



12 August 2013

*(Amended text to include
ST/AI/2013/3/Amend.2 issued on
28 Aug 2016 and Amend.3 issued
on 1 May 2018)*

Administrative instruction

Official travel

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of the Secretary-General's bulletin [ST/SGB/2009/4](#), and for the purpose of implementing section VI, para. 14, of General Assembly resolution [67/254 A](#) and staff rules 7.1 to 7.9 and 7.11, hereby promulgates the following:

Section 1

General provisions and scope

1.1 The provisions of the present instruction shall apply to official travel of:

- (a) Staff members under conditions established in staff rule 7.1;
- (b) Eligible family members as defined in staff rule 7.2;

(c) All other authorized United Nations travellers who are not staff members, except as provided in section 1.2, below whose standard of travel accommodation by air shall be established in accordance with section 4.5 below.

1.2 The provisions of the present instruction shall not affect the standard of accommodation of air travel of members of organs and/or subsidiary organs, committees, councils and commissions of the United Nations, which shall be based on the provisions of the Secretary-General's bulletin [ST/SGB/107/Rev.6](#), or as superseded.

1.3 In accordance with staff rule 1.4, subject to the needs of the Organization, staff members may be called upon to work beyond normal working hours established for each duty station. In this regard, staff members may be required to travel on official business during any day of the week, including weekends or on official holidays.

Section 2

Official travel of staff members and their eligible family members

2.1 Official travel may be authorized for staff members in accordance with staff rule 7.1 and the conditions specified by the Secretary-General in respect of specific forms of official travel.



2.2 Official travel may be authorized for eligible family members of staff holding fixed-term or continuing¹ appointments under the Staff Rules in accordance with staff rule 7.2 and the conditions specified by the Secretary-General in respect of specific forms of official travel.

2.3 Pursuant to staff rule 7.1 (c), the Secretary-General may reject any claim for payment or reimbursement of travel expenses which are incurred by a staff member in contravention of any provision of the Staff Rules and the present administrative instruction.

Section 3

Authorization for official travel

3.1 Under staff rule 7.4, all official travel must be authorized in writing before it is undertaken. In exceptional cases, staff members may be orally authorized to travel. In such cases, written confirmation shall be required as soon as possible, and no later than two calendar weeks after completion of travel.

3.2 Prior to authorizing any official travel, the primary consideration should be whether direct face-to-face contact is necessary for mandate implementation. If not, then alternative methods should be employed. Therefore, programme managers are required to certify on form TTS.5 that alternative methods, such as videoconference, audioconference or other remote business practices, such as online meetings, have been carefully reviewed, were found not to be effective and that travel is therefore necessary.

3.3 In accordance with staff rule 7.8, all travel arrangements for individuals travelling on behalf of the United Nations, including advance booking and purchase of tickets, should be finalized 16 calendar days in advance of commencement of official travel. Programme managers will be required to provide justification on all official travel arrangements that could not be finalized 16 calendar days in advance of the commencement of travel. Any changes to an approved travel authorization shall require justification and certification by the appropriate programme manager and the relevant executive or administrative office.

3.4 Official travel for senior officials is further regulated as follows:

(a) Official travel by senior officials at the Under-Secretary-General level and by heads of mission in the field shall be recorded and approved in the time management module of Umoja through the employee self-service portal;

(b) Wherever feasible, Under-Secretaries-General and heads of mission shall inform the local United Nations office or mission of their presence;

(c) To the extent possible, senior officials should avoid attending the same event;

(d) Travel undertaken by senior officials at the Assistant Secretary-General level shall be authorized by their respective heads of department.

¹ In accordance with staff rule 13.1 (a) all permanent appointments shall be governed by the terms and conditions applicable to continuing appointments under the Staff Regulations and the Staff Rules, except as provided otherwise under the same staff rule (13.1 (a)).

Travel provisions relating to the policy on breast feeding

3.5 Pursuant to section 4 of the Secretary-General's bulletin [ST/SGB/2003/14](#), staff members who are nursing mothers with an infant under one year of age may elect to have the infant travel with them on official business travel, except when the staff member travels to a non-family duty station.

3.6 When the travel of an infant is permitted, in addition to the travel expenses authorized for the mother, the Organization shall pay for the infant:

(a) 10 per cent of the cost of the mother's ticket, including taxes and surcharges; and

(b) 10 per cent of the applicable daily subsistence allowance.

3.7 Further to the provisions of section 3.6 above, no travel expenses shall be paid on account of the infant's caretakers.

Medical and security clearance

3.8 In accordance with section 2 of administrative instruction [ST/AI/2011/3](#), entitled "Medical clearances", candidates and staff members authorized to travel at the Organization's expense on travel on initial appointment, re-employment, assignment or transfer are required to receive the necessary medical clearance in order to ensure that they are fit to travel. After recruitment, and in accordance with the provisions of section 4 of the administrative instruction, medical clearance is required to ensure that the staff member continues to maintain a level of fitness that enables him or her to perform the functions assigned when on travel status.

3.9 All United Nations travellers are required to obtain the necessary security clearance required for their travel. In this connection, all travellers are to visit the website of the Department of Safety and Security for more details on how to manage their trips and obtain security clearance.²

3.10 A prerequisite to undertaking official travel is the successful completion of all required security training, including the course on basic security in the field for all official travel and the course on advanced security in the field for official travel to any field location. No travel should be authorized without the successful completion of those courses, as applicable.

Section 4**Mode, dates, route and standard of travel accommodation**

4.1 The standard of accommodation for official travel shall be determined in accordance with staff rule 7.6, as complemented by the provisions of this section.

4.2 Pursuant to staff rule 7.6 (f), the normal route for all official travel shall be the most economical route available, provided that the total additional time of the whole journey does not exceed the most direct route by four hours or more.

4.3 For official travel by air, the standard of accommodation shall be economy class, except as provided in section 4.3 (a) to (f) below:

² See <https://trip.dss.un.org>.

(a) In order to perform their functions, for staff members in the security detail of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, travel in the same cabin as that of the protectee shall be provided for one member of the assigned security detail;

(b) For the Deputy Secretary-General, Under-Secretaries-General, Assistant Secretaries-General and, where applicable, their eligible family members, the class immediately below first class shall be provided for travel on official business and on appointment, assignment or separation, home leave and family visit, irrespective of the duration of the particular flight;

(c) For staff members below the Assistant Secretary-General level and, where applicable, their eligible family members, the class immediately below first class (business class cabin, where available) shall be provided for travel on official business and on appointment, assignment or separation when a single-leg journey is 9 hours or more and for multi-leg journeys if the combined travel time of the journey is 11 hours or more, including a maximum of 2 hours of connection time, provided that the journey to the next destination resumes within 12 hours;

(d) The provisions of section 4.3 (c) shall not apply to travel for the purpose of learning and development (training).³ The standard of accommodation for such travel shall be economy class. This provision shall not apply to staff members travelling as instructors, whose travel accommodation shall be determined in accordance with section 4.3 (c);

(e) When official business travel is combined with home leave or family visit travel, the provisions of sections 4.3 (c) and 12 do not apply. The standard of accommodation for official business travel combined with home leave or family visit travel shall be economy class;

(f) For the purposes of travel for medical, safety or security reasons or in other appropriate cases, including when accompanying a staff member's remains as an escort, when, in the opinion of the Secretary-General, there are compelling reasons for paying such expenses, the standard of accommodation for travel shall be economy class. In instances where an escort (a staff member or an eligible family member) is authorized to accompany a medical evacuee, the standard of travel accommodation for the escort shall be determined on the basis of the standard of travel accommodation of the evacuee. A standard of accommodation for air travel higher than that authorized above may be approved on an exceptional basis in accordance with sections 4.8 and 4.9 below.

4.4 Where possible, staff members are encouraged to voluntarily downgrade their entitlement from the class immediately below first class to premium economy cabins or premium seats, without restriction to the least costly economy service. The provisions of section 7 below shall also apply.

4.5 When travel is authorized for consultants and individual contractors, economy class shall be the standard of accommodation for air travel in all cases irrespective

³ See [ST/SGB/2009/9](#).

of the duration of the journey, unless determined otherwise by the Secretary-General, taking into account the circumstances of the traveller (such as for health reasons) and the interests of the Organization as provided in sections 4.8 and 4.9 below.

4.6 Air travel accommodation under the applicable standards defined in section 4.3 above shall be provided in accordance with section 4.2, including discounted airfares. The Organization shall assume responsibility for the surcharge that may be imposed after tickets have been issued if changes in the original travel plans were necessitated by the Organization or for other compelling reasons. However, where the normal standard of accommodation is unavailable and the cost of daily subsistence allowance while waiting for the next available seat would be greater than the additional cost of the higher standard of travel, an upgrade in travel accommodation is allowable.

4.7 For official travel to missions or conferences, special arrangements may be made for group travel, in which case the provisions of section 4.3 (a) to (f) may not apply.

4.8 A standard of accommodation for air travel higher than that authorized under normally applicable rules may be approved on an exceptional basis when, in the opinion of the Secretary-General, special circumstances warrant it, such as for duly certified medical reasons. Requests for all exceptions shall be submitted in writing to the Under-Secretary-General for Management well in advance of travel. Such requests shall also be made using form TTS.3.

4.9 Pursuant to section 4.8, in support of the request for an exception on medical grounds, a medical report and any supporting documentation should be submitted directly to the Director of the Medical Services Division in New York indicating what specific negative medical outcome will be prevented by travel in a higher class. The supporting medical report should indicate the reasons why the conditions of travel in the normally authorized standard of travel accommodation cannot be medically tolerated, as compared to the conditions of a normal working day.

Section 5

Travel time other than on home leave or family visit

Travel time by the normal mode

5.1 Pursuant to section 4.2, in determining the duration of a journey, either by air or by the fastest available surface mode of transportation when air travel is not feasible, actual travel time spent during a working day shall not be charged to annual leave. Neither shall annual leave be charged for a rest period in accordance with section 5.4 below or for an unavoidable stopover.

5.2 A staff member shall not be entitled to additional days of annual leave, overtime payment or compensatory time off to compensate for official travel on days considered non-working days at the staff member's duty station.

Travel time by other than the normal mode

5.3 Staff members travelling for all or part of a journey by a route other than the approved route, or wholly or in part by surface when air transportation is the normal mode, or by other than the fastest available surface means of transportation when air

travel is not feasible or cost-effective, shall be granted travel time not chargeable to annual leave only for the time that would have been required had the travel been undertaken by the approved route and normal mode.

Rest periods

5.4 Rest periods for travel by air shall be limited to staff travelling in economy class. In this respect, staff members shall be granted rest periods before commencing duties if the scheduled time for the journey in economy class is more than six hours. In such cases, the staff member shall not normally be required to commence duty within 12 hours of arriving at the destination.

5.5 In computing the scheduled time under section 5.4, a maximum of two hours shall be counted for each necessary waiting period between connecting flights.

5.6 Staff members who travel at the class immediately below first class are expected to report to duty within a reasonable time (i.e. four hours) upon arriving at a given destination.

Staff members attending consecutive meetings

5.7 Staff members who are required to attend consecutive meetings in different duty stations in close proximity, or in the same duty station, pending the commencement of the second meeting, may remain in either of the two duty stations, which would normally be the duty station with the lower daily subsistence allowance rate, while taking into consideration any security-related issues and the preparatory needs of the next meeting. The staff member may remain on official travel status during the intervening days if there is a maximum of three calendar days between meetings. The decision on whether a staff member may remain on official travel status will be based on the welfare and health of the staff member, the related cost savings and any security-related concerns. Staff shall be expected to work remotely where possible for any intervening days authorized between meetings.

Section 6

Travel time on home leave or family visit

6.1 For travel undertaken during a working day on both the outward and the return journey on home leave or family visit, including under the lump-sum option set out in section 12 below, staff members shall be granted a fixed amount of travel time not chargeable to annual leave, based on the approved route as follows:

- (a) One day for each journey of 11 hours or less;
- (b) A maximum of two days for each journey of more than 11 hours.

In computing the duration of a journey for the purpose of travel time, each necessary waiting period between connecting flights shall be counted. No travel time shall be granted for travel undertaken on a weekend or official holiday at the duty station of the staff member.

6.2 There shall be no entitlement to subsistence allowance for travel time.

Section 7**Deviations for personal convenience from the approved route, mode of transportation or standard of accommodation**

7.1 Pursuant to staff rules 7.6 (d), (f) and (m), when staff members or their eligible family members are permitted to travel for their personal convenience by a more economical route, mode of transportation or standard of accommodation than the approved standard for the authorized destination as determined in line with section 4.2, their entitlement in respect of a particular journey shall be limited to the actual route, mode of transportation or standard of accommodation used at the rate paid by the traveller.

7.2. Further to section 7.1, the use of a more economical fare shall not entitle the staff member to apply savings to any deviation from the approved itinerary or to stopovers or further transportation. The staff member shall be responsible for any delays, penalties or additional expenses incurred as a result of taking a lower fare or making special arrangements, including deviations for personal convenience.

Section 8**Reimbursement for travel by private motor vehicle**

8.1 Pursuant to staff rule 7.7, staff members may be authorized to travel by private motor vehicle. Such authorization must be made in writing prior to the commencement of travel.

8.2 In instances where the Organization provides authorization for travel by a private motor vehicle, the total reimbursable amount that a staff member may claim in respect of a particular journey shall be limited to the maximum travel expenses to which the staff member would have been entitled had he or she and his or her eligible family members, if any, travelled by the approved route and mode of transportation and standard of accommodation.

8.3 The maximum travel expenses for this purpose shall be limited to and calculated on the basis of:

(a) The cost of the most economical airfare, including charges for accompanied excess baggage if applicable; or

(b) When air travel is not feasible, the cost of travel by the fastest available surface mode of transportation using the appropriate standard of accommodation as determined in the present administrative instruction.

Reimbursable expenses

8.4 Subject to presentation of relevant proof, reimbursement of expenses related to the authorized travel by privately owned vehicle may include:

(a) Operating costs on the basis of total vehicle mileage by the most economical route, as shown in official road guides, at established rates applicable to the area in which travel is undertaken;

(b) Road, bridge or tunnel tolls;

(c) Where the journey requires that a portion of travel be by train, a vehicular roll-on/roll-off ferry or a ship, or a combination of these modes of

transportation, reimbursable expenses shall be limited to port charges and the cost of passage for both the vehicle and the authorized passengers;

(d) Extra expenses incurred for transportation of accompanied excess baggage, if applicable.

Travel of more than one United Nations traveller in the same vehicle

8.5 In case of travel by more than one United Nations traveller in the same vehicle, only one of the travellers is entitled to claim reimbursement for the expenses under section 8.4 (a), (b) and (d).

Travel time

8.6 A staff member who is authorized to travel by private motor vehicle shall be granted travel time, not chargeable to annual leave, equivalent to the actual travel day(s) that would have been required had the staff member travelled by air by the approved route and mode of transportation, subject to the provisions of sections 5 and 6.

Travel for personal convenience

8.7 Those authorized to travel under the provisions of the present instruction who elect to travel by private motor vehicle for personal convenience should obtain prior authorization from the appropriate executive or administrative officer or, where applicable, the local human resources management office, by submitting a written request indicating, among other things, the purpose of travel, the planned itinerary and the names of accompanying family members or colleagues. As with all other travel claims, request for reimbursement of travel expenses (other than mileage) must be supported by proper receipts and ticket stubs.

8.8 Pursuant to appendix D to the Staff Rules, compensation in the event of death, injury or illness shall not be payable in the case of private motor vehicle transportation sanctioned or authorized by the United Nations solely at the request and for the convenience of the staff member. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 22 E (I) and staff rule 1.8, staff members who own or drive motor cars are required to carry public liability and property damage insurance in an amount adequate to insure them against claims arising from injury or death to other persons or from damage to the property of others caused by their cars.

Rates of reimbursement

8.9 The rates of reimbursement indicated in section 8.4 (a) above, which are applicable to different groups of countries and territories, shall be updated from time to time on the basis of changes in the operating costs in the area concerned. Changes in rates shall be communicated to the staff by means of information circular.

Section 9
Terminal expenses

9.1 In accordance with staff rule 7.9, terminal expenses incurred for each required trip between the airport or other point of arrival or departure and the hotel or other place of dwelling shall be paid in a fixed amount in respect of the staff member and, where applicable, each eligible family member authorized to travel at United

Nations expense. Such fixed amounts, and any reduction applicable when official United Nations, government or any other type of transport is made available for the trip, shall be set out in the information circular on official travel issued by the Under-Secretary-General for Management;

9.2 No terminal expenses shall be paid in respect of:

- (a) An intermediate stop that is not authorized;
- (b) An intermediate forced connection of less than six hours that does not involve leaving the terminal or is exclusively for the purpose of making an onward connection;
- (c) Travel using the lump-sum option; or
- (d) Travel by privately owned motor vehicle.

9.3 Terminal expenses paid in accordance with section 9.1 shall be deemed to cover all expenses for transportation between the airport or other point of arrival or departure and the hotel or other place of dwelling, including transfer of baggage and other related incidental charges.

9.4 Claims for payment of terminal expenses shall be made in accordance with the provisions of section 13 below.

Section 10 **Miscellaneous travel expenses**

In accordance with staff rule 7.11, expenses that are deemed necessary and incurred by a staff member while on official travel status may be reimbursed by the Organization after the completion of travel, provided that the necessity and nature of the expenses are satisfactorily explained and supported by proper receipts, which shall normally be required for any expenditures in excess of \$30. Non-receipted expenses under \$30 may be reimbursed where authorized. Such expenses, for which advance authorization shall be obtained to the extent practicable, shall normally be limited to:

- (a) Local transportation other than that provided for under staff rule 7.9 and section 9 above;
- (b) Telephone and other forms of communication required for official business;
- (c) Space, equipment and services required for official use;
- (d) Transportation or storage of authorized baggage or property used for conducting official business;
- (e) Baggage fees charged by airlines, equivalent to the charge for one checked bag up to 23 kg, when no free baggage allowance is offered by a particular airline;
- (f) Passport fees for locally recruited staff members required to travel on official business on behalf of the Organization; and
- (g) Visa fees for official travel.

Section 11

Travel advances

11.1 An advance payment of 100 per cent may be made to a staff member authorized to travel on official business in respect of the following:

- (a) Estimated subsistence allowance; and
- (b) Terminal expenses payable under staff rule 7.9 on the basis of amounts estimated and certified by the appropriate certifying officer.

No advance payment shall be made in respect of miscellaneous travel expenses under staff rule 7.11 and section 10 above.

11.2 No travel advance payment shall be made for travel on separation from service.

11.3 An advance of up to 75 per cent of the estimated subsistence allowance may be made to individuals who are not staff members, such as consultants, individual contractors or members of committees.

Section 12

Lump-sum option for travel on home leave or family visit or education grant travel

12.1 For travel on home leave or family visit or education grant travel, staff members may opt for a lump sum.

12.2 For travel by air, including where there is a combination of other modes of transportation involving the purchase of a ticket (e.g. ferry, ship or train), the lump sum payable under this section shall amount to 70 per cent of the cost of the least restrictive economy class ticket, as determined in accordance with section 4.2 above, by the least costly scheduled air carrier between the staff member's duty station and:

- (a) The closest airport to the established place of entitlement for home leave or family visit travel or an approved alternate, whichever is the less costly; or
- (b) The established place of home leave or the educational institution, whichever is less costly, for education grant travel.

For children entitled to reduced-fare tickets, the lump sum shall be 70 per cent of the cost of the least restrictive reduced economy class ticket, provided that the ticket would allow the child to occupy a seat on the approved mode of transportation.

12.3 For travel by car, the lump sum payable under this section shall amount to 20 per cent of the cost of the least restrictive economy class ticket, by the least costly scheduled air carrier, per authorized household member in the car, as determined in line with section 4.2.

12.4 By selecting the lump-sum option, a staff member agrees to waive the entitlements relating to home leave, family visit or education grant travel that would otherwise have been payable by the Organization, except travel time as provided under section 6.1 above. No additional payment shall be made once the option has been exercised.

12.5 Utilization of the lump-sum option shall not affect compensation under appendix D to the Staff Rules, provided that the travel is, in line with section 4.2, between the staff member's duty station and the established place of home leave or authorized place of family visit travel, as applicable.

12.6 The lump-sum option shall not be available on a partial basis. It must cover both the outward and the return journeys for home leave, family visit or education grant travel and all travel related to a particular home leave by the staff member and his or her eligible family members, even when separate home leave travel has been authorized. However, when a staff member's home leave travel is combined with travel on official business, the staff member may exercise the option in respect of his or her eligible family members.

12.7 Once the lump-sum option has been selected, it shall not be possible to revert to the normal travel entitlement for the specific travel.

12.8 Pursuant to section 3.1 above, there shall be no retroactive reimbursement of travel cost through the lump-sum option mechanism unless a written request was made and approved prior to the commencement of the journey. In this connection, any retroactive reimbursement of travel costs shall be limited to the actual cost of the air ticket(s) not exceeding the maximum travel expenses to which the staff member would have otherwise been entitled had he or she and his or her eligible family members, if any, travelled at the direct expense of the Organization through the approved route and mode of transportation.

12.9 The Organization shall not be responsible for delays or additional expenses that may be incurred or liabilities that may arise as a result of the exercise of the lump-sum option. It is the staff member's responsibility to take out appropriate travel cancellation insurance. However, when the exigencies of service make it imperative for the staff member to postpone the home leave or family visit travel for which the lump sum was paid, the Organization shall assume responsibility for surcharges or fees that may be imposed as a result of the ticket changes, but not for any fare increase.

12.10 Staff members who wish to obtain the information necessary for them to decide whether to exercise the lump-sum option shall so inform their executive or administrative office, which will proceed in accordance with the procedures set out in the information circular on official travel issued by the Under-Secretary-General for Management and ensure that the staff member completes part B of form PT.165, entitled "Lump-sum travel".

Section 13

Travel claims

General

13.1 Staff members shall, within two calendar weeks after completion of travel other than under the lump-sum option, submit a completed travel reimbursement claim on form F.10, entitled "Voucher for reimbursement of expenses", to their executive or administrative office, in accordance with the instructions set out in that form, including those governing the documentation to be submitted.

13.2 Staff members may be required to submit their respective travel claims through a travel portal (i.e. the Travel Claims Portal, which is available to staff members at United Nations Headquarters in New York). In those instances, the staff

member shall be required to retain the original travel documentation, such as used airline tickets, boarding passes and hotel receipts, for a period of five years, and must be ready to provide the documentation in the original form at any time, upon request, for audit and monitoring purposes. Failure to do so will result in immediate recovery of the travel expenses, including lump-sum payments and the daily subsistence allowance payments, where applicable.

13.3 Recovery of travel advances through payroll deduction shall be initiated if a staff member fails to submit a duly completed F.10 form, together with the supporting documentation, within two calendar weeks after completion of travel.

13.4 If, on review of the claim, it is determined that the travel advance exceeded the amount of reimbursable travel expenses, the staff member shall be informed of the amount of overpayment, which shall be recovered through payroll deduction.

Travel under the lump-sum option

13.5 Staff members having selected the lump-sum option in section 12 shall, within two calendar weeks after completion of travel, complete part C of form PT.165 and provide the certification and supporting evidence required in that form.

13.6 The entire amount of the lump sum shall be recovered through payroll deduction if the staff member fails to comply with the terms and conditions of utilizing the lump-sum option as authorized, including but not limited to the failure to submit a duly completed PT.165 form and the requested documentation within two calendar weeks after completion of travel.

Section 14

Final provisions

14.1 The present administrative instruction shall enter into force on 12 August 2013. Travel arrangements (bookings) made prior to the entry into force of the present administrative instruction shall continue to be implemented under the provisions of ST/AI/2006/4 and Amend.1 and 2 through 28 August 2013.

14.2 Administrative instructions ST/AI/2006/4 and Amend.1 and 2 and ST/AI/1998/2 are hereby superseded.

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