



# FICSA

Federation of International  
Civil Servants' Associations

# EXPLAINED



	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations		World Health Organization (WHO)
	International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)		World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
	International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)		World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
	International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)		BIOVERSITY International
	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)		European Organization for Nuclear Physics (CERN)
	International Training Center of the ILO (ILO TC)		Centre international d'enregistrement des publications en série (CIEPS)
	International Maritime Organization (IMO)		Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)
	Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)		European Central Bank (ECB)
	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)		European Southern Observatory (ESO)
	Pan American Health Organization - WHO Regional Office for the Americas (PAHO-WHO),		The Global Fund
	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD)		International Cocoa Organization (ICCO)
	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)		International Coffee Organization (ICO)
	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)		International Development Law Organization (IDLO)
	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)		International Organization for Migration (IOM)
	United Nations Global Service Centre (UNGSC)		International Olive Council (IOC)
	United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)		International Organization International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER)
	United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)		Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, (OPCW)
	Universal Postal Union (UPU)		World Customs Organization (WCO)
			World Trade Organization (WTO)
			United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

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Founded in Paris in 1952, the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA) is a federated group of 30 staff associations/unions from organizations belonging to the United Nations common system. Eighteen staff associations/unions outside the common system have associate status. Fifteen staff associations/unions are consultative members, and 22 Federations of United Nations Staff Associations (FUNSA) are observers. The diversity of membership ensures that all staff in the field and at headquarters duty stations have the opportunity to exchange views and information about conditions of service, seek the Federation's assistance and support when difficulties arise, and organize collective action.

### Aims

FICSA fosters the development of the international civil service in accordance with the principles set forth in the United Nations Charter and the constitutions of the specialized agencies.

The Federation:

- Ensures that equitable conditions of service for all staff are maintained at a level that will permit the recruitment and retention of the most qualified people
- Defends staff rights
- Contributes to building a positive image of the international civil service
- As a global staff representative body of UN and other international organizations and agencies, FICSA provides an important forum for safeguarding and improving conditions of service

### Council and Offices

A Council of member association/union representatives meets annually to define the Federation's policies. Each year the Council elects an Executive Committee (consisting of a President, General Secretary, Treasurer, two members for Compensation Issues, a member for Regional and Field Issues and a member without portfolio) and four Regional Representatives who are responsible respectively for implementing the Federation's policies and representing the Federation.

The Executive Committee draws up the annual programme of work, based on the decisions and recommendations adopted by Council. Standing committees specialize in General Service Questions, Professional Salaries and Allowances, Conditions of Service in the Field, Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety, Human Resources Management, Staff-Management Relations and Legal Questions. In addition, two ad-hoc committees exist during Council sessions to address administrative matters as well as strategic development.

## Actions

FICSA's annual and ongoing programmes of work include the following activities:

- *Representing* the interests of international civil servants in interagency bodies and legislative organs of the common system
- *Coordinating* activities at the local level and exchanging information on conditions of service
- *Informing* all staff on issues affecting their conditions of service
- *Organizing* training seminars, workshops and working groups on specific aspects of conditions of service
- *Advising* member associations/unions on staff-management relations
- *Producing* position papers on the technical aspects of conditions of service
- *Coordinating* industrial action
- *Supporting* the use of the appeal process (internal appeals and Administrative Tribunals) in cases of non-observance of terms of appointment
- *Formulating* strategies to prevent violations of staff rights
- *Participating* in cost-of-living surveys that determine the post adjustment indices
- *Providing* technical assistance to member associations / unions in preparation for local salary surveys
- *Advocating* staff positions with representatives of Member States
- *Providing* guidelines on how staff associations should deal with organizational reform
- *Assisting* member associations / unions in capacity building and knowledge transfer

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## REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

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### Regional Representative for Asia

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### Regional Representative for Europe

**Maria del Rocio Martin Vargas**

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### Regional Representative for Middle East – North Africa

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### Standing Committee on Conditions of Service in the Field

The FICSA Standing Committee on Conditions of Service in the Field addresses issues relevant to the following:

**Safety and security policies are established** by the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN). Issues include: security training for staff; mobility; emergency telecommunications; residential security; road safety and gender consideration in security management.

**Field allowances and benefits:** These include the **hardship allowance**, a non-pensionable allowance designed to compensate for the degree of hardship experienced by staff assigned to difficult duty stations, payable to internationally-recruited staff on assignment of one year or more; the **additional hardship allowance/non-family service allowance**, introduced on 1 July 2011 for staff serving in non-family duty stations as an incentive for staff to undertake assignments at non-family locations; the **mobility incentive** designed to encourage mobility of staff in general to field duty stations; and the **rest and recuperation framework** which is viewed as a way for staff to relieve accumulated stress from the difficult and dangerous conditions that characterize non-family duty stations.

**Non-HQ salary surveys for locally-recruited staff** which should ensure the objective application of the salary survey methodology for establishing salaries for locally-recruited staff including NPOs.

**Review and classification of hardship duty stations:** FICSA participates in the review and classification of hardship duty stations according to conditions of life and work, security, health, isolation and environmental factors.

### Standing Committee on General Service Questions

FICSA Standing Committee on General Service Questions addresses issues relevant to the following:

**GS salary survey methodologies** including the technical analysis and development of the best method to capture and analyse information about the local salary market.

**Workshops** including training in using the salary survey methodologies and how best to participate in a Local Salary Survey Committee (LSSC).

**Local salary levels** including the defence and protection of salaries for all categories of staff in all duty stations.

### FICSA Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances

The FICSA Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances addresses issues relevant to the following:

**Post adjustment questions** including participation in the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions (ACPAQ) to develop the best system to establish post adjustment indices.

**Education grant** including defending the grant and participating in the review of the level of the grant.

**Review of the pay and benefits system** including participation in all discussions, recommendations and decisions on every aspect of pay and benefits.

**Training** including workshops on place-to-place surveys, post adjustment and Professional salaries.

### Standing Committee on Human Resources Management

The FICSA Standing Committee on Human Resources Management addresses issues relevant to the following:

**Staff contracts** including the identification of best practices in contractual arrangements.

**Job classification** through the monitoring of job evaluation tools and standards for all categories of staff.

**Recruitment and selection** by sharing information on recruitment and selection procedures and the participation of staff representatives in selection committees/panels.

**Appointment and promotion procedures** through the exchange of information relative to appointment and promotion procedures and the participation of staff representatives therein.

**Performance management** systems and tools available in the organizations and procedures for acknowledging and rewarding outstanding performance.

**Career development:** Promotes the implementation of a holistic approach to career development policies.

**Leave provisions:** Monitors and identifies best practice.

**Separation and termination policies:** Monitors and identifies best practice and ensures that termination policies do not violate the acquired rights of staff.

**Hours of work, holidays, flexi-time:** Facilitates the exchange of information to identify best practice and advocates for the implementation of flexi-time policies system-wide.

**Mobility policies and procedures:** Contributes to the development of inter-agency and intra-agency mobility policies.

**Outsourcing:** Identifies the impact of outsourcing on the organizations and their staff.

**Ethics:** Contributes to the preparation of Codes of Ethics and Standards of Conduct.

**Whistle-blowing:** Advocates for the strengthening of protections for whistle-blowers.

### Standing Committee on Legal Questions

The FICSA Standing Committee on Legal Questions addresses issues relevant to the following:

**Legal strategies:** Identifies cases which can be brought to an administrative tribunal for the common benefit of staff, either to advance their rights or to protect their conditions of service.

**Legal insurance:** Exchanges information on available legal protection insurance coverage for international civil servants in connection with employer/employee disputes.

**Interpretation of Staff Regulations and Rules:** Assists members in understanding their respective staff regulations and rules and provides opinions on whether they have been applied correctly.

**Use of the FICSA Legal Defence Fund:** Advises on which legal appeals should be supported by FICSA.

**Grievance procedures:** Identifies best practices and shares information on internal grievance procedures.

**Administration of justice:** Monitors the work of the Administrative Tribunals and contributes to any efforts to reform the Tribunals.

**Roster of Legal Advisors:** Compiles and maintains a list of the best legal experts to assist in appeals.

**Administrative Tribunal case law:** Reviews and provides information on the judgments of the Administrative Tribunals.

**Staff rights:** Identifies staff rights and the best strategies to protect and advance them.

**Membership issues:** Defines the parameters of the various categories of FICSA membership.

**Constitutional questions:** Interprets the provisions of the FICSA Statutes and Rules of Procedure.

**Training** on the appeals process.

### Standing Committee on Staff / Management Relations

The FICSA Standing Committee on Staff/Management Relations addresses issues relevant to the following:

**Labour relations** including consultation, collective bargaining and negotiation.

**Joint staff-management bodies** including a system-wide inventory of best practices.

**Partnership and recognition agreements** including the development of model agreements.

**Strengthening staff representation** through FICSA-organized workshops, the development of training materials and guidelines as well as the publication of FICSA's Handbook for Staff Representatives.

**Access to Organizations' governing bodies by staff associations and unions** including a system-wide inventory of best practices.

**Organizational reform and its impact on staff representation** including the development of strategies to enhance the representation of staff in reform initiatives.

**Relations with inter-agency bodies** including the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM), the HR Network (HRN) and subsidiary working groups and task forces relative to these inter-agency bodies.

### Standing Committee on Social Security and Occupational Health and Safety

The FICSA Standing Committee on Social Security and Occupational Health and Safety addresses issues relevant to the following:

**Pensions** including items for the Pension Board discussions such as the impact of currency devaluation on pension benefits, benefits for divorced spouses, the purchase of additional years of pension and the Fund's investment policy.

**HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace** including participation in the Task Force to provide input to the development of information and learning material and to ensure equitable access to treatment and health insurance coverage for all staff. Continue to fight against stigma and discrimination.

**Long-term care health insurance:** Collect and exchange information on the various health insurance policies offered by UN organizations.

**Staff well-being:** Collect and exchange information on staff well-being policies such as the work-family agenda and promotion of best practices, monitor absenteeism and causes of disability, collect and exchange information on long-term care policies and advocate for a system wide long-term care coverage.

### Permanent Technical Committee on Questions Concerning the General Service and related categories

The Permanent Technical Committee on Questions Concerning the General Service and related categories (PTC/GSQ) is a sub-committee of the FICSA Standing Committee on General Service Questions (SC/GSQ), and has the following main functions:

- Advise the Executive Committee and the Standing Committee on General Service Questions on issues related to the conditions of service of the General Service and other locally recruited categories of staff;
- Develop documents and recommendations of a technical nature in support of FICSA's actions on issues related to the conditions of service of the General Service and other locally recruited categories of staff;
- Develop and maintain training material on the GS salary survey methodologies;
- Maintain a list of FICSA experts on the GS salary survey methodologies;
- Propose topics for discussion or items for inclusion in the agenda and/or the workplan of the Standing Committee on General Service Questions;
- Assist the Standing Committee on General Service Questions in coordinating and evaluating information received from member associations/unions on issues pertaining to the conditions of employment of General Service and related categories of staff;
- Study and analyse issues of a technical nature brought to its attention by the FICSA Executive Committee, the Standing Committee on General Service Questions or individual associations/unions represented by FICSA; and
- Recommend relevant solutions and/or courses of action, as appropriate.

### Permanent Technical Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances

The Permanent Technical Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances is a sub-committee of the FICSA Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances, and has the following main functions:

- Advise the Executive Committee and the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances on technical issues related to the salaries and allowances of staff in the Professional and higher categories;
- Develop documents and recommendations of a technical nature in support of the Federation's actions on issues related to the conditions of service of staff in the Professional and higher categories;
- Propose topics for discussion or items for inclusion in the agenda and/or the work plan of the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances;
- Assist the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances in coordinating and evaluating information received from member associations/unions on issues pertaining to the conditions of employment of staff in the Professional and higher categories;
- Study and analyse issues of a technical nature brought to its attention by the FICSA Executive Committee, the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances or individual associations/unions represented by FICSA;
- Recommend relevant solutions and/or course of action, as appropriate;
- Propose to the Executive Committee the name(s) of participant(s) to represent FICSA at ACPAQ and any other working groups and ICSC sessions that focus on issues related to the salaries and allowances of staff in the Professional and higher categories;
- Develop a roster of trainers on issues related to the salaries and allowances of staff in the Professional and higher categories; and
- Participate in the development of training material on issues related to the salaries and allowances of staff in the Professional and higher categories.

### Representation

- Intervenes with management of an organization upon request of the respective member association/union
- Formulates strategies, both locally and globally, to prevent violations of staff rights
- Reaches out to representatives of Member States in promoting staff interests
- Actively represents the interests of international civil servants in inter-agency bodies and legislative organs of the common system
- Is the only Staff Federation which represents the interests of staff of the specialized Agencies
- Represents staff at the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) which periodically reviews all conditions of service, including:
  - the post adjustment methodology for staff in the Professional and higher categories
  - the salary survey methodologies used for purposes of establishing salaries of local staff, including those of the General Service category
- Acts as independent observer in cost-of-living surveys which determine post adjustment
- Has observer status in several inter-agency bodies, such as the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM), the Human Resources Network (HRN), the Board of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN)

### Training

- Has a carefully chosen pool of expert trainers who train staff representatives on a variety of topics relevant to them
- Frequently sends one or more of its experts to train local salary survey committees well in advance of the conduct of their salary surveys
- Training is freely accessible to FICSA members and special conditions apply to members from the other Federations through joint cooperation agreements
- Has a [training catalogue](#) which is updated on a regular basis

### Legal protection

- Maintains a list of international lawyers with extensive experience in representing international civil servants at the ILOAT and UNDT/UNAT
- Offers its members an attractive legal protection insurance package
- Maintains a legal defence fund for its members

### Knowledge base

- Provides expert advice to its member associations/unions in relation to their rights
- Has a large network of experts and resource persons with various expertise on which it can draw
- Collects best practices from across the membership

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## FICSA'S GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE PAST YEARS

- Coordinated the preparation of legal briefs which resulted in staff winning their appeals at the ILOAT, such as the recent judgments on the pay cut
- Obtained the creation of an ICSC Contact Group to review the consultative process and working arrangements of the ICSC
- Obtained a dependent spouse allowance for the first dependent child in the case of single parents
- Obtained a total review of the current post adjustment methodology and its operational rules
- Obtained an increase in pensionable remuneration rates
- Prevented the misuse of national professional officer contract modalities
- Secured an equitable education grant scheme
- Influenced contractual modalities
- Drew attention of the ICSC and the Pension Board to the consequences of the increased use of non-staff contracts
- Contributed to improvements to the hardship and mobility schemes
- Improved the content of cost-of-living questionnaires
- Obtained leave for parents in cases of child adoption
- Obtained increases in allowances and benefits, e.g., children's allowance, installation grant, hazard pay
- Enabled staff representatives to address and resolve challenging staff management matters
- Enhanced reviews of the internal system of justice and the appeals process
- Protected the staff-management consultative process
- Preserved staff rights when organizations reformed and re-profiled
- Enhanced the voice of staff in inter-agency bodies
- Ensured access to personnel files
- Contributed to improved security in all duty stations, especially for all staff at high risk duty stations
- Successfully challenged proposed cuts in pensions and secured a more equitable adjustment for pension beneficiaries





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