

Professional Subscriptions and Memberships Policy

Document Control

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This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with changes in HMRC guidelines and university budget. In the event that this policy or procedure is not compliant, the relevant legislation shall prevail.

Changes to this policy will be subject to consultation with the University's recognised Trade Unions before implementation

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1. Introduction

This policy sets out Brunel's criteria for the payment of Professional Subscriptions and Membership Fees. This policy supersedes previous policies or agreements on the payment of Professional Subscriptions and Membership Fees. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes, email agreements, letters of appointment, any recruitment and retention allowance related documents and any other document that refers to the payment of personal Professional Subscriptions and/or Membership Fees.

Brunel is committed to the continuous professional learning and development of our employees, and to supporting staff with the necessary skills and continuous professional development to undertake their roles effectively. This is most important in the development of talent within our career progression grades and this policy aims to specifically support this by providing for employees that are in roles graded up to and including H3. We recognise the many benefits of membership of professional bodies to individuals and to the University and will therefore cover the costs of an individuals' professional subscription or membership fee where it is an essential requirement of their role, or is necessary to support the work they do, or is related to their academic specialist area. Any repayment or reimbursement of subscriptions and memberships will be funded from local departmental budgets.

2. Definition and scope

This policy applies to all employees in roles graded up to and including H3, including fixed term employees for whom the terms of the contract extend beyond the cycle of the membership (typically one year). This policy does not extend to workers engaged on a casual basis, to contractors (either on or off payroll) or students employed through the Job Shop.

Professional subscriptions and membership fees will be paid on a pro rata basis for employees employed on a part time contract of less than 0.5 FTE. This reflects that part time employees may have their main employment with another organisation.

This policy applies solely to professional subscriptions and membership fees paid to organisations recognised by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) as per the [Approved](#)

[professional organisations and learned societies \(list 3\)](#). This does not include costs such as medical indemnity or professional insurance costs.

a) **Types of Professional Subscriptions and Memberships**

1. A **University Subscription & Membership** is held in the name of the University. Fees would be paid via Purchase Order through Procurement on an annual basis. The University subscription is expected to capture as many employees as needed as to avoid unnecessary individual applications and administration. If an individual application is made where Brunel also has an organisation subscription, this application will automatically be declined.
2. An **Individual Subscription & Membership** is held in the name of an employee and is likely to relate to an accreditation or recognition essential within the role of that employee.

The list of Subscriptions / Memberships that are role required will be maintained by Human Resources and will be reviewed regularly to ensure all essential subscriptions and memberships are included.

If an employee is an existing member, yet the organisation has a subscription (under which the individual could be covered or named) the university will not reimburse for the individual subscription/membership fees.

3. A **College, Institute or Department** might be able to subscribe to professional association or similar organisations on a corporate basis where the reason for the subscription is to obtain access to professional literature, journals, advice, etc. Corporate membership must be in the name of the University, College, Institute, or Department and paid for directly by the University, and the membership address must be University premises. These would be paid for similarly to a University Subscription.

b) **Eligibility criteria for Subscription & Membership fees for reimbursement**

1. A reimbursement request received from an eligible employee, against a receipt of payment, will be processed if there is no organisation subscription, and all other criteria herein are met.
2. If the employee is currently studying towards a qualification to which the University is a sponsor of the studies, and assuming the membership meets the requirements of the employee's substantive role, the membership will be reimbursed.
3. The reimbursement is not part way through the subscription year, unless, the employee requires it to commence study.
4. The role description/person specification must note the subscription or membership as an **essential** requirement of the role, and ensure that Human Resources has this membership included on the approved list.
5. The subscription or membership is required to be held in order to accredit the outcome of students on a course.
6. Where it can be shown that the membership results in a net saving in costs by giving free or reduced subscriptions to professional journals and/or a reduced fee for the attendance at a conference. Where the former, it is a necessary condition that the journals or other

publications and any other membership benefits accrue to the University and not just to the individual member of staff.

7. The reimbursement must adhere to the requirements of the Travel and Expenses policy, and must be requested within 3 months of making the payment.
8. An individual annual subscription or annual membership may be no more than £350, and where more than one subscription meets the criteria, the annual total of subscriptions may not exceed £500.

3. Procedure for Reimbursement of Individual Fees

a) To confirm eligibility of Subscription and Membership Fees

An individual subscription or membership will only be considered if there is no university subscription. Even if the employee is required to maintain their membership number, then can be added to the University subscription which in most cases, is far more cost effective. Therefore, before a formal request for reimbursement for fees is made the employee should establish the above noted criteria are met.

b) Reimbursement

The Subscription or Membership fees will be reimbursed through the Expenses process on CHIME. The Employee will be required to make the claim including the receipt detailing their membership.

The approving manager / line manager will need to be assured that the fees meet the eligibility criteria above, and that the receipt is attached in order to approve payment.

In the approval process Reward will 'sample check' claims to ensure reimbursements are in line with the eligibility criteria and HMRC guidelines.

Where a reimbursement is processed and approved, it will be paid through Payroll.

c) Renewals and Moving Roles

Subscriptions are generally renewed on an annual basis. At the time of renewal, the process repeats as per above.

Where an employee who is in receipt of a subscription moves to another role within the university, the subscription might no longer be eligible. There will however be no claw back of fees where the employee remains with the University and the membership may continue until the next renewal. At renewal, should the membership not meet the criteria reimbursement will not be made, even where the employee continues to be a member.

4. Sustainability

Improving our environmental performance and doing things in a more sustainable way should be seen as integral to our core business practices.

In line with our commitment to improving environmental and sustainable development performance, please be mindful if printing this document – keeping paper usage to a minimum (print only version), printing on both sides, and recycling.

5. Equality Statement

The University is an equal opportunities employer where all employees will be treated with dignity and respect. We are fully committed to equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights and to ensuring our culture, working environment, policies, processes and practices are free from bias. This policy is therefore positively committed in supporting all the Protected Characteristics within The Equality Act 2010 legislation and recognises the aims of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Employment).

Payment for memberships and subscriptions will be monitored regularly and a full Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity analysis will be completed for annual review by the Human Resources Committee so that Brunel can evidence fair, meaningful and transparent application of the policy.