

HR.SOP.III.082

Dependent Spouse – Request recognition and dependent spouse benefits

HRT/HPJ

HR Standard Operating Procedure
Target Audience: All Staff

Update effective: 1 January 2019

DISCLAIMER

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) provide a step-by-step guide for staff directly involved in the processing of administrative actions to support and facilitate the implementation of WHO policies and procedures. The SOPs are for guidance only; they are neither authoritative nor binding. The SOPs reflect the policies and procedures of WHO at the time of writing; however, policies and procedures change from time-to-time. In the case of a conflict between the SOPs and the WHO eManual provisions, the WHO eManual provisions take precedence.

DOCUMENT SPECIFICATIONS

Version	Date of revision	Author (s) / Dept / Unit	Approver	Indicate which section changed compared to previous version
0.1	06.08.2012	S.E.Amaudruz		1 st draft
0.2	01.10.2012	S.E. Amaudruz HRD/HPJ		Incorporating the procedures for spouse's who are employed and the minimum salary limits
0.3	02.10.2012	JM		Added VISIO
0.4	02.10.2012	Sent to SHI & GHR for comments on the procedure for staff member submitting medical report for an insurance/dependency request at any other time than a life event, or within 3 months of such.		GHR provided comments on 3.10.2012
0.5	19.10.2012	Follow-up to SHI for comments		Awaiting comments
0.6	19.10.2012	S. Amaudruz		Incorporated GHR comments, No comments from SHI
1.0	05.11.2012		S Amaudruz, HRD/HPJ N Jeffreys, Comptroller M Altmaier, Director, HRD	Approved for publication.
1.1	07.05.2019	HRD/HPJ (JSP, RJO, SEA) Reviewed by GHR on 29 May 2019-changes incorporated.	S. Amaudruz, HRD/HPJ	SOP name amended. Overall business process amended to implement new earnings requirements for dependant spouses. Edits to steps to reflect the ECM records management, refer earnings and clarify text. Key Risks and controls revised.
2.0	01.06.2019	Cleared with GHR	S. Amaudruz, HRD/HPJ P. Cronin, HRD/HPJ J Sidibe Pimpie, HRD/HPJ A. Khaidova, GSC/GHR	Revised version 2.0 with new name published to reflect change in Staff Rule 310.5.1 to include all earnings of spouses for the calendar year 2019.

3.0	25.08.2023	HRT/HPJ	K. Mollard, HRT/HPJ	Editorial updates.
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview/Description

This Standard Operating Procedure explains the steps which a staff member, appointed under:

- a temporary appointment under Staff Rule 420.4;
- a fixed-term appointment under Staff Rule 420.3; or
- a continuing appointment under Staff Rule 420.2;

should take to request the official WHO “recognition” of a spouse and to “Apply for Dependency Benefits” through GSM Employee Self-Service - Recognized Family Members - Request for Recognition of my Family Member and Apply for Benefits for my Recognized Spouse.

A staff member who requests recognition of a spouse must already have updated or requested a change in their personal status from single to married; divorced to married; widowed to married and provided the relevant “marriage” document – See HR.SOP.III.079 – Change in personal status.

A "recognized" spouse is one which is duly recognized as such in accordance with the provisions of WHO eManual III.3.2 Personal Status after submission by the staff member of relevant supporting documentation i.e. spouse birth certificate or passport and marriage certificate or equivalent as verified and approved by GHR. For other types of official union/partnership, e.g. domestic partnership, which are duly recognized by the national authorities under which the partnership was contracted, the GHR verification process will include Global HR obtaining Director HRT’s approval of the personal status. See Personal Status – WHO eManual III.3.2.

Once the spouse is “Recognized” officially, the staff member may request the spouse to become a dependent spouse which includes a spouse allowance and health insurance coverage, or alternatively, to be considered as a Non-Dependant Spouse in order to benefit from Staff Healthiinsurance coverage only.

1.2. General Guidance / Business Rules

i) Request for recognition of a spouse – mandatory step

Staff members make declarations with regard to their spouse by completing the GSM Employee Self-Service request to have their spouse/partner officially recognized by the Organization for the purpose of receiving allowances and benefits and obtaining a residence permit in the duty station.

Staff member prepares and uploads a Scanned copy (in PDF format) of the marriage certificate, proof of date of birth of the spouse (passport or birth certificate) or national equivalent to the GSM request.

The GSM request to Recognize a Spouse is forwarded automatically to the GHR team who review the request, verify the documentation and implement the request for recognition of the spouse.

The staff member receives a GSM Worklist notification that the Spouse has been “recognized”, with a message that the staff member may request dependency status or benefits by submitting a further request - Apply for benefits for my Recognized Spouse.

ii) Request for Dependency Status/Allowance for a Recognized Spouse

A staff member whose spouse is i) not in receipt of earnings, or ii) who is employed or in receipt of earnings/income which are less than the limit stipulated in Staff Rule 310.5.1 may submit a request to claim spouse dependency allowance as follows:-

- For General Service (GS) staff and national professional officers (NPO): Spouse Allowance in local currency (if applicable in the local salary scale at the staff member’s duty station)
- For Professional staff: Spouse allowance equivalent to 6% of annual net salary of the staff member plus post adjustment.

Dependency status for a spouse who is unemployed, retired or in receipt of any social security benefits or other earnings, is subject to presentation of evidence that the earnings are less than the threshold mentioned below:

- For GS staff: If the spouse's annual gross earnings or pension/unemployment or other benefits are less than the lowest General Service salary level at the place of work of the spouse.
- For Professional staff: If the spouse's annual gross earnings or pension/unemployment or other benefits are less than the lowest General Service salary level at the place of work of the spouse and provided the limit at the place of work of the spouse is not less than the General Service entry level at New York, i.e. G.2 Step 1.

A professional staff member may not claim dependency status for any period a spouse is working full-time as a professional in WHO or another UN agency during a calendar year. If during a calendar year a spouse works for WHO or another UN Agency on a part-time basis, i.e. less than 100%, dependency status may be requested for that period only, provided that gross annual earnings (full-time and part-time) are below the limit stipulated in Staff Rule 310.5.1.1.

iii) Supporting documents relevant to the request are mandatory and must be uploaded

Evidence of spouse earnings: Includes all earnings received such as salaries and allowances received from gainful employment, or own private business, social benefits such as unemployment benefits, pension benefits, disability benefits and earnings resulting from real estate (e.g. rents) etc. Staff members shall provide such evidence and certify that the information provided is complete and true.

- If the spouse is employed, a salary statement from the spouse's employer attesting to the spouse's total gross occupational earnings for the year, and the exact period of employment (tax declaration) is required. In cases where the earnings are derived from sources other than gainful employment, a tax declaration is required.

- Clear Scanned copies of supporting documents as indicated in the self-service request must be uploaded and self-certified by the staff member that they are true copies of originals.
- *If an official document is in a WHO official language other than English or French, i.e. Chinese, Arabic, Spanish, Russian or in a working language of the regional office where the staff member is assigned, the staff member makes a self-certified translation and requests the HR Focal point/HR Officer in the major office or country office to certify the translation is correct, wherever possible. If not possible, the staff member is responsible for obtaining an official translation.*
- *If the document is in a non-WHO official or working language, the staff member is responsible for obtaining an official translation.*
- Staff members may be requested by their RHRO/HRBP/A/MO to provide original documents for certification at any time.

Upon receipt of the request GHR reviews and approves, requests further information or rejects if the request is neither duly supported with relevant documents or within the rules. If approved, the dependency status/allowance will be paid from the effective date as determined by the GHR Administrator. Requests for recognition of a spouse must normally be made within 3 months of the marriage/partnership. Requests for allowances or entitlements of any kind that are submitted more than one year after the date when the initial payment would have been due will not be accepted. Accordingly, retroactive payments are limited to a maximum of 12 months.

NB: If the national laws of a country provide for more than one spouse, a second spouse may be recognized for pension fund and Staff Health insurance purposes through a request in GSM for Recognition of Spouse with a comment that it is a second, third spouse. However, only one spouse may be claimed for the purpose of a dependency allowance.

Changes in Spouse status : Staff members must inform the Organization immediately of any change in the status of a dependent spouse and request cessation of benefits if appropriate, as follows:

- earnings increase and are above the limit stipulated in Staff rule 310.5.1.1 for professional staff and Staff rule 310.5.1.2 for GS staff (earnings limits are available from the HQ or Regional HR focal point; or
- upon divorce;
- upon official separation

Staff members should verify their spouse's earnings for the prior year at latest by 31 March to ensure that the all the spouse's gross annual earnings received do not exceed the limit. As soon as the earnings exceed the annual earnings, the staff member must submit a GSM Self-service request to cease dependency benefits.

In addition, the administration requires staff to make an annual declaration of spouse dependency through GSM Employee Self-service/Declaration of Dependency/Statement of Declaration of Dependency and provide supporting documentation for the prior calendar year, if not already submitted.

A "non-dependant" spouse is a "Recognized Spouse" for whom the staff member does not wish/ or is not eligible to claim an allowance. A non-dependant spouse may be covered under the WHO Staff **Health Insurance Coverage for Non-dependant Spouse** - see HR.SOP.III.083.

Other important actions to be taken once a spouse is recognized :

Upon recognition of a spouse the staff member should immediately update the WHO Beneficiaries (WHO 90.6) form through the GSM Employee self-service function; Pension fund forms – Designation of Residual Beneficiaries PEN A.2.; and the emergency contacts in GSM.

Reference Material

1.2.1. Staff Rules

- 310.5., 310.5.1, 310.5.2, 310.6 - Definitions of Dependents - Dependants' Allowances
- 310.4 - Dependants' Allowances (Professional & Higher Category Staff)
- 490.2 - Notification by Staff Members and Obligation to Supply information about themselves
- 495 – Staff member's beneficiaries
- 820 - Travel of Spouse and Children

1.2.2. WHO eManual

- III.3.2 Personal Status
- III.3.4 Dependants' Allowances
- III.3.10 Assignment Grant
- III.3.15 Payment of Salary, post adjustment and allowances
- III.8.2 Travel of Spouse and Children - see also WHO Manual VII.1-3.
- III.8.3 Home leave travel
- III.8.7 Lump sums for statutory travel

1.2.3. Related SOPs

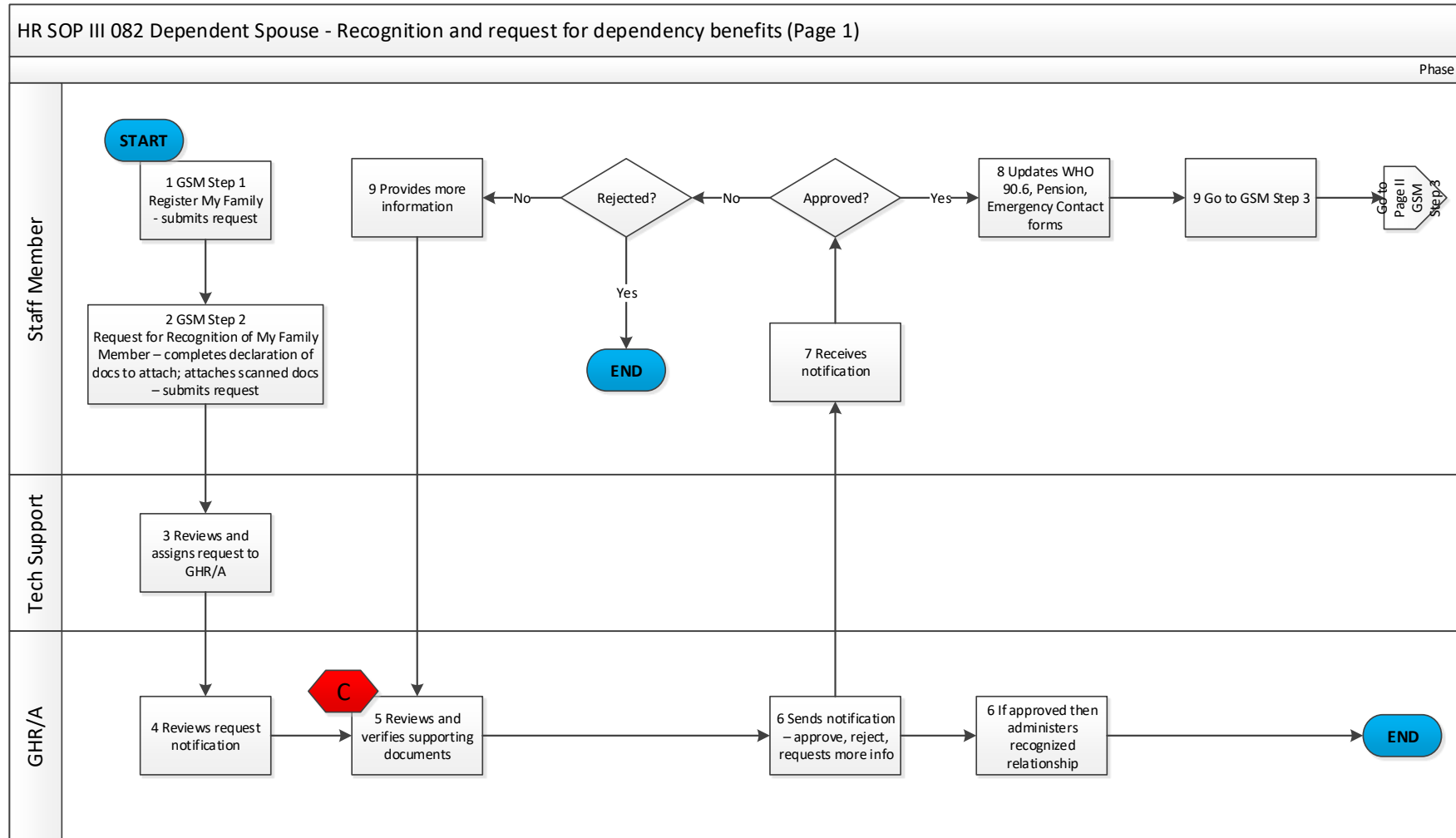
- HR.SOP.III.080 Register, request recognition & apply for benefits for family member
- HR.SOP.III.083 Request Health insurance coverage for a non-dependant spouse
- INS.SOP.XII.063 Entitlements processing
- FIN.SOP.XI.003 Staff Health Insurance Contributions

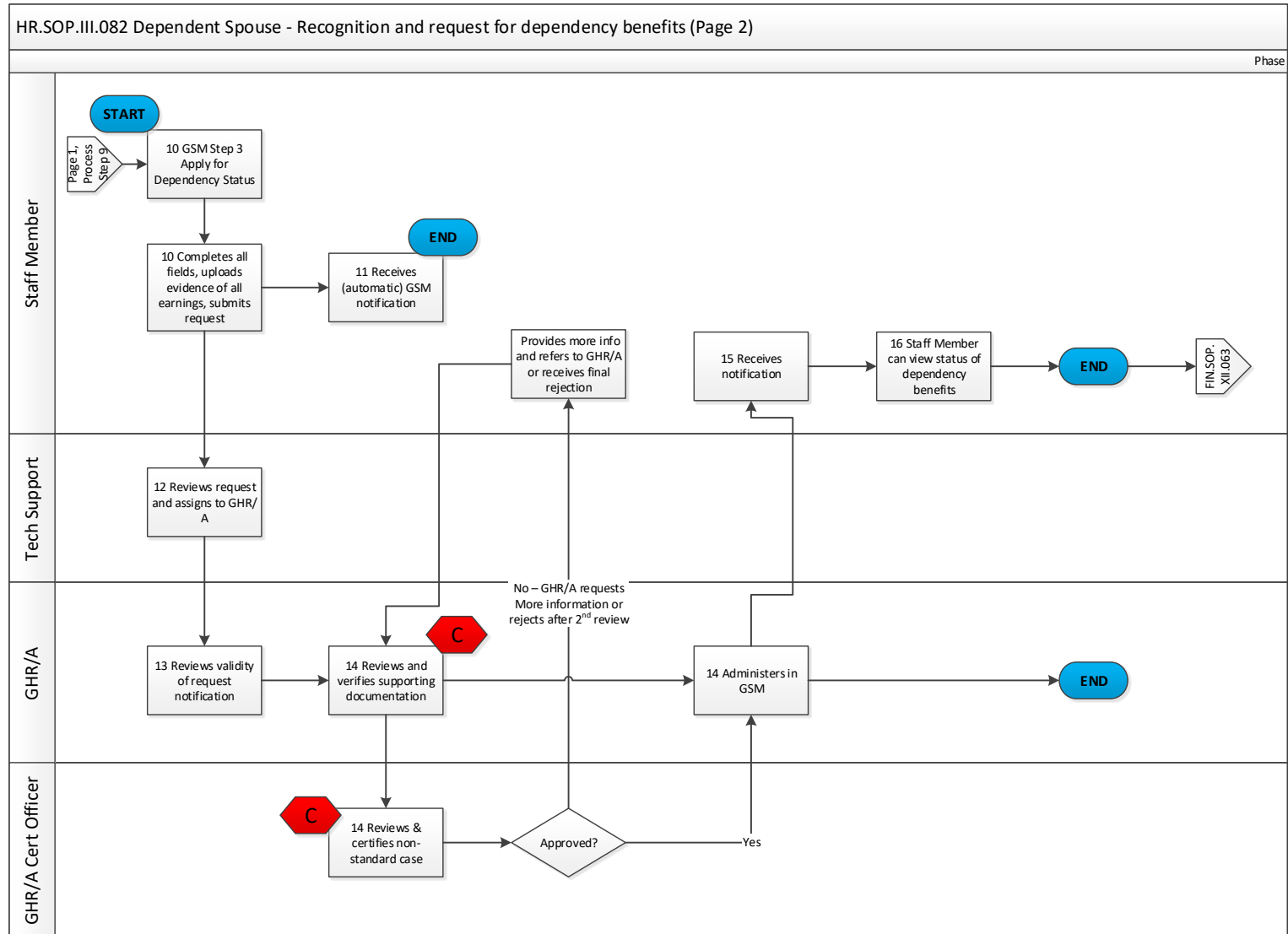
1.3. Other

1.3.1. Definitions

- GHR/A GHR Administrator
- DFF Decriptive Flex Field
- SHI Staff Health Insurance
- UNJSPF United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund
- RHRO Regional Human Resources Officer
- MO Management Officer
- HRBP/A Human Resources Business Partner/Associate
- GS General Service Staff
- NPO National Professional Officer
- SHW Staff Health and Wellbeing
- RSP Regional Staff Physician

2. PROCESS FLOW





3. PROCESS STEPS

Step	Control (C)	Type	Process	Role / Responsibility
		On appointment only - off line submission	<i>During the reporting to duty with HR focal point - staff member completes form WHO 90.1 providing relevant original supporting documents (i.e. birth & marriage certificates). HR focal point verifies documents for authenticity, signs that originals are certified originals or copies thereof and sends by email WHO90.1 to GHR to administer entitlements.</i>	Staff member in collaboration with HR focal point/RHRO
1		GSM input	<p>GSM Step 1 - Register my Family Member (only complete this step if the spouse is newly acquired and/or has not been previously registered and recognized in GSM)</p> <p>Submits request to record a family member navigating through Employee Self-Service/Recognized Family Members/My Family Member. Completes the fields and submits.</p> <p>Name and new family member details are recorded in GSM - No approval, no documents required.</p> <p>Proceeds immediately to GSM step 2 to request official recognition of the spouse.</p>	Staff Member
2		GSM input	<p>GSM Step 2 - Request for recognition of my family member</p> <p>Go to Employee Self-Service - Recognized Family Members / Request for Recognition of My Family Member Select the spouse name and the appropriate choice from the list provided i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spouse – Spouse Birth Certificate & Marriage Certificate 	Staff Member

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner – Partner Birth Certificate & Legal Domestic Partnership Certificate <p>Completes declaration on whether the spouse is employed by a UN Organization. Click Apply</p> <p>Click Managed Attachment and New to uploads the required Scanned pdf documents to the GSM request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Click Browse to select the required document saved on your computer Scroll down to Document Type and Select the correct document type, e.g. Marriage, Legally Recognized Partnership Certificate or Recognition of Personal Status - HRT memo as appropriate; Click Check-In Repeat the steps to add the other required document types, e.g. Birth Certificate or Passport Click Refresh button to review your attachments Close the page by clicking on the “x” top right hand corner to return to the GSM submission. <p>Click Next Review your submission and Add Comments if appropriate Click Submit</p> <p>Your request is sent to GHR for verification and approval.</p>	
3		Off line	Reviews and assigns request to Administrator	GHR Technical support
4		GSM	Reviews request notification to ensure request is valid e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> correct category of dependency is being requested; and 	GHR Administrator

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • verifies staff member record in GSM to determine the start date of recognition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Start date of appointment of the staff member; or if later, ○ Start date of the recognized spouse relationship, date of marriage/domestic partnership. 	
5	C	GSM input	<p>Reviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting documents for authenticity and appropriateness, and <p>Verifies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • name of spouse date of marriage/legal domestic partnership against the marriage certificate/legal documents, • that the staff member appears on the document as the other spouse, • if the staff member is married to another staff member in WHO or other UN organization – makes the relevant check in the contact DFF to indicate “married to a WHO/UN staff member; i) checks that neither spouse is already a recognized dependant of the other. If yes, ii) contacts the WHO staff member to seek clarification on the dependency status and earnings; iii) if spouse is recognized as the dependant of the fixed-term full-time staff member, or if both spouses are fixed-term staff; iv) checks whether dependency status is relevant depending on category, grade, employment percentage and earnings, • that no duplicate record exists in GSM – if spouse already recognized, rejects the request and explains why to the staff member or requests further information, • If legal domestic partnership sends to Director HRT for confirmation that national law recognizes partnership (unless approval of personal status 	GHR Administrator

			<p>document attached to the request or on the list of nationalities already recognized)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews and requests clarification if the request is to recognize a “second, third ” spouse for pension fund purposes only. 	
6	C	GSM input	<p>If all in order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> approves the request for recognition administers the recognized relationship in GSM by; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> selecting the applicable relationship type, and enters the start date of the recognition-see 5 above; or <p>if not in order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> returns for correction via GSM, or contacts the staff member off-line if more information/detail is required and corrects the submission in GSM. rejects the request e.g. where there is no entitlement eligibility, or if a duplicate record has been received and informs the staff member of the reasons for rejection and/or what other steps need to be followed. 	GHR Administrator
7		GSM notification	<p>Staff member receives notification that the spouse is "Recognized" or otherwise in the GSM worklist. (Independently of this process, immediately updates WHO 90.6 Designation of WHO Beneficiaries form, pension fund forms, Emergency Contacts in GSM.)</p>	Staff member
8		Off line	<p>If recognition request is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> approved, goes to GSM step 3 rejected or more information is required staff member reverts to GHR with necessary documents/information. 	Staff member

			If and when amended request is approved, upon receipt of approval notification go to GSM Step 3.	
The next steps describe the actions to take to request benefits, e.g. Apply for Dependency Status				
9		GSM input	<p>GSM Step 3 – Employee Self-Service> Recognized Family Members > Apply for Benefits for my Recognized Spouse</p> <p>Once approval notification has been received that the spouse is “Recognized” the staff member may apply for spouse dependency status.</p> <p>Select the Recognized Spouse Click Next Click Add button and choose the relevant option</p> <p>Spouse- Apply for Dependency Status Reply to each question, all fields are mandatory and take note of the options and documents indicated in the menus provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reason for request for dependency status • Effective date • Date of marriage/recognized domestic partnership • Employment status of my spouse • Earnings declaration • Spouse employer • Spouse gross annual earnings amount • Spouse grade if WHO/UN • Declaration that information provided is correct 	Staff member

			<p>Continue the submission process to Apply,</p> <p>ECM upload To upload the relevant Scanned supporting document(s) which will be prompted by the electronic archiving system click on the Manage Attachments button Click New Scroll down to the “Document type” field and open the drop down list Select the appropriate document type for your request, e.g. Proof of Spouse gross annual earnings or if Ending dependency status due to change in employment status, choose “Spouse End of Employment Confirmation”; Scroll up and click Browse to open the relevant document on your computer to upload; Ensure your document/s are complete and include all earnings in one PDF.</p> <p>Click Check-in. A confirmation page opens, click on the refresh button to review your upload and repeat the process to upload other required documents as appropriate/prompted. Click the ‘X’ on the right upper side to close the attachment function to return to the transaction.</p> <p>Click Apply to review your request, Add Comments to Approver only if appropriate, then click Submit. The request is sent automatically to GHR for verification and approval.</p>	
10		GSM notification	<p>Upon submission, receives automatic notification in worklist to inform that Changes to Personal Information have been submitted.</p>	Staff member
11		GSM	<p>Reviews and assigns request to Administrator</p>	GHR Technical Support

12		GSM	Reviews request is valid and checks staff member record to verify requested start date of dependency considering EOD date, the date of recognition of the spouse, or a later date if the request is made more than three months from the life event, appointment, marriage, etc.	GHR Administrator
13	C	GSM input	<p>Reviews the documents for correctness and completeness.</p> <p><i>Where the spouse works</i> - Makes the necessary review of the spouse gross earnings against the GS salary scale at the place of work of the spouse; if the staff member is a professional makes a comparison with the NY 2.1 level and applies the higher limit.</p> <p><i>Where spouse is a UN employee</i> and earnings claimed to be below the limit – checks that the WHO staff is GS and applies the gross annual earnings limit.</p> <p><i>Where spouse is a UN employee working 100% and both are professionals</i> – reviews the request in accordance with internal rules indicated in 1.2 (ii) general business rules. Periods where the UN spouse employee works 100% are rejected. For periods where the UN/WHO spouse works less than 100% during the calendar year, gross annual earnings comparison is made for the full calendar year. Dependency status may be granted only for periods of part-time employment.</p> <p>If correct and standard request, Administers the recognized spouse benefits relationship ensuring the correct effective date of the benefits applies to either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of marriage, or • Date of appointment of the staff member if later, 	GHR Administrator

			<p>Verifies effective date for payment of dependency allowance is not more than 12 months prior to date of request (Staff Rules 380.7 refers), if yes adjusts effective date of benefit and informs the staff member once implemented.</p> <p>Brings any anomalies to the attention of the GHR certifying officer for review and advice.</p>	
14	C	Offline	<p>If anomaly or unusual case, reviews documents and request and advises on whether request can be approved, or more information is required, or if not in accordance with the rules, rejects the request.</p> <p>If rejected, the GHR Administrator explains reason(s) to staff member in the rejection notice.</p>	GHR Certifying Officer
15		GSM worklist notification	Receives notification to inform that Change in Information has been successful.	Staff member
16		GSM review	View notification in the GSM Worklist and view the spouse's start and end date of benefits in Employee Self-service/Recognized Family Members/View Benefits Relationships.	Staff member
17			FIN.SOP.XII.063 Entitlements processing	Payroll

4. KEY RISKS & COMPENSATING CONTROLS

Risks	Compensating Controls	Process Step
<p>Overpayment of staff member due to non-declaration or late declaration of change in personal situation.</p>	<p>Staff members are required to declare changes immediately and a standard reminder to all staff members is sent annually.</p> <p>Staff members are required to complete the annual verification of dependency status. Follow-ups and reviews are made by GHR to ensure every staff completes their declaration.</p> <p>Dependency status (optional) and/or SHI will for spouse will only cease on request by staff members to cancel either.</p>	<p>GHR – Information notes</p> <p>Annual Verification of Dependency status.</p>
<p>Overpayment and infringement of staff rules if staff member provides falsified documentation</p>	<p>GHR/A verifies documents for correctness/validity and brings any anomalies to the attention of the GHR certifying officer.</p> <p>ECM validations prevent staff from submitting their requests without supporting documents and warning messages trigger.</p>	<p>Steps 5, 6, 13, 14</p>
<p>Incorrect data entry due to human error</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by GHR • by staff member 	<p>Staff members are required to check their information on a yearly basis to verify information is correct and are requested to submit supporting documents. Staff members should check their payslips regularly to ensure payments are correct.</p> <p>GHR Administrator verifies documents for correctness</p>	<p>Steps 13 and 14</p> <p>Annual Verification of Dependency status via GSM self service.</p>