

often a gap between expectations and reality. Foreign service is not particularly amenable to uniformly interpreting the rules and regulations in every circumstance and you should be prepared for a little give and take on minor issues. These things tend to even themselves out over the course of a posting.

Administrative Officers care about your concerns and will do their utmost to satisfy you within reasonable limits. There is no need to go begging for favours when a problem arises. Similarly, no useful purpose will be served by shouting or desk-pounding. If you have reached an impasse, take the matter up with your supervisor. Very often you will find that person is already aware of the situation as he or she was consulted by the Administrative Officer in order to reach a solution. Most supervisors will understand your difficulties because they are long in foreign service experience themselves.

More than likely your problem will be resolved by this stage, or reasonable efforts will be made to work out a compromise acceptable to all parties. If you are still not satisfied and you consider the situation serious enough to go one step further, the formal grievance system is at your disposal.

Note — Some employees in the past have taken the position that if their problem cannot be solved, they are going home. Be very careful when considering this action. The Foreign Service Directives specify that in the event of premature return, certain major costs, including a portion of relocation costs and entitlements already issued, may be the employee's personal responsibility to bear. In addition, your decision could also have disciplinary implications. Make sure you know all the ramifications before acting in haste.

Community Coordinators

About 80 missions hire a Community Coordinator to welcome newcomers, run an information centre, organize community activities and publish a community news bulletin. Get to know that person; she or he can be of great value to you and your family during the settling-in period, and can be of assistance throughout your entire stay at the mission.

4.3 Diplomatic Designations

You may be wondering just how the hierarchy at your Mission works and how this is decided upon. The most common diplomatic designations at Missions are shown in order of precedence as follows:

Ambassador — High Commissioner (in Commonwealth countries)
Consul General (in charge of Consulate General outside the country's capital)
Minister
Minister - Counsellor
Counsellor (1)
First Secretary (1)
Second Secretary (2)
Third Secretary (2)

(1) can be combined with Consul
(2) can be combined with Vice-Consul

Note — The Attaché designation is also widely used. Precedence depends on the type of work performed.

The responsibility for diplomatic designations rests with the Designations Panel, a Departmental Committee chaired by the Assistant Deputy Minister, Personnel Branch. The Designations Panel meets as required to deal with policy issues and with specific proposals for designations which do not meet established guidelines. In arriving at decisions on designations, the Panel takes into account the views of the appropriate geographic or functional Assistant Deputy Ministers and the recommendations of the Heads of Mission.