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## OHR Policy Guidelines

### Implementation of ICSC/CIRC/GEN/08/2023: Guidelines for the implementation of the Personal Transitional Allowance (PTA) related to negative results of place-to-place surveys

OHR/PG/2023/7

#### I. Definitions – Purposes

**Post adjustment system:** The overall goal of the post adjustment system is to equalize the purchasing power of the remuneration of eligible UN officials in US dollars serving in various locations around the world with the remuneration of their colleagues in New York, which is the base of the system.

**Post adjustment index (PAI):** A statistical index designed to measure the cost of living as experienced by internationally recruited staff members at a given duty station relative to the base city, New York.

**Post adjustment multiplier (PAM):** Percentage of the net base salary that is added to the net base salary to adjust to a relative difference in the cost of living between a duty station and New York. Post adjustment multiplier may vary from month to month. Accordingly, the actual post adjustment paid to newly onboarded staff members is the one in effect at staff member's official duty station on the month in which staff member reports for duty.

**Cost-of-living surveys:** Surveys carried out by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) secretariat as part of the process of establishing a post adjustment index to compare living costs between a given location and the base city, New York, at a specified date.

**Personal Transitional Allowance (PTA):** an element of the gap closure measure designed to mitigate the impact of negative cost-of-living survey results. If the PAI resulting from the cost-of-living survey is less than the existing pay index (PAM+100) by more than 3 per cent, a revised PAM equal to the survey PAI plus 3 per cent is promulgated. The PTA is the difference between the existing PAM and the new PAM paid in full for the first six months and then reduced by 3 per cent every four months until it is phased out.

As per staff rule 3.6, post adjustment is payable to staff members serving in the Professional and higher categories and in the Field Service category.

## II. Implementation of Personal Transitional Allowance (PTA) under ICSC/CIRC/GEN/08/2023

The change of the schedule of entitlement date for determining PTA eligibility as described in ICSC/CIRC/GEN/08/2023, enclosed in the annex to this guideline, has not changed the purpose of PTA, which is to facilitate the gradual transitioning of staff members to a lower pay level.

**Following the principle of PTA, staff members serving in the duty station during the implementation month of the negative survey results are eligible for PTA, whereas staff members not serving in the duty station during the implementation month of the negative survey results are not eligible for PTA.**

As per the above-mentioned circular, and the principles of PTA, staff members eligible for post adjustment and already on post or onboarded at the duty station **on or before the last day of the month of the implementation** of the negative survey results are eligible for PTA.

In other circumstances such as secondment and special leave, ICSC/CIRC/GEN/08/2023 outlines key considerations for eligibility for PTA; whether the staff member was being paid or had a reasonable expectation of being paid at the higher level, prior to the last day of the month of the implementation of the survey results. What constitutes a reasonable expectation will depend on the specific circumstances of a case, including, *inter alia*, the provisions of the applicable legal framework, the provisions of any applicable policy guidance, and any undertakings or assurances made by the Administration to the staff member.

The following table summarizes the most common scenarios to support HR local offices to make decisions on PTA implementation under ICSC/CIRC/GEN/08/2023:

| ELIGIBLE FOR PTA  |
|---|
| Staff members (s/m) of the UN Secretariat or any UN common system organizations serving / having continuity of service in the duty station on or before the last day of the month of the implementation of the survey results and related PTA.  |
| Scenarios   |
| 1. S/m encumbering a post at any post incumbency % other than zero during the month of the implementation of the survey results.  |
| 2. S/m encumbering a post at 0% post incumbency, who started special leave without pay (SLWOP) on or before the last day of the month of the implementation of the survey results and related PTA.  |
| 3. S/m previously in receipt of PTA and returning from special leave without pay (SLWOP) while PTA is still in effect.  |
| 4. S/m whose contractual status changes from a TA to FTA, FTA to TA, CA to TA and CA to FTA, and who were employed on any type of appointment in the Professional and higher or FS categories by a UN common system organization at the duty station during the month of the implementation of the survey results |

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| and related PTA, if the break in service was completed on or before the last day of the month of the implementation of the survey results.   |
| 5. S/m returning to the Secretariat from secondment or loan from within the duty station, irrespective of the date of return.  |
| 6. S/m returning to the Secretariat from secondment or loan from another duty station on or before the last day of the month of the implementation of the survey results and related PTA.  |
| 7. S/m coming to the UN Secretariat on transfer, secondment or loan from another common system organization within the duty station, provided they were already serving in that Organization on or before the last day of the month of the implementation of the survey results and related PTA. |
| 8. S/m coming to the UN Secretariat on transfer, secondment or loan from another Organization outside the duty station, whose EOD is on or before the last day of the month of the implementation of the survey results and related PTA.   |
| 9. New s/m whose EOD is on or before the last day of the month of the implementation of the survey results and related PTA.  |

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| <b>NOT ELIGIBLE FOR PTA</b>  |
| Staff members (s/m) of the UN Secretariat or any UN common system organizations who did NOT serve NOR have continuity of service in the duty station on or before the last day of the month of the implementation of the survey results and related PTA. |
| <b>Scenarios</b>   |
| 1. New s/m whose EOD is after the last day of the month of the implementation of the survey results and related PTA.   |
| 2. S/m returning to the Secretariat from secondment or loan from another duty station after the last day of the month of the implementation of the survey results and related PTA.   |
| 3. S/m coming to the UN Secretariat on transfer, secondment or loan from another Organization outside the duty station, whose EOD is after the last day of the month of the implementation of the survey results and related PTA.                        |

**Annex:**

**ICSC/CIRC/GEN/08/2023**



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INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE  
COMMISSION

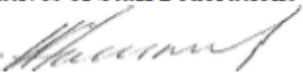
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**ICSC/CIRC/GEN/08/2023**  
**ICSC 60-2**

**29 May 2023**

**TO: Human Resources Managers of Participating  
Organizations Representatives of Staff Federations**

**FROM: Ibrahim Yansaneh, Chief**   
**Cost-of-Living Division**

**SUBJECT: Guidelines for the implementation of the Personal Transitional Allowance (PTA)  
related to negative results of place-to-place surveys**

1. These guidelines are prepared to provide additional clarification, in response to queries from payroll and human resources offices regarding the implementation of the Personal Transitional Allowance (PTA) related to negative results of place-to-place surveys. It aims to supplement the information already provided in the monthly post adjustment memo regarding eligibility for, and implementation of, PTAs, following the discontinuation of the Covid-19-inspired special measures, effective 1 February 2023.

2. In line with the approved system of operational rules of the post adjustment system, the PTA is implemented when a place-to-place survey results in a post adjustment index that is more than 3 per cent below the prevailing pay index. In such cases, Professional staff already at the duty station before the implementation of the survey results will be transitioned to a lower level of pay. PTA refers to the difference between the new lower pay level and the existing pay level. Its purpose is to facilitate a gradual transitioning of staff to the lower pay level.

3. PTA payments are intended for staff who are on post at the time of its implementation, usually the first of the month of its implementation. However, there was a modification to the entitlement date due to a change in the publication schedule of the post adjustment memo. Previously, the memo was published twice a month until August 2021. However, it is now published once a month due to changes in the conditions of publication of mid-month revisions of the operational exchange rate by United Nations Treasury. The mid-month revisions of the exchange rates by the United Nations Treasury now occur automatically, regardless of the exchange rate fluctuation threshold. Consequently, with the regularized mid-month publication of the operational exchange rates by the United Nations Treasury, the ICSC no longer publishes the post adjustment multipliers at the beginning of the month.

#### **Implication of the change of the Post Adjustment memo publication date**

4. It should be noted that the publication of the post adjustment memo at the beginning of the month provided advance notification to staff about impending changes to post adjustment at their respective duty stations, which was critical, particularly for changes that were negative. However, as of 1 August 2021, the publication schedule was changed from the first of the month to mid-month. As a result, Professional staff joining the duty station after the first but before the end of the survey implementation month should be considered eligible for the PTA since they had an expectation of the higher level of pay at onboarding before the implementation date of the survey result. Therefore, the entitlement date for the PTA was changed from the first of the month to the end of the month.

5. The Cost-of-Living Division of the ICSC has been providing guidance to organizations since the resumption of the PTA revision cycle in February 2023 including additional details in the monthly post adjustment memos. It is important to highlight that during the period of Covid-19 pandemic-inspired special measures, although the post adjustment memo was published once a month for a portion of this period (August 2021 to February 2023), the change in the PTA entitlement date, from first of the month to the end of the month, did not create implications for payroll as all staff were eligible for the PTA, regardless of date of assignment to the duty station. However, the discontinuation of the special measures in February 2023 had an impact on the entitlement date for PTA. Specifically, staff who joined the duty station as of March 2023 were not eligible for the PTA that was in effect in February 2023, whereas those who joined in February 2023 were eligible. That is, starting with the March 2023 payroll, there should be two pay levels for duty stations with active PTA to distinguish between existing staff, joining the duty station before or at any point during the month of implementation of the PTA (entitled to PTA) and new staff, joining the duty station after the month of implementation of the PTA (not entitled to PTA).

6. It should be noted that there may be circumstances that are not specifically addressed by these guidelines, such as secondment, leave without pay (LWOP), telecommuting, etc. For such special cases, Human Resources Officers may wish to use their discretion, consistent with applicable HR rules, in the implementation of these guidelines. The key consideration for eligibility for PTA is whether the staff member was being paid, or had a reasonable expectation of being paid, at the higher level prior to the implementation date of the survey results. An example of scenarios for PTA implementation is provided in the table below.

7. Human Resources Directors are requested to inform the payroll offices within their organizations about these guidelines and, in particular, the modification to the entitlement date of the PTA. The ICSC is available to provide further guidance to payroll offices regarding the implementation of these changes in their systems.

8. I am at your disposal for any further questions you may have, or any further clarifications you may need.

### Example of PTA implementation

Assume that a place-to-place survey for duty station K with negative result was published in the mid-month post adjustment memo issued on 13 April 2023. The post adjustment multiplier for this duty station changed from 50 to 40, resulting in the implementation of a PTA of 10 multiplier points. The Table below provides, for PTA entitlement, the distinction between staff on post or onboarded at the duty station on or before the month of implementation of the survey results, and those that joined the duty station afterwards.

| Scenario   | Applicable PAM   | PTA entitlement   |
|--|--|---|
| Staff already on post at the duty station on or before the month of implementation of the survey results | The new PAM of 40 is retroactive to the first of the month of implementation of the survey results. This PAM may be revised up or down, over time, in accordance with the approved operational rules | Staff onboarded up to the last day of the month of implementation of the survey results are eligible for the PTA, in this example up to 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2023.  |
| Staff onboarded at the duty station after the month of implementation of the survey results              | The new PAM of 40 is retroactive to the first of the month of implementation of the survey results. This PAM may be revised up or down, over time, in accordance with the approved operational rules | No PTA entitlement for staff joining after the month of implementation of the survey results. Eligibility for PTA ends on the last day of the month of implementation of the survey results, for staff being onboarded during this month. For example, for a survey implemented in April 2023, the last day of PTA entitlement for staff being onboarded during April 2023, is 30 April 2023. In this example, staff joining from 1 May 2023 onwards are not entitled to the PTA and will be paid only the new PAM of 40, or its revised level, by application of the approved operational rules. |