

## Relocation Expenses Policy

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This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with changes in financial regulations, HMRC guidelines, employment law and equality and diversity legislation. If this policy or procedure is not compliant, the relevant legislation shall prevail.

## Introduction

The University will consider making a contribution towards relocation costs in order to support the recruitment of staff. Relocation expenses may be reimbursed by the University to assist with out of pocket expenses incurred when an employee relocates as a result of his/her employment with the University.

## Scope

This policy applies to all new staff appointed to permanent roles of a senior or specialist nature, typically at grade 6 or above or research contracts providing they are moving their family home. Expenses cannot be claimed where an employee is buying or renting a secondary home or where their contract is of a temporary nature i.e. fixed term.

The policy provides equality and fairness to all our employees and is committed against any unlawful discrimination against all the protective characteristics of the Equality Act, 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

To qualify for relocation assistance, the employee must be moving to a new base because of accepting an offer of employment with the University. Reimbursement is not payable on promotion or change of appointment within the University. However, should the University change an employee's normal work place on a permanent basis, making it necessary to relocate, the Director of HR will have the discretion to provide a relocation allowance.

Relocation expenses are judged on a case by case basis and each employee's situation and circumstances will be unique. The University therefore retains discretion to tailor the relocation package to suit the particular circumstances.

Relocation assistance is discretionary. It is not a contractual entitlement and the University reserves the right to withdraw it any time. The University will always act fairly and in a non-discriminatory manner.

## Eligibility

The following criteria must be met to make a claim for reimbursement of eligible relocation expenses. These criteria meet the HMRC and University rules of entitlement:

- Relocation expenses can be offered at the appointment stage and are usually only offered to senior, specialist or "difficult to fill" posts
- The employee's existing residence must be 60 miles or more away from his/her new location (fewer miles may be considered where actual travel time is not within reasonable commuting time)
- The employee's new home is reasonably close to the University which has been defined to be within 25 miles of his/her new place of work.
- Costs **must be claimed within three months of incurring the expenditure** and must be paid or incurred before the end of the tax year that's after the one in which the employee started their job.

Qualifying costs include receipted:

- Costs of buying or selling a home
- Moving costs
- Buying domestic goods for the new residence
- Bridging loans, subject to [HMRC rules](#)

Reimbursement is not payable on promotion or extension or change of appointment within the University. However, where the University changes a member of staff's normal place of work on a

permanent basis, making it necessary to relocate, the Director of HR will have discretion to make available some or all of the provisions of the financial support for relocation expenses.

The employee must be moving to a permanent residence that will be his/her main residence and this can be either purchased or rented.

### Amount Available

The maximum level of relocation assistance provided by the University will not exceed £8,000. This amount is not a lump sum but can be reimbursed for eligible expenditure as set out below against valid receipts.

Employees are expected to mitigate all expenses involved in their relocation and expenses will only be approved for reimbursement if deemed reasonable.

This policy provides for a contribution to the cost of relocation only and is not intended to meet fully all costs associated with relocation although it may do in some cases.

The financial support offered is in respect of the relocation of one employee, but if two new members of staff from the same household are offered appointments at the University and relocate from one jointly-occupied home to another, one member of staff may make a claim subject to the limits within this Relocation Policy.

### HMRC Rules

#### Taxation

All offers of relocation support are subject to the regulations set by the HMRC.

Provided certain HMRC conditions are met, and the new property is the employees' main residence the first £8,000 of any job-related relocation expense claim is tax exempt.

All claims must include receipted evidence of expenditure.

Where claim is made for temporary accommodation or commuting costs, evidence will need to be provided that the existing property is on the market.

#### Time Limit for claims

To qualify for exemption, the removal expenses must be incurred or the removal benefits provided before the last day of the year of assessment (5 April) following the one in which the employee starts the new job. This day is known as the limitation day. It does not matter when the employee moves to his or her new home.

At the time of being offered relocation assistance, the employee will be advised of the date by which his/her relocation must be completed.

HMRC rules are subject to change so it is advised that you visit [HMRC](#) for further information.

### Repayment of relocation assistance

Employees will only be offered relocation assistance if they agree to repay some or all of the amounts given by the University in the event that their employment terminates within three years from the date of payment of the relocation expenses. If employment is terminated as a result of redundancy any repayment will be waived. Those offered relocation assistance will be required to sign an agreement to this effect.

The amount to be repaid will be reduced proportionally as follows:

- Within 1 year of appointment: 100%
- More than 1 year but within 2 years: 50%
- More than 2 years but within 3 years: 25%

In the event that an employee does not relocate, he/she will be asked to repay all or part of any relocation assistance that has been given to them.

On receipt of a resignation letter from an employee who has received reimbursement of relocation expenses, HR will check if the employee will have completed 2 years' service at the point their resignation takes effect. If not, HR will advise the Line Manager that the employee has relocation expenses that are repayable and must be reimbursed to the University. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to arrange repayment terms and this would need to be agreed with the Payroll and Pensions Team.

Any outstanding amount will be deducted from an employee's final salary if repayment terms have not been agreed in advance of their last day of employment.

## Expenses that can be claimed

**These lists are not exhaustive but detail the most common types of expenditure which may be claimed. For further clarity, please contact the Human Resources Payroll and Pensions Team for confirmation.**

### Buying or Renting and Selling Property

- Removal of household effects, including transit insurance. Three quotations must be obtained, the lowest will normally be relied upon. Where an employee undertakes their own move, the cost of a hire of a vehicle and associated fuel and insurance costs can be claimed.
- Purchase of domestic goods intended to replace items from the old home that are not suitable for use in the new home. Up to a maximum of £1000. Examples would be carpets and curtains that were the wrong size for the new home, or an electric cooker bought to replace a gas cooker where there is no gas supply in the new home.
- Moving domestic pets
- Temporary storage, including insurance, of furniture if you do not move directly from the old residence to the new for a period of up to 6 months (but temporary storage is not an eligible cost if the employee has no intention of moving the belongings to the new residence).
- Legal costs in connection with house purchase e.g., solicitors' fees including property enquiries, surveyor's fees, stamp duty, searches and land registry fees.
- Mortgage redemption and/or arrangement fees (excluding fees relating to fixed rate loans).
- Estate agents' fees, or direct advertising costs if not using the services of an estate agent, for selling property.
- Rental Letting fees (excluding refundable deposits)
- Connection or disconnection for Gas, electricity. Water and telephone supplies.

### Rented to Purchased accommodation

If the employee is living in rented accommodation but intends to purchase a property in the new work location, relocation allowance is limited to the costs reasonably incurred in moving from the rented accommodation as set out above and no contribution will be made towards the purchase of the new property. Property purchase expenses will be paid only where an existing property has been sold. This is because employees should not gain financially because of the relocation.

## Temporary accommodation

In circumstances where the employee has not been able to move to a new permanent property (whether purchased or rented) by the time of starting work in the new work location, the University will give consideration to the reimbursement of the costs of temporary hotel, bed and breakfast or rental accommodation. Temporary hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation will be allowed up to a maximum of 6 weeks. Temporary rental accommodation will be allowed up to a maximum of three months. Both subject to the £8000 package limit. Any contract for temporary rented accommodation should be direct with the landlord, not via Brunel. To extend beyond these limits, the employee must obtain prior agreement from his/her line manager.

If the employee is renting out his/her existing property before or while trying to sell it, any rent received on the rented out property must be offset against the cost of temporary accommodation. The difference only will be covered by the relocation allowance.

## Travel expenses

If the employee is travelling from his/her existing property to the new work location, rather than staying in temporary accommodation, prior to relocating, the mileage can be claimed from the relocation allowance and will be paid at normal rates.

Mileage from temporary accommodation to the new work location is not eligible for reimbursement.

## Appointment of staff from outside the UK

In addition to the financial support already detailed, employees may also claim the economy air fare to United Kingdom for him /her and family (partner plus children) at the time of taking up the new appointment. Where there is a delay in essential items being transported by sea freight, claims will also be accepted for excess baggage costs

Where candidates who join the University with an agreed relocation package who require a Skilled Worker Visa, the University will reimburse the cost of the visa as well as any Immigration Health Surcharges as part of the University's [Immigration cost support](#) arrangements. These expenses will be paid subject to PAYE deductions as HMRC does not class Visa costs as an allowable expense.

Claims may be submitted in a foreign currency but will be reimbursed in sterling using the exchange rate applicable at the date on which the expenses were incurred i.e. the date of the receipt.

## Expenses that cannot be claimed

- Expenses in buying or renting a secondary home
- Security and refundable deposits
- General purchase of new domestic fittings or appliances and DIY home improvements.
- Redirection of mail
- Costs relating to quarantine of domestic pets
- Council tax charges
- Assistance with mortgage deposits or loan payments
- Removal of office and laboratory effects

## Procedure for making a Relocation claim

Claims must be submitted on the **Relocation Expenses Claim Form** and submitted to [payroll@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:payroll@brunel.ac.uk)

For audit purposes, the claim must be accompanied by appropriate documentation including proof of payment. In the case of expenses related to the sale or purchase of property the final receipted solicitor's completion statement must be submitted. If a removal firm has been used, three quotations must be provided with a receipt for the chosen firm, noting the University will only reimburse the cheapest quotation.

Where a claim is made for temporary accommodation or commuting costs, evidence will be required confirming the existing property is on the market.

Claims can be made in as many instalments as suits but no later than the end of the first complete tax year following appointment.

Claims received by the published [payroll deadline](#) will be included with that month's salary payment.