

# Office Moves Policy

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## 1. Introduction

This policy applies to internal members of University staff whose place of work is moved to a new location resulting in additional expenditure.

## 2. Consultation

Members of staff who will be affected by office relocation will be informed of the intention and reasons for the move at the earliest opportunity. Staff affected will be consulted regarding the location of the new office.

## 3. Eligibility

A special disturbance and travelling allowance scheme will apply to any member of staff whose place of work is moved to a new location resulting in additional expenditure for the member of staff, for example, increased daily travel costs or a necessary change of living accommodation.

For a member of staff to be eligible for any of the benefits set out below, the University must be satisfied that additional expenditure has been caused by the office move and has been approved in advance. No claim under the special scheme will be considered unless prior approval has been obtained.

## 4. Excess travelling expenses allowance

A member of staff incurring additional travelling expenses as a result of the relocation of their place of work will be eligible to claim an allowance to cover the difference between the cost of travelling from home to the new place of work and from home to the old place of work. This will be based on standard University travel rates (e.g. standard class rail fare or the University, agreed car mileage rate, or alternative means of standard-class travel where car or train is not available). The distance should be calculated using a route planner which will calculate the shortest route from the postcode of the staff member's home address to the postcode of the new place of work.

The allowance will normally be paid for a period of up to two years from the date of the office move. It will be paid monthly in arrears and it is a **taxable** allowance. The People Hub will advise on the process for claiming this allowance which will either be completion of a claim form on a monthly basis or a set amount will be agreed at the start of the period and automatically paid each month (unless the individual's circumstances change). The claim form is available on the Finance website.

Note: All excess travel costs are charged to Units - there is no central provision.

## **5. Time allowance**

For a period, not exceeding one year, provision is made for Heads of Units to approve a reduction in the working day to compensate members of staff for extra travelling time.

## **6. Removal expenses**

Normally a member of staff will only be required to move home if the journey to a new office location is 25 miles or more and the move will normally be required within a period of two years from the date of the office move. A member of staff who, as a direct result of the relocation of their place of work, is required to move home, will be entitled to claim reimbursement of the expenses as set out in the Relocation Expenses Policy - Internal Staff.

In the event of a member of staff voluntarily terminating an employment within two calendar years of the payment of a grant, the University reserves the right to seek repayment of all or part of the grant as follows:

- Terminated within one calendar year from date of removal: 100% of grant
- Terminated within two calendar years from date of removal: 50% of grant

The University undertakes to give sympathetic consideration to individual cases before making any claim for the repayment of all or part of this grant.

## **7. Disturbance expenses**

Disturbance expenses can be claimed when a member of staff is required to move home as a direct result of the relocation of their work place and the University agrees that it would be unreasonable to expect a member of staff to travel daily to the new location whilst looking for new accommodation. In this situation the University is prepared to consider claims for the payment of disturbance expenses to cover:

- A contribution towards the cost of temporary accommodation in the area of employment; plus,
- Up to one return journey per week by the most economical means of transport at standard University travel rates (e.g. standard class rail) – see Travel and Subsistence Policy for details.

Details of the scheme are set out in Relocation Expenses Policy - Internal Staff.

## **8. Exceptional hardship**

In certain special cases, a change in place of work may give rise to exceptional hardship for a member of staff which may not be covered by the provisions of

this scheme. It is the intention of the University to examine any such cases on their merits and to give the University Secretary discretion to make appropriate special provision to deal with them.

## **9. Local conditions**

The University recognises that local conditions vary from one area to another. Representations from members of staff regarding the particular problems not covered by this scheme will be considered, e.g. in exceptional circumstances, extra assistance to staff moving to an area with higher house prices may be considered.

## **10. Temporary moves**

Provision on an ad-hoc basis will be made for members of staff affected by long-term temporary moves.

## **11. Equality, diversity and inclusion**

Policies are inclusive of all Open University staff, regardless of age, care experience, caring status or dependency, civil status, disability, family status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, gender reassignment, marital status, marriage and civil partnership, membership of the Traveller community, political opinion, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic background or trades union membership status.

## **12. Useful references**

Reimbursable Expenses Policy

Relocation Expenses Policy – Internal Staff

Travel and Subsistence Policy

Taxable Expenses Claim Form - Office Moves Only (Finance website)