



RELOCATION EXPENSES POLICY

1. Policy Statement

This policy supports the University's recruitment and selection process and aims to assist eligible new employees who relocate to take up a role at Queen's. It aims to alleviate some of the financial challenges associated with relocation for new employees. The policy also underpins the University's commitment to attracting and retaining high quality employees.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the Policy are to enable staff to:

- (i) begin a new job with the minimum cost and disruption to home life; and
- (ii) assist towards reimbursement of expenses attributable to the move.

3. Eligibility

Relocation expenses are available to staff who fulfill all of the following conditions:

- (i) the employee must be Grade 7 (AC2) or above;
- (ii) the move must be from one permanent residence to another. In the case of temporary employees, permanent residence is the residence in which the employee intends to reside for the duration of the contract; and
- (iii) the location of the new residence must be acceptable to the University.
- (iv) relocation assistance is not available for KTP Associates and recipients of The Marie Curie Grant.

The relocation allowance payable depends on the appointee's contractual terms and conditions i.e starting salary and length of contract at commencement of employment. Please see *section 4 below* for further information.

4. Financial Assistance

The following are the maximum amounts which are available to claim:

- Permanent Staff - £1,000 plus 20% of the basic annual starting salary.
- Temporary Staff – One month's basic annual starting salary for those with contracts of up to 3 years. Those with contracts of 3 years or more will be entitled to 20% of their basic annual salary.

- If an employee has relocated from outside the EU (other than the UK) they will be entitled to an additional £1,000.

5. Principles

The following underlying principles are relevant in relation to the application of the Relocation Expenses Policy:

- Expenses will be reimbursed to staff appointed at Grade 7 (AC2) and above only.
- Expenses will be reimbursed only when the University is satisfied that the proposed costs are reasonable.
- Expenses are reimbursed to the employee only on production of valid receipts.
- Advances are not permitted.
- Expenses paid in a foreign currency will be translated, by the Finance Directorate, using the rate in place at the time that the expense was incurred, according to the daily average rate published by Oanda (www.oanda.com).
- Expenses will not be paid directly to third parties.
- In accordance with HMRC legislation the relocation expenses are available to be claimed for the period up to the end of the tax year following the tax year in which the member of staff was appointed. The tax year runs from 6th April to 5th April.
- All employees in receipt of relocation expenses will be asked to sign a declaration on the claim form. The declaration states that if they should leave the service of the University prior to the fulfilment of their contracted period, repayment of funds paid will be sought in proportion to the period of service not completed. If the contracted length exceeds three years the period of service will be capped at three years.
- The amount to be repaid will be calculated and the staff member informed. Repayment will be taken by deduction from the final months' salaries and if this is not possible, a means of repayment must be agreed with the University.
- If the University terminates the contract of employment for any reason (other than redundancy), within three years from the date of accepting the post, then the employee may also be required to repay a proportion of the relocation expenses. Each case, in this situation, will be judged individually by the Director of Finance.
- Relocation expenses are payable only for an employee who is relocating to Northern Ireland. If an employee continues to maintain his/her main residence outside Northern Ireland, commuting costs are not allowable.
- Where all/some of the relocation expenses are available from other sources e.g. a partner's employer, then the University will not pay for those costs.
- Where more than one member of the household is entitled to make a claim under this policy, then only one claim can be made.
- Applicants should make claims honestly and in good faith. Any attempt to defraud the University under this scheme will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

6. Claim Process

The claim form, which can be found at:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/FinanceDirectorate/visitors/relocation/> must be completed each time a claim is made and forwarded to the Finance Directorate (Relocation), Level 3, Administration Building, for processing and payment (relocation@qub.ac.uk).

The following points should be noted:

- Incomplete forms will not be processed.
- Receipts must be attached to claim forms or the claim will not be processed.
- Receipts in a foreign language must be translated on the claim form.
- Claimants must clearly state why they are making a claim for a specific item under the relocation policy.
- If receipts are in a foreign currency, then the currency used must be clearly shown.
- All claims received before the 5th of each month will be reimbursed in that month's salary whereas claims received after this time will be paid in the following month's salary.

7. Allowable Expenditure

Allowable expenses generally fall within the following categories:

- (i) removal expenses - the cost of the removal of household effects (including insurance for transit only).
- (ii) legal and other professional fees directly connected with the sale and purchase of accommodation.
- (iii) search for new accommodation – travelling expenditure will be reimbursed where it is necessary to visit the area to look for new accommodation. Payment of travel expenditure will be at the standard class rate or travel mileage rate, in line with the University Financial Regulations.

In Section 8, below, more detail has been provided regarding particular items of expenditure. However, the primary factor is whether the cost incurred is reasonable in the circumstances. For example, if the cost is one which people would generally be expected to provide for themselves, irrespective of the relocation (e.g. phone, electricity and heating costs), then it will not be reimbursed by the University.

8. Specific Expenditure Items

In the paragraphs below, more detail has been provided in relation to specific items which may be claimable.

- (i) Disposal of old residence

If the employee sells a property or relinquishes his/her rights under a tenancy agreement, then certain expenses will be met under this policy. These include:

- legal expenses and services connected with the disposal;
- estate agent's fees connected with the disposal;
- advertising; and
- disconnection of mains supply.

(ii) Acquisition of a new residence

If the employee acquires a new home or enters into a tenancy agreement for a new home, then certain costs will be met, which include:

- legal expenses connected with the purchase;
- stamp duty;
- temporary subsistence whilst searching for permanent accommodation (please see section 8 (iv) for further details);
- survey of the property; and
- connection of mains supply.

(iii) Transporting belongings

The cost of physical removal of domestic belongings from the old residence to the new, and the cost of insuring them in transit, is covered. It is important to note that this is for domestic belongings only.

Costs under this category include:

- packing and unpacking; and
- temporary storage, where there is not a direct move from the old residence to the new residence.
- taking down domestic fittings in the old residence if they are to be taken to the new residence, and re-attaching them on arrival there.

(iv) Travel and Subsistence

Travel and subsistence expenses can be claimed for both the employee and the employee's family (i.e. dependants). Expenses which may be claimed include the following:

- preliminary visits to the new location;
- food and drink whilst residing at temporary accommodation (providing there is no access to kitchen facilities). Consequently, those staying in hotels will be reimbursed reasonable subsistence i.e. food costs, and those in rented accommodation will not, as they have access to kitchen facilities. All subsistence is expected to be reasonable; and
- travelling from the old home to the new home, when the final move takes place.

(v) Visa & IHS Surcharge

The cost of a Tier 2 visa (sponsored by the University) and the IHS surcharge can also be claimed for the employee and the employee's family (i.e. dependants) and will be tax free when they are an expense of the initial journey to the UK. Where the new employee incurs in country visa costs in moving to the University these may be claimed but will be liable to income tax.

(vi) Temporary living accommodation – Rental Expenses

- Temporary living accommodation – the allowance in respect of temporary living accommodation applies where the employee intends to move to permanent accommodation (rented or purchased) to complete the relocation.
- Temporary staff members are entitled to claim for temporary living accommodation as follows:

Length of Appointment	Period allowed
One year	2 months
Two years	3 months
Three years or more	6 months

- Permanent members of staff are entitled to claim for temporary living accommodation costs for a maximum of 6 months.

(vii) Domestic goods for the new residence

If the employee disposes of an interest in the old home and acquires an interest in a new home, then domestic goods purchased to replace items used at the old home, which are not suitable for use in the new home, will be reimbursed. This is restricted to essential white goods ie cooker, fridge/freezer washing machine, tumble dryer and dishwasher.

If the new property is rented as furnished and essential white goods are provided the policy does not cover replacement or upgrades.

Domestic goods only are covered, whilst non-domestic goods such as computers, are not covered. Please also note that all purchases must be reasonable.

9. Non-Eligible Expenses

The following costs will not be reimbursed by the University:

- (i) Mortgage or housing subsidies if the employee moves to a higher cost area.
- (ii) Furniture items such as tables, chairs, bedding, cutlery, computers and laptops.
- (iii) Utility bills i.e. gas, oil, electricity and telephone bills.
- (iv) Mobile phone costs.

- (v) The installation and monthly subscription costs of cable or satellite television.
- (vi) Compensation paid for any loss on sale of the employee's home.
- (vii) Interest payments for the mortgage on the employee's existing home.
- (viii) Re-direction of mail.
- (ix) Council Tax bills.
- (x) Purchase of new school uniforms for employee's children.
- (xi) Compensation for losses, such as:
 - having to give up a part-used season ticket
 - cost of joining a new sports or social club
 - penalty for giving insufficient notice of a child's withdrawal from school
- (xii) Counselling services.
- (xiii) Help towards an employee's partner finding a job.
- (xiv) Financial advice.
- (xv) Nanny agency fees.
- (xvi) House cleaning on sale or purchase.
- (xvii) Partner's loss of earnings.
- (xviii) Help with starting a garden.
- (xix) Transporting and kennelling for domestic animals.

This list is not exhaustive.

10. Tax Implications

Payments of up to £8,000 will have no tax implications provided that the employee changes his/her sole/main residence as a result of taking a post within the University and the expenses incurred meet three conditions as laid down by HMRC. These relate to the following:

- Conditions relating to a change of job and home;
- Conditions relating to the type of expense or benefit; and
- Condition regarding the time limit for making a claim.

When a new employee has not been resident in the UK in the previous 10 tax years prior to coming to the UK to commence this employment at QUB, the cost of the visa and IHS may also be reimbursed tax free in addition to the £8,000. In country visa costs will, however, be liable to income tax.

The Finance Directorate will decide what the taxable payment is by referring to the specific legislation / HMRC guidelines. It is important that employees make themselves aware of the regulations when submitting a claim because tax and NIC may significantly reduce the amount which is finally paid. The University has no discretion in this area

and is legally obliged to apply the rules and regulations laid down by HMRC. The rules can be located at the following address:

<https://www.gov.uk/expenses-and-benefits-relocation/overview>

11. Method of Payment

Payment under the scheme will be made only upon receipt of fully completed appropriate documentation which is accompanied by valid receipts. Payment will be processed in the monthly payroll only.