

Arctic Council Secretariat

## Staff Rules

Staff Rules of the Arctic Council Secretariat



ARCTIC COUNCIL

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# STAFF RULES

## of the Arctic Council Secretariat

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### **1. Scope**

- 1.1** These Rules set out terms and conditions of employment, working relationships and rights and responsibilities of the Staff members in the service of the Arctic Council Secretariat (hereafter referred to as the ACS).
- 1.2** These Rules apply to the Director, unless they vary from his or her terms and conditions of employment as established by the Arctic Council, in which case the terms and conditions established by the Arctic Council shall prevail.

### **2. Duties, obligations and privileges**

- 2.1** The Director and the other Staff members upon accepting their appointments pledge themselves to perform their duties faithfully and to conduct themselves with the interests of the Arctic Council in mind.
- 2.2** While fulfilling their duties, the Staff members shall at all times conduct themselves in a manner keeping with the international nature of the Arctic Council. They shall always bear in mind the loyalty, discretion and tact imposed on them by their international responsibilities in the performance of their duties. While they are not expected to give up their national sentiments, culture or their political and religious convictions, the Staff members shall avoid all actions, statements or public activities that might be detrimental to the Arctic Council and its aims.
- 2.3** Staff members shall observe maximum discretion regarding official matters and shall abstain from making private use of information they possess by reason of their position. Authorisation for the release of information for official purposes shall lie with the Arctic Council in respect of the Director, and with the Director in respect of the Staff members.
- 2.4** Staff members shall uphold the highest standards of efficiency, qualifications and integrity. The concept of integrity includes, but is not limited to, probity, impartiality, fairness, honesty and truthfulness in all matters affecting their work and status.
- 2.5** Staff members shall not accept any honour, decoration, favour, gift, remuneration, or employment from any source without first obtaining the approval of the Director.
- 2.6** Staff members shall enjoy the privileges and immunities to which they are entitled by virtue of the Host Country or pursuant to domestic legislation.

- 2.7 Privileges and immunities are granted to Staff members as defined in the Host Country Agreement in the interest of the Arctic Council and not for the personal benefit of the individuals concerned. In particular, they shall not excuse Staff members from the performance of their private obligations or from the due observance of the law applying to them at the place where they are carrying out their duties. In any case where the question of claiming immunity from legal suit or process may arise, the Staff member involved shall immediately report to the Director, who shall decide whether the immunity shall be waived. In any case involving the privileges and immunities of the Director, the Senior Arctic Officials (hereafter referred to as SAOs) shall decide whether the immunity shall be waived.

### **3. Authority of the Director**

- 3.1 Staff members shall be supervised by and accountable to, and have their powers and duties regulated by, the Director. In the case of employees designated to the Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat (hereafter referred to as IPS), the Director may delegate this role of supervision to the Executive Secretary of the IPS, in consultation with the board of the IPS.
- 3.2 The Director shall designate a member of the Staff to act on his or her behalf when necessary.
- 3.3 In the event the position of Director is vacant, or the Director is unable to appoint a member of Staff to serve on his or her behalf pursuant to Rule 3.2, the SAO Chair shall designate a member of Staff to serve as Acting Director.

### **4. Classification of Staff members**

- 4.1 Staff members shall be classified in one of the two following categories: Professional and General service. The Staff rules apply to all Staff, unless otherwise provided for.

a) Professional staff category

Positions of high responsibility of a managerial or professional nature. These posts will be filled by appropriately qualified professionals, preferably with University qualifications or the equivalent. Staff members in this category will be recruited from among nationals of Arctic States.

b) General staff category

Staff performing functions of general and supportive character (e.g. clerical and technical work) or administrative nature for the ACS, or where the requirement for local expertise, language skills, continuity and contacts within the host country make it such that the position is best classified as a general staff category position.

- 4.2 The Director shall be responsible for the classification of any new positions approved by SAOs as part of the ACS budget approval process. In so doing, the Director shall determine the appropriate staff category and salary level, in accordance with Schedule A, based on an

assessment of the scope of work and duties to be performed. The Director may also amend work descriptions for existing positions, including their classification level and category, where justified by the changing nature of the work and/or team structure.

## **5. Recruitment and appointment**

**5.1** The ACS shall be headed by a Director, who shall be appointed by the SAOs from candidates who are nationals of Arctic States.

**5.2** The Director shall appoint, direct and supervise Staff members in accordance with the following general standards:

- Staff shall be appointed and retained, and their conditions of employment shall be determined, strictly on the basis of efficiency, qualifications and integrity.
- Staff shall be appointed from nationals of an Arctic State.
- Due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting an equitable proportion of staff from among the nationals of each Arctic State; and any further general standards established by the Arctic Council.
- Due regard to the importance of gender balance.
- In the case of the IPS, due regard to the importance of indigenous representation.
- Vacancies should be announced by the Director to the SAO Chair between 3 to 6 months ahead of the proposed time of employment. For each staff vacancy a job description shall be available. Vacancies should be advertised on the Arctic Council website at least 3 months in advance of the proposed time of employment in a way which will give qualified candidates a good opportunity to acquaint themselves with the vacancy. Advertisements can be made through other media.
- Posts for General staff members may be advertised only within Norway.
- Candidates are invited to forward their applications to the Director. The Director will list the applications and rank the candidates according to established criteria for the staff position. Candidates for positions designated to the IPS shall be reviewed in consultation with IPS Board, as appropriate.

**5.3** Appointments for Professional staff members shall be offered for a period of up to four years, with a six month probation period, and with the possibility of prolongation for up to four years if in the interest of the Arctic Council. SAOs may decide, in exceptional circumstances and upon request by the Director, to approve a proposal to extend the contract of a Professional staff member for a period of up to two years in order to secure the Secretariat's operational requirements.

**5.4** General staff members shall, as a main rule, not be given or offered fixed term contracts.

**5.5** Upon selection, each Staff member shall receive an offer of appointment stating:

- that the appointment is subject to these Rules and to changes which may be made to them from time to time;

- the identity of the parties;
- the place of work;
- the nature of the appointment including a short description of the duties of the position, post or category of work;
- the date of commencement of the appointment;
- expected duration of temporary contracts;
- provisions relating to a probationary period;
- vacation rights;
- notice periods;
- salary and additional benefits (remuneration);
- daily and weekly working hours;
- length of breaks;
- potential agreement concerning a special working-hour arrangement;
- the allowances attached to the appointment; and
- any special terms and conditions which may be applicable.

**5.6** Together with the offer of appointment, Staff members will be provided with a copy of these Rules. Upon acceptance of the offer, Staff members shall state in writing that they are familiar with and accept the conditions set out in these Rules.

**5.7** All appointments for Staff members designated to the IPS shall be in accordance with the framework of the Arctic Council Secretariat Terms of Reference, the Arctic Council Secretariat Staff Rules and the Arctic Council Secretariat Financial Rules, and in accordance with Procedural Guidelines of the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat, and approved by the Board of the IPS or its Chair. In addition to the general standards as described in article 5.2, staff designated to the IPS should have knowledge of Arctic indigenous peoples and cultures, and preferably some knowledge in at least one Arctic indigenous language.

## **6. Allowances for personnel in the Professional staff category**

**6.1** All expenses related to accommodation in Norway, such as rent, are to be paid by the Staff members themselves. The ACS will be of assistance in finding suitable accommodation.

**6.2** An establishment allowance equivalent to two months' salary will be paid to all Staff members.

**6.3** Staff members are entitled to a moving allowance at the beginning and end of their contracts with the ACS. It will be limited to 40 m<sup>3</sup> for a Staff member bringing dependent family members and limited to 20 m<sup>3</sup> for a single Staff member. Staff members have the right to import free of duty furniture and personal effects that they have owned, possessed or ordered before taking up their posts and that are intended for their personal use.

**6.4** Staff members have the right to import one motor vehicle at the time of their arrival, and one once every three years, free of duty, it being understood that no permission to sell or dispose

of the vehicle in the open market shall normally be granted until three years after its importation.

- 6.5** The actual cost for economy class air travel expenses for the Staff member and his or her dependent family members when moving to and from Tromsø will be reimbursed by the ACS.
- 6.6** If a Staff member terminates the employment contract within the first two years, he or she is obliged to cover the return costs if the ACS and the Staff member do not agree otherwise.
- 6.7** All international staff members, as well as all Norwegian nationals whose habitual place of residence is located more than 500km from Tromsø, shall be entitled to an annual home travel allowance for themselves and dependent family members, subject to the pre-approval of the travel itinerary and cost estimate by the ACS Director (or in the case of the Director, by the SAO Chair). Staff members will be reimbursed the actual costs of coach/economy class travel upon submission of travel itinerary and proof of payment. The allowance cannot be transferred, added to the next such allowance, or converted to a cash payment in lieu of travel if it is not used for the year for which it is available.
- a) For the purpose of this Rule, "habitual place of residence" means the place within Canada, Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, or the United States where the incumbent was resident before being appointed, unless otherwise decided by the Director in the case of staff or by the SAOC in the case of the Director.
  - b) A staff member shall be eligible for home travel if his or her service is expected by the Director to continue at least six months beyond the date of his or her return from any proposed home travel.
  - c) When a staff member travels from Tromsø as part of their annual home travel allowance, and subject to the Director's approval, they shall be granted administrative leave for the actual and reasonable time required to travel from Tromsø to the point of origin or destination (if less), and return.
- 6.8** An annual school allowance may be offered to international staff members who enroll a dependent child up to the age of 18 at the Tromsø International School. The allowance shall be equivalent to the Tromsø International School annual tuition costs for each child enrolled, and reimbursed upon submission of proof of payment.
- 6.9** The ACS will offer a basic annual "cost of living allowance" to all staff in the professional category equivalent to 2.5% of Level 4, Step 1 of the ACS Salary Scale. In addition to this, a dependency allowance will be offered for each eligible dependent as follows:
- a) 2.5% of the above-referenced salary step and level for the first eligible dependent
  - b) 1.5% of the above-referenced salary step and level for each additional dependent

For the purpose of this article, an eligible dependent shall be defined as follows:

1. Spouse: a spouse or common-law partner whose occupational earnings, if any, do not exceed the gross salary of Level 6, Step 1 of the ACS Salary Scale.

2. Dependent Child: may include a staff member's natural child, legally adopted child, or stepchild, if residing with the staff member, so long as the following requirements are met:
  - a) The child is under the age of 18; the child is between the ages of 18 and 21 and attends university or its equivalent full-time and resides with the staff member; or is of any age and has a disability as medically determined by a competent professional as being permanent; and,
  - b) The staff member is providing primary and continuing support for the child.

## **7. Travel expenses and insurance**

- 7.1 Official travel shall be undertaken only if authorized in advance by the Director, or in the case of staff designates to the IPS, by the Director in consultation with the Chair of the IPS Board as appropriate.
- 7.2 The ACS follows the Norwegian public regulations on daily allowances. Official duty travel expenses and hotel accommodation shall be paid by the ACS. Travel insurance will be covered by the insurance arrangements made by the ACS for the Staff members. On official missions, economy class tickets are to be booked.

## **8. Vacation and special leave**

- 8.1 Vacation is regulated by the Norwegian Annual Holidays Act. According to the Act Staff members are entitled to 21 working days' holiday (excluding Saturdays and Sundays) per year. In addition Staff members are entitled to an extra four days paid leave.
- 8.2 A Staff member who has reached the age of 60 before September 1st of the current calendar year is entitled to an extra five days' annual holiday.
- 8.3 Holiday pay from the ACS is calculated on the basis of the salary from the preceding year. Under the Act, a Staff member is entitled to holiday pay of 10.2% of the basis of the salary from the preceding year. When stipulated in advance by written agreement, the Staff member is entitled to advance payment of the holiday pay, which will be earned on the basis of the last year of the appointment contract.
- 8.4 The taking of leave shall not cause undue disruption to normal ACS operations. In accordance with this principle, leave dates shall be subject to the needs of the Arctic Council.
- 8.5 The Act relating to public holidays lists the following Norwegian public holidays:
  - Ordinary Sundays;
  - New Year's day;
  - Maundy Thursday;
  - Good Friday;
  - Easter Sunday;

- Easter Monday;
- Ascension Day;
- Whit Sunday;
- Whit Monday;
- Christmas Day; and
- Boxing Day.

May 1st and May 17th are both defined as public holidays/festival days and, as a general rule, will be treated as Sundays. Work will not be permitted unless necessitated by the nature of the job.

- 8.6** A Staff member shall, at his or her earliest convenience, report absence due to sickness to the ACS. If a sick leave period exceeds 3 days a medical statement issued by a doctor declaration is required for further payment by the ACS. Staff members who are enrolled in the Norwegian social security system will be compensated for sick leave according to this system.
- 8.7** Staff members who are enrolled in the Norwegian social security system will be compensated for parental leave according to this system. According to the Working Environment Act Staff members are entitled to parental leave.
- 8.8** In relation to welfare reasons, a Staff member may apply for absence with salary up to five days per year.

## **9. Working hours**

- 9.1** Office working hours are from Monday to Friday and a normal work week is 40 hours (8 hours/day). Disposition of the working hours will be stipulated in the contracts. Staff members are entitled to a daily break of 30 minutes. However, the ACS is obliged to facilitate expanded working hours in accordance with the working hours of the SAO Chair in their time zone.
- 9.2** For overtime a supplement shall be paid in addition to the pay received by the Staff member for corresponding work during normal working hours. The overtime supplement shall be 50 %.
- a) Overtime hours may wholly or partly be taken out as off-duty time.
  - b) Overtime is subject to approval by the Director.
- 9.3** Exemptions for working time regulations and overtime payment can be made for the Director and personnel in senior and independent posts according to the Norwegian Working Environment Act.

## **10. Salary**

- 10.1** The level of salaries for the Professional staff category is determined on the basis that the ACS should be able to recruit appropriately qualified staff from Arctic States. The level of salaries for the General staff category should reflect the prevailing conditions found locally for similar work.
- 10.2** The ACS Salary Scale for both Professional category and General Category staff can be found in Schedule A. Salaries shall be paid in Norwegian kroner (NOK).
- 10.3** Based on qualifications and subject to the approved salary budget envelope, the Director may decide to appoint a Staff member at a salary higher than step 1 of the relevant level. Staff shall remain at the step and level they are appointed for at least the first year of their appointment.
- 10.4** Staff members may receive annual step increases, subject to satisfactory performance of their duties and operational budget considerations. Step increases shall cease once the Staff member has reached the highest step in the level in which he or she was appointed.
- 10.5** The salary scales may be adjusted by a decision of the SAOs including, inter alia, adjustments for inflation in Norway.
- 10.6** The day of payment of salaries shall be the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. When the 20<sup>th</sup> is a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, salaries are paid on the last working day before the 20<sup>th</sup>. Salaries will be paid into Norwegian bank accounts held in the name of the individual Staff member.
- 10.7** Staff members exempt from taxation in Norway on salaries and emoluments, including allowances provided for in the Staff rules and the Staff appointment contract, paid by the ACS according to the Host Country Agreement with the Government of Norway, shall pay an internal fee imposed by the ACS. The internal fee shall be used to pay for social security benefits for the Staff members, including payments under paragraph 11.2 for an occupational pension. Any excess payments shall be added to the administrative budget and be used to pay for the official functions of the ACS.

## **11. Social security**

- 11.1** As a general rule, Staff members will be a member of the Norwegian national insurance scheme regulated by the Norwegian national insurance act. Membership in the Norwegian national insurance scheme gives Staff the right to receive sick pay, maternity and paternity benefit and pension.
- 11.2** In addition to benefits from the Norwegian national insurance scheme, all Staff members are entitled to an occupational pension. The contribution to this pension is included in the Staff internal fee in paragraph 10.8 and must be a minimum of 2 % of the Staff member's salary.

## **12. Resolution of Grievances or Disputes**

- 12.1** Any dispute between staff members or grievance concerning a staff member's Terms and Conditions of Employment, whether they have been agreed upon in an employment contract or set out in the ACS Staff Rules, shall, if possible, be resolved amicably, and brought to the attention of the Head of Administration.
- 12.2** If no amicable solution can be reached, an official written complaint may be filed with the Head of Administration. The complaint should be as specific as possible and specify the staff member's preferred resolution. A decision on such a complaint shall be given by the Head of Administration, with the approval of the Director, within 10 days of receipt of the written submission, unless otherwise specified by the Director.
- 12.3** Should the complaint involve the Head of Administration, then it may be filed directly with the ACS Director. The Director may also decide to refer the issue to an impartial external mediator for informal resolution, before the matter is escalated further.
- 12.4** Should the grieving staff member(s) disagree with the decision rendered by the Secretariat, or should the complaint relate directly to the ACS Director, they may request that the Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) act as an impartial mediator between the parties.
- 12.5** In case that the SAO Chair is unable to help the staff member(s) resolve the matter within 15 days, they may request that the matter be brought to arbitration for final resolution. The request for arbitration shall be made in writing and be addressed to the Chair of the SAOs. The submission by the staff member or the Secretariat shall contain the following information:
- i) A copy of the decision to be submitted to arbitration;
  - ii) The resolution that the staff member or the Secretariat requests;
  - iii) A description of the situation or the issue as the staff member / Secretariat perceives it;
  - iv) Reference to any document that the staff member / Secretariat would like to see considered;
  - v) Information on who will represent the staff member / Secretariat before the Arbitrator, should either party deem such representation necessary.
- 12.6** Any dispute referred to arbitration under the procedure set out herein shall be finally settled by an arbitrator in accordance with Norwegian Employment Law. Such reference to Norwegian Employment Law does not constitute a waiver of any of the privileges, immunities, exemptions, or facilities accorded in the Host Country Agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Norway and the ACS. The independent arbitrator must be a senior judge or professionally-recognized arbitrator with significant experience in labour disputes, whose selection shall be mutually agreed upon by both parties. The place for the arbitral proceedings shall be Tromsø, unless otherwise agreed upon by both parties, and the language used shall be English. The arbitrator shall decide the division of costs for the arbitration procedure; however, the costs for external legal help shall be borne by the party using such help.
- 12.7** This mechanism is only available to current staff members of the ACS.

### **13. Separation from service**

- 13.1** Separation from service will be regulated by the Norwegian Working Environment Act.
- 13.2** A Staff member has the right to terminate his or her appointment contract after giving three months' notice. The resignation does not need to state a reason.
- 13.3** The ACS may terminate the appointment contract with a Staff member only when this is objectively justified on the basis of circumstances relating to the ACS or the Staff member.
- 13.4** The notice period is three months starting the first day of the following month.
- 13.5** The Director, on behalf of the ACS, may after consultation with the SAO Chair dismiss a Staff member immediately if he or she commits a serious breach of the appointment contract.
- 13.6** Termination of the appointment contract with or dismissal of a Staff member designated to the IPS may only be executed after consultation with the Board of the IPS or its Chair.
- 13.7** The SAOs may decide to dismiss the Director.

### **14 Amendment to the Staff Rules**

- 14.1** The Staff Rules may be amended by decision of the SAOs.

## APPENDICES

### SCHEDULE A

2025 SALARY SCALE FOR THE PROFESSIONAL and GENERAL STAFF CATEGORIES OF THE ARCTIC COUNCIL SECRETARIAT

(NORWEGIAN KRONER)

LEVEL	STEPS						
	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII
1 Director level	1 272 200	1 297 200	1 322 600	1 347 100	1 371 800	1 396 300	1 420 000
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI
		1 121 700	1 146 500	1 171 600	1 196 700	1 222 100	1 247 000
LEVEL	STEPS						
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
2 Civil servant level	925 800	951 900	977 200	1 002 100	1 031 300	1 058 700	1 089 800
3 Civil servant level	778 500	792 000	807 000	826 900	846 900	872 900	899 200
4 Civil servant level	686 700	698 700	709 800	722 600	736 000	752 600	765 500
5 Civil servant level	611 600	621 400	632 000	643 000	654 500	663 900	675 500
6 Civil servant level	549 300	557 800	565 800	574 600	583 200	592 200	601 600
7 Civil servant level	496 000	502 800	511 200	518 600	526 400	534 000	541 400

## **Overview of Amendments to Date**

1. Update of ACS salary schedules, SAOX meeting, Tromsø, Norway, 2014
2. Update of ACS salary schedules, SAOX meeting, Anchorage, Alaska, US, October 2015
3. Update of ACS salary schedules, SAOX meeting, Portland, Maine, US, October 2016
4. Update of ACS salary schedules, intersessional SAO approval, August 2017
5. Update of ACS salary schedules, intersessional SAO approval, July 2019
6. Rule 5.3, the line “if in the interest of the Arctic Council” was added at the SAOX meeting on 11 November 2020. In addition, the following non substantial amendments were made: a) Replaced “Secretariat” with ACS in Rule 1,4,5,6,7,8,9,10 and 12 b) Replaced “Arctic state/Arctic States” with “Arctic State/Arctic States” in Rule 4 and 5 c) Replaced the “Terms of Reference”, the “Staff Rules” and the “Financial Rules” with the “Arctic Council Secretariat Terms of Reference”, the “Arctic Council Secretariat Staff Rules” and the “Arctic Council Secretariat Financial Rules” in Rule 5.7.
7. Rule 5.3, the sentence “SAOs may decide, in exceptional circumstances and upon request by the Director, to approve a proposal to extend the contract of a Professional staff member for a period of up to two years in order to secure the Secretariat’s operational requirement.”, was added and intersessionally approved on 29 September 2020.
8. Rule 6.7 was amended and Rule 6.8 and 6.9 were added and intersessionally approved by the SAOs on 30 March 2021.
9. Appendix 1, Schedule A, Salary scale for the professional staff category of the Arctic Council Secretariat was amended and approved by the SAOs at the SAOX meeting on 10 March 2021.
10. Update of ACS salary schedules, SAO intersessional approval, 15 September 2023.
11. New rule 6.4 added to clarify authority of ACS Director with respect to the classification of positions. Rules 10.3 and 10.4 amended to clarify the process surrounding the progression / promotion of staff across salary steps and levels, in accordance with ACS review recommendations. New section 12 added on the Resolution of Grievances or Disputes. These changes were approved intersessionally on 6 June 2024.
12. Rule 6.7, 6.8 and 6.9 were amended and intersessionally approved by the SAOs on 24 October 2024.
13. Update of ACS Salary Scale to reflect inflation adjustment to Norwegian Civil Service scale, approved 15 December 2024.
14. Definition of “general staff” category amended, ACS Salary Schedules A and B merged, and corresponding changes made to Rules 4.1, 4.2, 6.9, and 10.2, following SAO intersessional approval on 14 February 2025.
15. Update of ACS Salary Scale to reflect inflation adjustment, approved 3 October 2025.