

Policy guideline¹

Lien management

OHR/PG/2026/2 – 11 March 2026

1. This OHR policy guideline provides guidance in the implementation of sections 5 and 9 of [ST/AI/2025/3](#) on *Administration of appointments*. It clarifies the conditions for granting and managing liens for staff members of the Secretariat released to serve in another function or entity through a temporary job opening or an inter-organization secondment/loan. It does not replace the applicable Staff Regulations and Staff Rules or relevant administrative issuances, which prevail in case of conflict with the provisions in this guideline.
2. The provisions of this guideline do not apply to special return rights explicitly established under Staff Regulations and Rules (e.g. staff rule 5.5(a) (iv) a) or to return rights explicitly established under other administrative issuances, including [ST/AI/2022/1](#) on *Resident Coordinator selection*. Nor do they apply to the special considerations for temporary job openings under section 5 of [ST/AI/2023/1](#) on *Downsizing or restructuring resulting in termination of appointments*.
3. For the purposes of implementing [ST/AI/2025/3](#) on *Administration of appointments*, a lien is a mechanism through which the Organization may retain a staff member's right to return to the post they temporarily vacate, subject to the approval of the releasing entity. A lien is attached to a specific, identifiable post and does not extend to the entity as a whole. It is post-specific and time-bound and does not create a general right of return to the releasing entity or to any other function. No general lien or general right of return may be created through release agreements, administrative arrangements, terms of reference, or exchanges of correspondence.

Granting of liens

4. A lien may be granted only in circumstances explicitly foreseen under sections 5 and 9 of [ST/AI/2025/3](#), namely temporary assignments arising from selections through Temporary Job Openings within the Secretariat, secondments and loans under the Inter-Organization Agreement, and temporary assignment of General Service staff to Professional posts for up to one year.
5. A lien may be granted only where the underlying post:
 - i) exists at the same level;
 - ii) remains substantively unchanged (the functional and classification characteristics of the post remain materially the same); **and**
 - iii) is confirmed in writing as being held for the staff member.

¹ Reissued for technical reasons on 11 March 2026.

6. Where a staff member is selected through a Temporary Job Opening, the releasing entity may decide whether or not to release the staff member. Where the decision is made to release the staff member on temporary assignment, a lien to the parent post must be granted. A staff member cannot be released on a temporary assignment without a lien.
7. Decisions to release on temporary assignment is based on operational requirements, including workforce planning considerations, restructuring, post availability, and funding. Staff members must be informed regarding the duration, scope, and conditions of liens at the time of release.
8. A lien expires automatically upon the staff member's return to duty from an approved period of release.

Management of liens

9. Where, during the lien period, the parent post is affected by organizational or operational changes, the following should apply:
 - (a) Where the post is impacted by downsizing or abolition resulting from organizational restructuring, the applicable provisions of [ST/AI/2023/1](#) applies.
 - (b) Where the post is under reclassification, the applicable provisions of [ST/AI/1998/9](#) on *System for the classification of posts* applies.
 - (c) In all other cases, including where the post undergoes a material change in functions, the releasing entity must ensure that the staff member's lien is transferred to a suitable equivalent vacant post at the same level for the remainder of the lien period.
10. If the liened post or equivalent placement post is abolished after the staff member has returned and the lien has expired, the staff member will be treated in accordance with the applicable policies including but not limited to lateral reassignment, mobility, abolition of posts and downsizing. No further lien-related obligations arise after the staff member's return. Any reabsorption measures applied thereafter do not constitute a lien.
11. For General Service staff temporarily assigned to Professional level posts, liens may be granted for a maximum of one year only, as per section 5 of [ST/AI/2025/3](#).

Transitional measures

12. As a transitional measure, lien arrangements approved prior to 1 November 2025 may be extended, where applicable, up till 31 October 2027 only. Accordingly, by 1 November 2027, all lien arrangements in the Secretariat must be limited to two years.