



**unesco**

United Nations  
Educational, Scientific  
and Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

## The Assistant Director-General for Education

To the Presidents of  
Electoral Groups

Ref: ED/PLS/TED/26/01/0189

21 January 2026

### **Subject: Revision of the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997) - Invitation to recommend experts for the Independent Expert Group**

Dear Chairperson,

Pursuant to the resolution of the UNESCO General Conference at its 43rd session ([43 C/Resolution 73](#)), the Director-General will proceed with the revision of the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997) (hereafter "1997 Recommendation"), in consultation with Member States and other relevant stakeholders.

In view of assisting the Organization in preparing the revision of the 1997 Recommendation, the Director-General will establish an Independent Expert Group (IEG-97) in accordance with Regulations for the general classification of the various categories of meetings convened by UNESCO (Category VI meeting) and appoint its members, who shall serve in a private capacity. Eligible members shall be nationals of UNESCO Member States, UNESCO Associate Members, or nationals of states, which are not members of UNESCO, but members of the United Nations.

The expert group members are expected to meet the following profile:

- Extensive national and international expertise as a policymaker, practitioner or an academic in one of the fields concerned by the thematic focus of the 1997 Recommendation or Target 4.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This may include, but is not limited to, areas of expertise on the status of higher education teaching personnel, such as academic freedom, institutional autonomy, higher education governance, and teacher professional development;
- Experience in drafting or participating in the elaboration of policy documents or normative instruments of global, regional, or national scope and involving government or non-governmental institutions;
- Understanding of the higher education sector, and especially the work, status, education, and experiences of higher education teaching personnel;
- Knowledge and understanding of inter-governmental processes;
- Proficiency in the working languages of the IEG-97 (English or French).

The members of the expert group will be expected to participate in several meetings, mainly online, during an 18-month period commencing in February 2026, including joint meetings with the Independent Expert Group advising on the revision of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) (IEG-66), and to contribute to the drafting of proposed revisions of the 1997 Recommendation. For more information on the revision process and proposed timeline, please consult the attached annex.

With these considerations, I hereby invite each of the Electoral Groups to submit three nominees suitable for appointment as members of the expert group by 13 February 2026 to [1997recommendation@unesco.org](mailto:1997recommendation@unesco.org) cc [ADG-ED@unesco.org](mailto:ADG-ED@unesco.org).

On the basis of these proposals, the Director-General will appoint one person per electoral region to the expert group. In addition, he will directly appoint six experts, to form a group composed of twelve members, taking into account gender balance, geographical representation, and diverse areas of expertise on the status of higher education teaching personnel. I shall recall that all these experts will sit in the same capacity and will not be considered to be representatives of their respective governments.

I would also like to inform you that, although as a general rule Category VI meetings are private, I intend to invite Member States and intergovernmental or international non-governmental organizations to send observers to follow the proceedings of these meetings, in line with UNESCO's commitment to provide a transparent and inclusive process for the revision of the 1997 Recommendation.

For questions regarding the revision process or the recommendation of experts, the team responsible within the Division for Policies for Lifelong Learning of the Education Sector is available to meet with you. You may also send any query to the following email address: [1997recommendation@unesco.org](mailto:1997recommendation@unesco.org).

We thank you for your commitment to this important task, and we look forward to your contribution to the revision of the 1997 Recommendation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stefania Giannini', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stefania Giannini

**ANNEX - Information relating to the planning and organization of the meetings and consultations for the Revision of the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997)**

The revision process will follow the phases below:

<b>PHASE 1 – PREPARATION</b>	
<b>Q4 2025</b>	Review by the Secretariat of relevant documents, collection of data and information to identify the specific strengths and weaknesses of each instrument and ascertain expectations for the revised instrument.
<b>PHASE 2 – TECHNICAL CONSULTATION</b>	
<b>Q1 2026</b>	UNESCO convenes an <b>Independent Expert Group</b> (IEG-97) to advise on the revision of the 1997 Recommendation based on the relevant Resolution adopted by the 43rd session of the General Conference, the Preliminary Study, other relevant studies, and the outcomes of any consultations conducted (including joint meetings with the Independent Expert Group advising on the Revision of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) [IEG-66]).
<b>PHASE 3 – FORMAL CONSULTATION AND ADOPTION</b>	
<b>Q 2/3 2026</b>	UNESCO’s Director-General <b>preliminary report</b> on the revision of the Recommendation, accompanied by a first draft text of the revised Recommendation, is transmitted to Member States at least 14 months before the opening of the 44th session of the General Conference
<b>Q4 2026</b>	Member States forward their <b>comments</b> and observations on the preliminary report at least 10 months before the opening of the 44th session of the General Conference (until January 2027).
<b>Q1 2027</b>	On the basis of the comments and observations transmitted by Member States, UNESCO’s Director-General prepares its <b>final report</b> containing the draft text of the revised Recommendation.
<b>Q2 2027</b>	UNESCO’s Director-General final report on the revision of the Recommendation is communicated to Member States at least 7 months before the opening of the 44th session of the General Conference (April 2027).
<b>Q2/3 2027</b>	UNESCO’s Director-General final report is submitted to the <b>special committee meeting</b> to be convened at least 4 months before the opening of the 44th session of the General Conference (July 2027).
<b>Q3 2027</b>	The special committee submits a draft which has its approval to Member States, with a view to its discussion at the General Conference, at least 70 days before the opening of the 44th session of the General Conference (August 2027).
<b>Q4 2027</b>	The <b>44th session of the General Conference</b> discusses and considers for adoption the draft text of the revised Recommendation (November 2027).