Office of Human Resources

OHR Policy Guideline

2025 (December) Third Early Separation Programme

OHR/PG/2025/8 – 12 December 2025

I. Purpose

1. **The Organization is introducing a Third Early Separation Programme in the context of the UN80 initiative and the revised estimates for the 2026 programme budget or the 2025/26 peacekeeping support account budget** and is intended to serve the interest of the good administration. **The programme seeks to mitigate the negative impact of potential future terminations of appointments** as a consequence of posts proposed for abolishment in the revised estimates, by facilitating the voluntary early separation of staff members, including through early retirement, thereby reducing the number of staff whose appointments may otherwise need to be terminated.

2. **Effective 12 December 2025, the Organization is launching a Third Early Separation Programme to yield additional vacant posts and further minimize the potential negative impact of the proposed abolition of posts in the revised estimates and reduce involuntary separation of staff members. The Secretary-General remains committed to ensure that through the current vacancies, upcoming retirements and the voluntary early separation of staff members, including through early retirement, which would yield additional vacancies, the Organization can absorb most of the staff members currently encumbering posts proposed for abolition.**

3. Consistent with the principles of good management and overall cost-effectiveness, the programme is designed to offer interested and eligible staff members the opportunity to voluntarily separate early from service, <u>regardless of the funding source of the position they encumber (i.e. regular budget, peacekeeping, support account, extra-budgetary, including PSC and cost recovery)</u>.

4. **The Third Early Separation Progamme is open from Friday 12 December 2025 to Wednesday 07 January 2026**.

II. Eligibility

5. The programme is open to staff members[1] **<u>of any age</u>** who meet all of the four following criteria:

    a. are in the Professional and higher categories, Field Service category and General Service and related categories, including but not limited to National Professional Officers, Trades and Crafts and Security Service categories;

[1] The programme is not open to staff members serving in entities under liquidation.

b. I hold career appointments (permanent, continuing or indefinite) or fixed-term appointments (without any limitation to a particular entity);
c. will have completed at least five years of continuous service with the Organization as of the mutually agreed date of separation, subject to the provisions of paragraphs 19 and 20 below[2]; and
d. will not have reached the mandatory age of separation of 65 on or before 31 December 2026.

III. Modalities for payment of termination indemnity

6. Subject to the staff member's eligibility for the programme, the regular termination indemnity will be paid as a lump sum in accordance with Annex III to the Staff Regulations.

7. No additional termination indemnity will be paid beyond the amounts specified in Annex III to the Staff Regulations regardless of the source of funding (reproduced in Annex I to these guidelines for ease of reference).

8. Payment in lieu of notice will not be offered regardless of the source of funding. Staff members must serve their notice period prior to the mutually agreed separation date, as decided by the Organization.

Additional provisions:

9. Staff members who have reached the applicable normal retirement age of 60 or 62, but not the mandatory age of separation of 65 years old, as of 30 June 2026, may request to be considered for early separation, on the understanding that the termination indemnity may not exceed the total amount of the salary and all emoluments they would have received had they remained in service until their mandatory age of separation.

10. In accordance with staff rules 9.8 (d) (i) and (ii) and 9.8 (e) and paragraph 5 above, eligible staff members who, as of the mutually agreed date of separation, subject to the provisions of paragraphs 19 and 20 below, meet either of the following conditions may, upon written request, be placed for a maximum period of two years on special leave without pay (SLWOP) for pension purposes:

    a. within two years of reaching the qualifying age of 55 or 58 years old, as applicable, for an early retirement benefit under article 29 of the Regulations of the United

[2] Service in other organizations of the UN common system of staff members who transferred to the UN Secretariat under the Inter-Organization Agreement concerning Transfer, Secondment or Loan of Staff among the Organizations applying the UN Common System of Salaries and Allowances, counts towards the minimum five years of continuous service provided that there was no break in service. However, in accordance with paragraph 37 of the Inter-Organization Agreement, if the staff member is separated from service after transfer, any terminal payments due to the staff member will be paid by the receiving organization, provided that, if separation occurs within two years of the date of transfer, that organization will be entitled to recover from the releasing organization that proportion of the payments which the number of months of service of the staff member before the date of transfer bears to the total number of the staff member's months of service.

Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) and 25 years of contributory service in the UNJSPF; or

b. over the applicable qualifying age for an early retirement benefit under article 29 of the Regulations of the UNJSPF and within two years of 25 years of contributory service in the UNJSPF.

11. In the case of staff members who receive approval for SLWOP for pension purposes, the entire cost of the full pension contribution of both the staff member and the Organization for the period in question will be deducted from the termination indemnity and remitted in advance to the Pension Fund by the Organization to cover the period of special leave without pay for pension purposes.

12. Upon being placed on special leave without pay, the staff member will be paid the balance of the termination indemnity, if any. However, an amount equivalent to 10 per cent of the total pension contribution will be withheld to account for the possibility of an increase in pension contributions during the period of special leave without pay. Should such an increase occur, the Organization will pay to the Pension Fund the increased contribution, from the amount withheld. Any unused amount will be paid at the end of the period of special leave without pay to the separated staff member, who will receive an accounting of all payments made for pension contributions. Should the amount withheld prove to be insufficient, the staff member agrees to pay the difference promptly.

IV. Implementation (process)

Step 1: Expression of interest by staff members (by cob Wednesday 7January 2026)

13. Staff members who fulfil the eligibility criteria and who wish to be considered for the 2025 Third Early Separation Programme are required to submit a request to that effect to their Executive Office or local Human Resources Office **as soon as possible and by no later than cob Wednesday 7 January 2026**.

Step 2: Review by Executive / Local HR Offices

14. The Executive Office or local Human Resources Office will review the eligibility of staff members who have expressed interest[3] upon receipt as they come in and, if eligible for consideration, will provide them with the estimated termination indemnity and any other information they have asked for. Staff members who are deemed ineligible will also be informed.

Step 3: Confirmation of Expression of Interest by staff members (by cob Friday 9 January 2026)

15. Upon receipt of the estimated indemnity and any other information requested from the Executive office or local Human Resources Office, staff members will confirm their interest to that Office **as soon as possible but no later than cob Friday 9 January 2026.**

[3] Also refer to OHR/PG/2024/2 issued on 22 January 2024 on Determination of continuous service for purposes of separation benefits (termination indemnity, grant upon death and repatriation grant).

Step 4: Entity Review and Approval of expressions of interest

16. The Executive Office or local Human Resources Office will submit the expressions of interest as they come in, on a daily basis, to the Head of entity for immediate consideration.

17. All Heads of entity have clearance from the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) to **approve immediately** but no later than **Monday 12 January 2026** the agreed terminations of staff members who are:

    a. **occupying a position** funded from the ***regular budget*** or the ***peacekeeping support account budget*** that is **proposed for abolition** in the revised estimates for the 2026 programme budget or the 2025/26 peacekeeping support account budget, as applicable; or

    b. **occupying a position** funded from the ***regular budget*** or the ***peacekeeping support account budget*** that is **proposed for redeployment to another duty station** in the revised estimates for the 2026 programme budget and for the 2025/26 peacekeeping support account budget; or

    c. **occupying a position** funded from the ***peacekeeping budget*** that **must be vacated and remain unencumbered** for at least the remainder of the 2025/26 peacekeeping budget cycle, as part of the implementation of the peacekeeping **mission contingency planning**; or

    d. **occupying a position** funded from the regular budget, the peacekeeping support account budget, the Jointly Financed Arrangements (JFA), or from any extra-budgetary resources, that will **be used only for the lateral reassignment of staff members in your entity who are occupying positions proposed for abolition** (in the revised estimates for the 2026 programme budget and for the 2025/26 support account budget), when the current incumbent is separated. The termination indemnity and other related separation costs must be charged to the source of funding of the position proposed for abolition; the incumbent of the post proposed for abolition would be laterally reassigned to the post vacated by the separating staff member.

    Expressions of interest not meeting any of the above criteria shall not be approved.

Step 5: Preparation and Signature of Agreements

18. Upon approval by the Head of entity, the Executive Office or local Human Resources Office will immediately prepare on a daily basis the agreements outlining the applicable terms and conditions, which the staff members will be required to sign the Memorandum of Understanding SEP.1-E (Acceptance of agreed termination).They must prioritize as much as possible, staff members holding a career appointment (permanent, continuing

or indefinite) being mindful of the required three-month notice period for such staff members, which must be served in full prior to the mutually agreed separation date as per the provisions of paragraphs 19 and 20 below.

Step 6: Notice Period

19. Staff members will be required to serve their notice as early as possible between January and April 2026, as per the following applicable notice periods:

    a. Career appointments (permanent, continuing or indefinite): three months;
    b. Fixed-term appointments (without limitation): a minimum 30 calendar days or as otherwise stipulated in the staff member's letter of appointment.

20. However, staff members who:

    a. are not nationals of the country of the duty station of assignment;
    b. are not permanent residents of the country of the duty station of assignment;
    c. do not intend to apply for permanent residency in the country of the duty station of assignment before/after separation from service;

    and who need more time beyond April 2026 to close their homes and depart from the country of the duty station of assignment and/or have their dependent children complete the school year, may be authorized to use their accumulated annual leave and/or request special leave without pay (SLWOP) for a period of less than 30 days to remain in service up to and **no later than cob 30 June 2026**.

21. Further, consistent with principles of cost-effectiveness and in the Organization's best interests, the requests from staff members to have their notice period deemed to be completed from the date on which they expressed interest in lieu of from the date on which they will be notified that it is approved by the Head of entity will be accepted; and the corresponding start and end dates of said notice period will be duly reflected in the Memorandum of Understanding SEP.1-E (Acceptance of agreed termination) prior to their signature.

22. Staff members shall be requested to sign the Memorandum of Understanding SEP.1-E (Acceptance of agreed termination) **no later than cob Monday 12 January 2026.**

Step 7: Submission to DMSPC

23. Heads of entity will submit to the ASG/OHR and ASG/Controller(oasg-ohr@un.org; controller@un.org) copies of all the signed agreements and an electronic list of the staff members for whom the agreements have been signed following approval by the Heads of

entity in accordance with **paragraph 17** above, using the **2025 Third Early Separation Programme Approved Template (Excel sheet)** **in Annex II** **no later than cob Wednesday 14 January 2026.** The list must include the staff member's index number, name, nationality, date of birth, type of appointment, functional title, category/level/step, latest EOD UN Secretariat, age as of the mutually agreed separation date, date of reaching the mandatory age of separation, date of reaching the normal retirement age, post number, post funding source, completed years of continuous full-time service, months of termination indemnity, estimated cost of termination indemnity, estimated cost of staff assessment, indication of which criteria under paragraph 17 above was used to approve the agreement (i.e. a., b., c. or d.), and the mutually agreed separation date**.**

V. Inquiries

24. Staff members should address any questions regarding the third early separation programme to their Executive Office or local Human Resources Office as Tier 1.

25. Executive Offices and local Human Resources Offices may reach out to the Human Resources Services Division (HRSD) in the Department of Operational Support (DOS) as Tier 2 for operational guidance, advice and support (DOS-HR-Advice dos-hr-advice@un.org), which may in turn reach out to OHR Policy as Tier 3, should further policy support and authoritative policy interpretation be needed (DMSPC-OHR-GSPD-Policy Support ohr-policysupport@un.org).

Annex I - Policy framework for agreed termination

1. An “agreed termination” is a form of separation from service mutually agreed upon by the staff member and the Organization, pursuant to Staff Regulation 9.3 and Staff Rule 9.6.

2. <u>Agreed terminations are not a routine occurrence.</u> They should be strictly limited and should only be considered in the overall interest of the good administration of the Organization and in accordance with the standards of the UN Charter.

<u>Termination indemnity</u>

3. The applicable termination indemnity is set out in Annex III of the Staff Regulations and Rules:

Completed years of service	*Months of gross salary, less staff assessment, where applicable*		
	Temporary appointments exceeding six months	*Fixed-term appointments*	*Continuing appointments*
Less than 1	One week for each month of uncompleted service subject to a minimum of six weeks’ and a maximum of three months’ indemnity pay	One week for each month of uncompleted service subject to a minimum of six weeks’ and a maximum of three months’ indemnity pay	Not applicable
1.			Not applicable
2.			3
3.			3
4.			4
5.			5
6.		3	6
7.		5	7
8.		7	8
9.	Not applicable	9	9
10.		9.5	9.5
11.		10	10
12.		10.5	10.5
13.		11	11
14.		11.5	11.5
15 or more		12	12

4. Other benefits and allowances such as repatriation grant and commutation of accrued leave up to 60 days, as applicable, will be payable in accordance with the applicable Staff Regulations and Rules.

5. Staff will be considered to have separated, except for pension purposes as applicable as of the date on which they cease to perform official duties. As of that date, their visa status will be subject to the host country agreement with the United Nations. (e.g. In the United States, staff members on G-4 visa have 30 calendar days to leave the country upon separation from the Organization. Upon written application to the US authorities, that

period may be extended for an additional 30-day period. The extension is subject to approval by US authorities and upon written application as per ST/AI/2000/19).

United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund

6. The amounts of termination indemnity and separation payments are in addition to any pension benefits due to a staff member after cessation of participation in the Pension Fund in accordance with its regulations.[4]

Notice of termination

7. Payment in lieu of notice will not be offered. Staff members will be required to serve their notice period of one or three months as applicable prior to the effective date of separation.

8. Pursuant to staff rule 9.7 (a), a staff member whose appointment is to be terminated shall be given written notice in accordance with the notice periods indicated below:

Type of appointment	*Notice period for termination*
Permanent and continuing[5]	At least three months
Fixed term	At least 30 calendar days

9. Notwithstanding the notice periods set forth in the table above, in the case of a staff member holding a fixed-term appointment, the applicable notice period shall be the notice period stipulated in the staff member's letter of appointment.

Period of ineligibility for re-employment with the UN Secretariat and other organizations of the UN common system

10. Staff separated under the Early Separation programme will be subject to the clause applicable to agreed termination, i.e. they will be precluded from employment as a staff member, engagement as a consultant or individual contractor, or engagement in any other capacity in any Organization participating in the United Nations common system of salaries and allowances for a period corresponding to the months of termination indemnity paid.

4 www.unjspf.org
5 Also applies to Iindefinite appointments.

Annex II – 2025 Third Early Separation Programme: List of all agreed separations approved by the Heads of entity in accordance with the criteria contained in paragraph 17 of these Guidelines and for which the mutual agreements have been signed by the staff members concerned

OHR
Office of Human Resources

2025 - Early Separation Programme
List of staff members for whom the agreement have been signed

Dept / Office/Mission):	Choose Department/ Office/ Mission
Date of submission to OHR	deadline no later than COB 14 Jan 2026
Please send your request to:	controller@un.org; oasg-ohr@un.org
Name of focal point in Dept / Office / Mission	

No	Index No.	Given Name	Family Name	Nationality	DOB	Type of Appt	Appt. Limitations YES/NO	Functional Title	Category	Level/Step	Latest EOD UN Secretariat	Age as of the mutually agreed separation date	Date of reaching the mandatory age of separation	Date of reaching the normal retirement age under UNJSPF	Post No.	Post Funding Source	Completed years of continuous full-time service	Months of termination indemnity applicable (as per Annex III to the Staff Regulations	Estimated cost of termination indemnity	Estimated cost of staff assessment	Justification for approving under paragraph 17: indicate a, b, c or d	Mutually Agreed separation date	Remarks
1							Choose an option														Choose an option		
2							Choose an option														Choose an option		
3							Choose an option														Choose an option		
4							Choose an option														Choose an option		
5							Choose an option														Choose an option		
6							Choose an option														Choose an option		
7							Choose an option														Choose an option		
8							Choose an option														Choose an option		
9							Choose an option														Choose an option		
10							Choose an option														Choose an option		
11							Choose an option														Choose an option		
12							Choose an option														Choose an option		

(Please submit using attached spreadsheet without altering any of the columns, to facilitate consolidation)