, in particular the decision to allow the Director-General to limit eligibility to apply for vacant posts to internal candidates, and to authorize staff members participating in the mobility exercise to apply for higher-level posts.

7. While ISAU notes with interest the definition of the term “internal candidates”, we feel that its scope is too restrictive. This term covers only those on fixed-term contracts and excludes all other categories of staff, including those hired on Project Appointments (PA) for long periods. This choice is all the more regrettable given that the “internal candidates” category could resolve a number of unfair situations by offering these employees the possibility of finally being recognized and regularized. ISAU therefore requests that long-term PAs be considered as “internal candidates” and be able to apply for posts advertised within the framework of geographical mobility.