

The Assignment Streams

The assignment area of the Personnel Operations Bureau (APD), working closely with The Posting Centre (ABMH), forms a pivotal point in the posting process. The assignment divisions not only make your assignment; but act as a source of advice and counselling on professional issues such as training and career development, and as a point of reference in directing you to other areas of the Department that are engaged in the posting process.

The steps leading up to your Posting Confirmation take from six to nine months. Every August/September, the Personnel divisions make a preliminary determination of the expected movements and vacancies for the next year. In September, letters are written to all staff inviting them to express their preferences regarding anticipated vacancies. Heads of Mission are invited to comment on their expected staff changes — who will move, who will extend, and what qualities are required in a successor. In October/November, consultations take place with branches in Ottawa to review the outlook for projected vacancies abroad and at headquarters. At this time, posting extensions are also confirmed.

In December/January, short lists of candidates for positions abroad are drawn up. Discussions with geographic division managers, functional division managers, if appropriate, and Heads of Mission take place. From January to March, short lists are negotiated and confirmed with managers and Heads of Mission and discussed with candidates. Candidates are referred to The Posting Centre (ABMH) for information on missions and children's educational considerations.

Between February and May, your assignment will be confirmed. The final Posting Confirmation will be issued after medical examinations are completed. You will be referred to The Posting Centre (ABMH) to begin rounds and to undertake specialized training and workshops that will prepare you and your family for your posting. The timing for your arrival at the mission will be confirmed, as well as any language training required, and special considerations will be explored concerning children's education and spousal employment. Then between June and August you will depart for the mission.

The Posting Centre

There's a comfortable spot located on the main floor of the Lester B. Pearson Building. This is The Posting Centre (ABMH), the logical place for you and your spouse to begin your preparations. (Spouses are welcome to contact The Posting Centre directly.) The Posting Centre offers a wealth of resources and its main role is to assist you in preparing for your posting and thereby help you to integrate more rapidly into your new life abroad.

As soon as you and your family have been notified of your assignment, drop by The Posting Centre to pick up any pertinent information available. This includes mission reports, medical reports, general administrative information, reports on educational facilities for your children and accounts of employment opportunities for spouses abroad. In addition, specific data on living conditions in individual countries is available including books, magazines, pamphlets, guides, maps and reprints, as well as videotaped interviews with returnees and cultural adaptation films. A returnee file is also available with the names of recent returnees who are willing to advise employees preparing for assignments.

The Posting Centre (ABMH) also makes Pre-Posting Administrative Arrangements, which include appointments for medical examinations, Pre-Posting Administrative Briefings and a personal interview to schedule rounds and discuss further administrative arrangements.

Workshops and Information Sessions are also available at The Posting Centre. A Calendar of Activities is published listing workshops and programs offered from March to June of each year, including sessions on topics such as Protocol, Financial Planning, Stress Management, Your First Posting, Culture Shock and Workshops for Spouses.

The Posting Centre offers Counselling Services to assist you and your family in finding the right educational facilities for your children, and information on employment opportunities for your spouse.

Right from the start, and even if you are not expected to leave for several months, it is important that you drop in to ABMH in order to get administrative arrangements organized.