

Overseas Postings

Postings and Transfers

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Overseas Postings: Introduction

Overview

This section explains what you need to know about undertaking an overseas posting.

A substantive overseas posting is a posting that lasts more than a year. Otherwise it is a temporary posting (see *Temporary Postings Overseas*). It can be secured either through the batch process (the majority) or through an individual one-off recruitment.

This section covers:

- terms and conditions for staff accepting an overseas posting, including pay and overseas allowances, taxation, NI and pensions, and leave entitlements (see *Pay and Overseas Allowances; Tax, National Insurance and Pensions; Leave Entitlements for Staff on an Overseas Posting*)
- allowances that apply to staff accepting an overseas posting, to cover costs including travel (to post and for visits) for yourself and your family, schooling and travel for children, transport of your belongings and accommodation (see *Benefits and Allowances for UK-Appointed Staff on an Overseas Posting*)
- benefits that apply to staff accepting an overseas posting including health care, benefits for partners, language skill acquisition and loans for car purchase (see *Benefits and Allowances for UK-Appointed Staff on an Overseas Posting*)
- information about naturalisation of a foreign-born spouse or civil partner (see *Naturalisation for Foreign-Born Spouses or civil partners*)
- other things you need to do when you and your partner or family move overseas, including obtaining visas and passports, and letting your UK house (see *Things to Do Before You Move Overseas*).

Audience

This section applies in its entirety to UK-appointed staff and, in most but not all cases, harmonised managers.

The provisions for overseas postings apply to both UK-appointed staff and harmonised managers working overseas, except where stated. They apply to substantive assignments only.

The term harmonised managers here refers to band 8 E&E colleagues and OAS staff whose terms and conditions were harmonised in 2002/03 and 2003/04. Band 9 E&E managers are on full UK-appointed terms.

Note: that the British Council does not necessarily follow Foreign Office practice.

Pay and Overseas Allowances

Overview

This section describes the pay and overseas allowances that apply to you when you accept an overseas posting. These terms and conditions supplement your normal terms and conditions as an employee of the British Council and apply for the duration of your overseas posting.

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting.

Responsibilities

The procedures in this section are carried out by:

- staff accepting an overseas posting
- HR International Assignments Team (HR IAT).

Policy

The overseas package is designed to recognise the disruption of mobility and the varying living conditions in different countries.

Guidance

Pay and overseas allowances

While overseas you receive:

- your salary less notional tax (see Salary below)
- an expatriate allowance (see Expatriate allowance below)
- a location allowance where applicable (see Location allowance below)
- a cost of living allowance (COLA) if warranted (see Cost of living allowance (COLA) below).

Notes:

- You can calculate approximately how much these allowances will be using the British Council online allowances calculator
- Your net income is paid in sterling into your UK bank account each month
- The overseas allowances are payable from the day you arrive at your job until the day you depart at the end of your posting, including any annual leave taken during this period
- Overseas allowances are not payable once you have left your job, even if you have leave outstanding and decide to take that leave in country
- Leave should also not be taken very near the end of a posting in order not to lose the overseas allowances; decisions on whether to grant leave should be based on operational requirements and not simply with the aim of safeguarding overseas allowances
- If you are posted from one country to another and take leave between the two postings, expatriate allowance will continue to be paid but location allowance and COLA will cease when you leave your old post and start again at the appropriate rates, if applicable, when you arrive at your new post.

Salary

You receive the same gross salary, except for the London Market Allowance, as you would in the UK. If you are being promoted, your promotion pay is calculated in the same way as for all UK-appointed staff. Annual salary increases are also determined in the same way as for all UK-appointed staff.

Expatriate allowance

This allowance recognises the cost and disruption of mobility.

Notes:

- You can spend or save the expatriate allowance in whatever way best meets your own needs and circumstances

- The allowance is paid as a set percentage, currently 30 per cent, of your salary. The same percentage applies to all UK-appointed staff overseas and is reviewed each year
- Expatriate allowance is not subject to notional tax and is not included in National Insurance calculations, so you receive the full value of the allowance in your net income

Location allowance

This allowance is designed to compensate staff who are living in a place where conditions are significantly harder than in the UK. So it does not apply if the conditions in the country where you will be working are similar to the UK.

Notes:

- The allowance is paid as a percentage of gross salary depending on the level set for the country where you are going to be. See the British Council location grouping of countries document on the intranet
- Location allowance is not subject to notional tax and is not included in National Insurance calculations, so you receive the full value of the allowance in your net income
- The factors used to determine whether location allowance is payable are:
 - climate
 - health
 - language and culture
 - goods and services
 - isolation
 - social network and leisure
 - housing, utilities and education
 - personal security
 - socio-political tensions
- Using this data, countries are grouped into levels of difficulty by the organisation Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA) and the groupings are reviewed each year. (ECA is a world-wide network which provides specialist information and advice for employers with internationally mobile staff).

Cost of living allowance (COLA)

COLA compensates for the additional costs of maintaining UK living standards while you are overseas.

Notes:

- COLA is calculated annually by applying to your 'spendable income' a cost of living index for the country where you are working. The allowance is normally adjusted in August and February each year.

The index measures the difference in day-to-day living costs between the overseas country and the UK, assuming the same lifestyle abroad as at home. The index for the UK is 100 so we pay an allowance in countries where the index exceeds 100. If the index for your country of posting is 100 (or less), no COLA is paid.

- The system for calculating COLA changed in 2002 as a result of introducing a new system which reduced administrative errors. While ECA cost of living allowances are still used, spendable income is now calculated as follows: Net income x spendable income factor 1 + spendable income factor 2.
 - If you are accompanied at post, that is taken into account for the spendable income factors.

- Net income itself is calculated on the basis of gross salary minus COLA notional income tax and national insurance plus COLA child benefit rebate and child tax credit

For an example of a COLA calculation, see the COLA calculator on the intranet.

- COLA is not subject to notional tax and is not included in National Insurance calculations, so you receive the full value of the allowance in your net income.

Tax, National Insurance and Pensions

Overview

This section describes the rules for tax and National Insurance and the pension entitlements that apply to you when you accept an overseas posting. These terms and conditions apply for the duration of your overseas posting.

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting.

Responsibilities

The procedures in this section are carried out by:

- staff accepting an overseas posting
- HR International Assignments Team (HR IAT).

Policy

This element of the overseas package is designed to maintain comparability with what your position would be if you were working in the UK.

Guidance

Tax

Notional tax

As a British Council member of staff working overseas, you are not subject to UK income tax on what the British Council pays you as long as you are abroad for a full tax year or longer (calculated from the date you first leave the UK). Periods of annual fare-paid leave during your job are also free of UK income tax - even if they are spent in the UK.

Procedure

1. When you transfer overseas, you must complete an HM Revenue and Customs Form (P85), establishing your status as Not Ordinarily Resident for Tax. HR IAT will send you the form.
2. Once the HMRC authorises the P85 form, you will not be subject to UK income tax again until you return to work in the UK. You will receive a P86 form from HR IAT on your return.
3. Notional tax is deducted from your gross salary to maintain comparability with what your position would be if you were working with the British Council in the UK. For this reason the calculation of the rate includes non-tax elements which make the situation comparable. The deduction of notional tax is not intended to replicate the actual tax you would be paying if you were working in the UK.
4. Calculation of your rate of notional tax assumes no income apart from gross salary and takes account of a number of elements which would affect your net income if you were working in the UK, some of which (but not all) reflect the current UK income tax system. The elements are:

- HMRC personal allowance
- contributions to future pension provision*
- application of the current tax rates (see *Income Tax Current Rates*) which HMRC applies to bands of the taxable salary.

*The taxable salary is reduced by the total amount of such contributions, which may be made up of the standard pension contribution of 1.5 per cent or 3.5 per cent of salary, and payments towards Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) and Added Years.

5. The rate of notional tax for an individual member of staff must be re-calculated whenever one of the following changes:
 - gross salary
 - pension contributions
 - family circumstances
 - national insurance status.#
6. The rates of notional tax for all UK appointed staff overseas must be re-calculated whenever any of the following changes:
 - HMRC tax rates
 - HMRC allowances
 - rates of Child Benefit
 - rates of Children's Tax Credit
 - rates of National Insurance contributions.

Taking advice on your tax position

Even if your personal finances are straightforward, when you are going overseas from the UK you may need to make your own arrangements with a tax advisor, accountant or your tax office to sort out your tax position (for example, any refund due), or liabilities for taxable private income. During your time abroad you may well be asked to complete a self-assessment form by the UK tax authorities. Only income other than your British Council earnings, for example rental income, should be declared on this form since a No Tax (NT) coding already applies to your British Council earnings.

Exemption from British income tax may extend to accompanying members of your family and HMRC will probably take no interest in any cash they might earn overseas. Again, you should consider taking advice on this.

Local income tax

If you become liable to pay local income tax on your British Council earnings, the British Council will pay it on your behalf. We do not pay any tax you incur on non-British Council income.

If your partner works while overseas with you, they may become liable for local income tax. The British Council does not refund this tax.

National Insurance

National Insurance contributions

During your posting overseas, your National Insurance contributions may be affected.

Procedure

1. Wherever you are, you must contribute Class 1 NI contributions for the first 52 weeks overseas. In addition, if you are in a country within the EU or EEA or which has a reciprocal health agreement with the UK (see EU, EEA and reciprocal agreement countries below), you must continue to pay Class 1 contributions for the full period

you are there.

2. Once you stop paying Class 1 contributions, you may elect to protect your state pension rights by paying voluntary Class 2 or Class 3 contributions. You are strongly advised to do this. The British Council reduces your notional tax rate by the amount of the contribution. HR IAT can give you more information on this.
3. You must inform the National Insurance Contributions Office whenever you move between the UK and overseas. The address is:

HMRC Centre for Non-Residents
 NICO International Services
 Room BP 1301, Benton Park View
 Newcastle upon Tyne
 NE98 1ZZ, United Kingdom

For current national insurance contribution rates, see the Current National Insurance Contribution Rates document on the intranet.

EU, EEA and reciprocal agreement countries

EU countries		
Austria Belgium Bulgaria Cyprus Czech Republic Denmark Estonia Finland France	Germany Greece Hungary Ireland Italy Latvia Lithuania Luxembourg Malta	Netherlands Poland Portugal Romania Slovak Republic Slovenia Spain Sweden United Kingdom
EEA countries		
Austria Belgium Bulgaria Cyprus Czech Republic Denmark Estonia Finland France Germany Greece	Hungary Iceland Ireland Italy Latvia Liechtenstein Lithuania Luxembourg Malta Netherlands Norway	Poland Portugal Romania Slovak Republic Slovenia Spain Sweden United Kingdom (including Gibraltar, excluding the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man)
Reciprocal agreement countries		
(where the United Kingdom has two way agreements about social security)		
Barbados Bermuda Bosnia and Herzogovina Canada Croatia Cyprus Guernsey	Israel Jamaica Japan Jersey Korea Macedonia Mauritius	New Zealand Philippines Serbia and Montenegro Switzerland Turkey USA

National Insurance numbers for children approaching their 16th birthday

If a child turns sixteen while you are in the UK and claiming Child Benefit, the Inland Revenue will automatically send you the necessary forms to obtain the child's National Insurance number. However, if at this time you are posted overseas to a non-EU country and are not claiming Child Benefit, you will need to contact HMRC approximately three months before the birthday, to request the forms be sent to you at your overseas address.

The contact address for HMRC is:

New Registrations
HM Revenue and Customs
Room BP 1002, GF Wing A
NICO
Newcastle upon Tyne NE98 1ZZ

Further information is available on the HM Revenue and Customs website and the DWP website.

Pension

Membership of the CSP

UK-appointed staff become or remain members of the Civil Service Pension (CSP) scheme while they are working overseas.

State pension for spouses or civil partners

Your spouse, civil partner or partner can qualify for a state pension on the basis of their own National Insurance contributions. Married women can claim a state pension based on their husbands' National Insurance contributions in certain circumstances. This does not apply to married men, civil partners or partners at the moment, but is due to change in 2010. Please see the DWP website for more information. You can also obtain a state pension forecast at <http://www.thepensionerservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/e-services/home.asp>.

The only way spouses, civil partners and partners can maintain their own contribution record while abroad is by paying Class 3 Voluntary National Insurance contributions. The British Council will reimburse the cost of these contributions on production of evidence that they have been paid and the following criteria are being met:

- the spouse/civil partner/partner is able to accumulate at least 10 years (for women) or 11 years (for men) of contributions before reaching retirement age [note: from 2010 the requirement for women will increase gradually and by 2020 it will also be 11 years]
- the spouse/civil partner/partner is not earning more than the cost of the annual Class 3 contributions.

Reimbursement can only be made for whole tax years. The British Council will reimburse your spouse/civil partner/partner for a full year's Class 3 contributions in the tax year in which they accompany you to post and also for the tax year in which you return to the UK.

Procedure

1. To apply to pay Class 3 Voluntary National Insurance while abroad, your spouse must complete form CF 83 Application to Pay National Insurance Contributions Abroad and send it to:

HM Revenue and Customs, Centre for Non-Residents
NICO International Services
Room BP 1301
Benton Park View
Newcastle upon Tyne NE98 1ZZ
United Kingdom

2. To claim for reimbursement of the cost of contributions, send your claim, supported by receipts, to HR IAT, who will process it. Reimbursement can only be made for the financial year in which the request is submitted and the preceding year.

Leave Entitlements

Overview

This section describes the leave entitlements, including compassionate leave, that apply to you when you accept an overseas posting. These terms and conditions apply for the duration of your overseas posting.

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting.

Responsibilities

The procedures in this section are carried out by:

- staff accepting an overseas posting
- Office Managers overseas.

Policy

Staff accepting an overseas posting are entitled to more days' leave than UK-based colleagues to allow for travel time on annual fare-paid leave trips.

Guidance

Annual leave

While overseas you are entitled to 35 working days leave a year in addition to the public holidays observed locally by the British Council. (Working days are counted as five days a week.) You will receive an additional five days leave if you are in a country with ECA location ranking at E or F.

In the interests of your own health and welfare, and your effectiveness in the job, you are expected to take all your leave each year. If this is impossible, you are able to carry over a maximum of 10 days into the following year.

Fare-paid leave

You are entitled to annual fare-paid leave, and the British Council provides air tickets, or their cash equivalent, for you and any accompanying members of your family.

1. You must agree leave periods with your line manager. You are entitled to take fare-paid leave after each completed twelve months in the job, that is, the anniversary of the date on which you started the job. For operational or personal reasons you may bring it forward, or delay it, by up to six months.
2. You must ensure that the anniversary date has been, or will be, reached before taking fare-paid leave. You must not use the option to anticipate the journey by six months as an opportunity for an extra leave journey before the end of a posting.
3. If you are posted from one overseas location to another within three months of the anniversary of your post start date, you may combine your transfer journey with a leave journey to the UK (or to another destination which does not incur costs higher than those of going via the UK), as long as you have not already taken the leave trip associated with that anniversary.

See *Fare-Paid Leave Travel Allowances* for information about the costs and allowances payable.

Breather visits

If you are in a country with a location ranking of level F (see the British Council location grouping of countries document) you are entitled to two breather visits a year to the designated leave centre. Breather visits are designed to allow staff and families at post a short trip away from the country they live and work in to de-stress and re-charge their batteries. They are in addition to annual leave.

1. A breather visit is an apex economy fare for yourself and family members at post with you on a permanent basis, to the designated leave centre. Country Directors are informed by HR which is the designated leave centre for their country. Costs are charged to the country budget and you must have receipts to claim the apex economy flight. Cash in lieu is not permissible and you must leave the country (not just the city you work in) to be able to claim a breather visit.
2. If you wish to travel to another country rather than the designated leave centre you may do so, but you must meet any extra flight costs above the apex economy fare to the designated leave centre. There is no extra leave or financial help with accommodation or food costs.
3. Staff posted to Afghanistan and Iraq are not covered by this provision because of their work pattern; specific guidance for those offices is available from the appropriate regional directorate.

Postings leave

You are entitled to take an additional five days paid leave during the period starting one month before departure from your current job and ending one month after your arrival at the new overseas job. This is to give you time for dealing with the packers and the other personal tasks associated with your move. This additional leave will be lost if it is not taken before the end of the first month in the new job.

Compassionate leave

While you are overseas the British Council can pay for return airfares in economy class to the UK (or up to the equivalent cost if a journey is required to a third country) for you or your partner for a compassionate journey, for example if a close relative has died. A maximum of five days in one calendar year is allowed for compassionate leave.

Benefits and Allowances for UK-Appointed Staff

Overview

This section describes the benefits and allowances to which you are entitled when you accept an overseas posting. It covers:

The **benefits** to which you and your family may be entitled:

- healthcare benefits when you are working overseas (see Health Benefits for Staff Working Overseas)
- benefits for a partner who accompanies you to post (see Benefits for Partners Accompanying an Overseas Posting)
- opportunities for language skill acquisition (see Language Skill Acquisition)
- obtaining a loan to buy a car for use at your new posting (see Car Purchase and Shipping).

See also *Pay and Overseas Allowances, Taxation, National Insurance and Pensions and Leave Entitlements* for information about pay, taxation, pensions and leave.

The **allowances** are payments of different kinds that cover, or help to cover, the costs of being posted overseas, including:

- transfer grant (see Transfer Grants)
- travel for you and your partner (or family), both to post and for annual fare paid leave journeys (see Travel to Post and Fare-Paid Leave Travel Allowances)
- shipping of your belongings (see Transporting Your Belongings Overseas)
- insurance of your belongings in transit and while you are posted overseas (see Obtaining Insurance for Your Belongings)
- schooling and travel for children (see Schooling and Travel Allowances for Children)
- accommodation at your new posting (see Accommodation and Related Allowances).

See *Benefits and Allowances* available below for more information.

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting.

Policy

The British Council provides a number of allowances and benefits to staff who accept an overseas posting. Some of the benefits you receive depend on whether you:

- are single or have a partner
- have children
- are accompanied overseas by your partner and/or children.
- The British Council does not provide benefits for other members of your family.

Notes: Your partner is defined as the person to whom you are married/ civil partnered or with whom you share a similar relationship. If the former, you are asked to confirm the marriage or civil partnership by supplying a copy of the relevant certificate. If the latter, you must sign a declaration to name the person whom you wish to register as your partner. You may declare a change of partner as often as you wish, but you can only claim one set of partner entitlements in each posting.

- 'Accompanied' status means that your partner and/or any children will spend at least six months of each year with you overseas. Whether or not you are accompanied determines benefits such as transfer grant and baggage allowances.
- **Note:** If you leave your overseas job at your own request before you have been in post for two years, you may be required to repay any allowances, grants or other benefits given to you because you were posted overseas.

Guidance

- You must let HR IAT know if there is any change in the status of your partnership or composition of your family, as this may affect the calculation of some of your benefits. If you have a baby and as a result become eligible for an abatement of notional tax in respect of child tax credit and a revised amount of COLA and (in non-EU countries where you cannot claim child benefit) an abatement of notional tax in respect of child benefit, you must inform HR IAT immediately. If you delay informing them, you will only receive the appropriate adjustments to your package up to a maximum of three months in arrears.

- You must also inform HR IAT about any employment package which your spouse or partner receives. Benefits in his or her package (for example flights, transfer of personal belongings and grants) may reduce or eliminate your eligibility to corresponding elements in your package.
- Because the rules in this area are quite complex, you should consult HR IAT if you are in doubt about the benefits that apply to your own particular circumstances.
- Before you leave, HR IAT will provide you with information specific to the country to which you are going.

Benefits and Allowances available

Benefit or Allowance	Description
Transfer grant	<p>This is a one-off payment to cover all pre-departure expenses, except for visas, and the cost of setting up home in a new location. It is paid whenever you transfer substantively to a new job and to a new location overseas, or from overseas to a job in the UK.</p> <p>For more information, see <i>Transfer Grants</i>.</p>
Overseas Allowances	<p>There are three overseas allowances to which you may be entitled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the expatriate allowance recognises the cost and disruption of mobility. ▪ the location allowance is designed to compensate staff who are living in a place where conditions are significantly harder than in the UK. ▪ the cost of living allowance (COLA) compensates for the additional costs of maintaining UK living standards while you are overseas. <p>For more information about these allowances, see <i>Pay and Overseas Allowances</i>.</p>
Salary Advance	<p>You may apply for an advance of salary of up to £1,500 before you take up your new job. No interest is charged. It is repayable over two years and is normally paid into your bank account a few weeks before you travel.</p> <p>To apply for an advance, complete a <i>Salary Advance Application Form</i>.</p>
Travel to post	<p>The journey to take up your job is usually by air and BC provides you, and any accompanying partner or children, with air tickets either from London or Manchester or from the city where you are working immediately prior to posting, if you are based at another BC office in the UK, or their cash equivalent.</p> <p>For more information, see <i>Travel to Post</i>.</p>
Fare-paid leave	<p>You are entitled to annual fare-paid leave, for which the BC provides air tickets, or their cash equivalent, for you and any accompanying member of your family.</p> <p>For more information, see <i>Fare-Paid Leave Travel Allowances</i>.</p>
Heavy baggage allowance	<p>The BC pays to transport certain personal effects to post as heavy baggage, subject to certain limits on cost and the type of goods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ for UK appointed staff, cost limitations are based on the

	<p>cubic footage volumes and this is dependent on family size</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ for harmonised managers the entitlement is expressed as a cost ceiling rather than volume. <p>Certain items may not be shipped or stored.</p> <p>For more information, see <i>Transporting your Belongings Overseas</i>.</p>
Insurance of your belongings	<p>The BC pays two-thirds of the premium on a worldwide all risks insurance of your belongings when they are in transit and while you are overseas.</p> <p>For more information, see <i>Obtaining Insurance for Your Belongings</i>.</p>
Schooling and travel allowances for children	<p>If you have children the BC helps you, as far as possible, to maintain their standard of education either in the UK with a Boarding School Allowance (BSA), or at post at International Schools or equivalent.</p> <p>Note: Harmonised managers are not entitled to BSA. Instead, the BC pays fees and other costs for children's education at post, at International Schools or equivalent.</p> <p>For more information, see <i>Schooling and Travel Allowances for Children</i>.</p>
Accommodation and related allowances	<p>The BC provides you with free, suitable accommodation in a house or flat adequately equipped with furniture and fittings.</p> <p>For more information, see <i>Accommodation and Related Allowances</i>.</p>
Car purchase and shipping	<p>You may apply for an interest-free loan to buy a car, up to £10,500 or 90% of the purchase price, whichever is less.</p> <p>The BC pays freight and marine insurance for UK-appointed staff (not harmonised managers) on a car purchased from a designated regional purchase centre.</p> <p>For more information, see <i>Car Purchase and Shipping</i>.</p>

Health Benefits

Overview

This section describes the health benefits to which you are entitled when you accept an overseas posting. It covers:

- the FCO Healthcare Contract
- obtaining approval for treatment
- making a claim for treatment obtained overseas
- seeing a doctor and obtaining medicines
- arranging for hospital treatment
- obtaining dental treatment
- obtaining treatment on home leave.

Information about the Expacare Medical Insurance Contract (for harmonised managers) is given in Expacare Medical Insurance Contract.

Information about maternity services and making arrangements for taking babies to post are in Maternity Services for Staff Working Overseas.

Health Benefits - Reference Information provides the names of contacts in the FCO Health and Welfare Department and details of charges for prescriptions and optical and dental treatment.

Audience

This section applies to both UK-appointed staff and harmonised managers accepting an overseas posting, however, the health cover provided is different for the two groups:

- UK-appointed staff are normally covered by the FCO Healthcare contract (for more information, see What the FCO Healthcare Contract covers below)
- harmonised managers are normally covered by the Expacare contract (for more information, see Expacare Medical Insurance Contract).

Notes:

- UK-based staff on temporary postings overseas, or on overseas visits from the UK, are also covered by the FCO Healthcare Contract while they are working overseas as long as they have obtained clearance before departure. See Temporary Postings Overseas.
- Staff taking up temporary postings as harmonised managers overseas will be covered by the Expacare contract once they have registered (see Expacare Medical Insurance Contract)
- Harmonised managers moving from an English and Examinations (E&E) or OAS post to a UK-appointed overseas Grant Funded Services (GFS) post will be covered by the FCO Healthcare Contract in their new post.
- Staff moving from a GFS post to a Harmonised post will not be entitled to membership of the FCO Healthcare scheme.

Responsibilities

The procedures in this section are carried out by:

- UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting
- HR International Assignments Team (HR IAT)
- staff in country.

Policy

The FCO Healthcare Contract covers pre-posting medical clearance, medical and hospital treatment at post, in the UK or in a third country as appropriate and repatriation costs when essential.

Note: You and your accompanying spouse or partner and accompanying dependant children are covered by the FCO Healthcare Contract only if you obtain medical clearance before taking up your new job. Children on holiday visits are covered ONLY for emergency treatment.

Guidance / Procedures

What the FCO Healthcare Contract covers

- The FCO Healthcare Contract is designed to ensure that you and your partner and dependants receive a similar standard of care to that which you would get from the NHS were you living and working in the UK. Under a contract which runs until 31 March 2009, International SOS provides a range of healthcare services to the FCO. These services form part of the FCO provision for staff health, welfare and safety. Services available include:
 - 24-hour, 7 days a week FCO Healthline: +44 (0)20 8762 8585 (for easy access to all services provided under the contract)
 - access to standard NHS care
 - pre-posting health assessments (medical clearance for your posting) - through International SOS's partner organisation Capita Health Services

- medical advice
 - vaccination service
 - prescription service
 - medical evacuations
 - maternity advice.
- A GP service is not provided. Details of local GPs/walk in treatment centres willing to see staff in London are available from the International SOS or NHS Direct.

What the FCO Healthcare Contract does not cover

- You are not protected under the Healthcare Contract in all circumstances when travelling abroad. It applies only:
 - in the country where you are working
 - when travelling between the UK and the country in which you are working (your family is covered too), provided a standard route is used. For more information, see Travel to Post
 - in countries to which you travel on British Council business.
- When travelling to a neighbouring country, that is one which has a common border with the country where you are working, you can claim under the Healthcare Contract for medical expenses arising from an accident or sudden illness.
- In all other circumstances, for example, leave journeys involving travel to several countries, you are not protected under the Healthcare Contract or any other scheme and you are strongly advised to take out adequate comprehensive medical insurance with good personal accident cover.

Obtaining approval for treatment

In principle you can claim for the cost of treatment that would be provided by the NHS if you were living and working in the UK.

You do not need formal approval to visit a local doctor or obtain medicines (see Seeing a doctor and Obtaining medicines below), but you must contact FCO Healthline on +44 (0)20 8762 8585 about treatment other than routine medical consultations, that is, for hospital treatment, operations, specialist examinations and so on. They will advise whether the treatment can justifiably be carried out at post at British Council expense or whether, bearing in mind relative costs, adequacy of healthcare services and other considerations, a third country or the UK would be preferable. The British Council will not pay for treatment at post which is not approved by FCO Healthline.

Procedure

To obtain approval for treatment, you must obtain a referral for the treatment from your local panel doctor (see Seeing a doctor below) and contact International SOS with the details. The FCO Healthline number, which is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, is the route by which you access all services provided under the contract.

International SOS also deal with medical evacuations. All medical evacuations will be to the nearest regional centre of excellence or to an NHS hospital in the UK, depending on individual circumstances and medical opinion.

Making a claim for treatment obtained overseas

You can claim reimbursement from the local medical budget for any treatment given overseas which would be provided by a NHS doctor or dentist if you were living in the UK. Before embarking on any expensive or lengthy treatment, you should consult International SOS to ensure that it would be available under the NHS.

The costs of medical and dental treatment for which you can claim from the local medical budget, OMOC1113 (or FABS equivalent, with GL Account 530030), are as follows:

- consultation with a local panel doctor and the provision of medicines less the standard NHS prescription charge (see Seeing a doctor and Obtaining medicines below)
- hospital treatment, operations, specialist examinations and services provided previous medical approval has been obtained through International SOS (see Arranging for hospital treatment below)
- maternity services (see Obtaining maternity services below)
- essential dental treatment, provided approval has been obtained from the Dental Practice Board (see below under Obtaining dental treatment).

Claims may also be made in the following circumstances:

1. Approval may be given for the payment of subsistence, in whole or in part, if staff or dependants are receiving medical care outside the country of posting. Although claims may be settled at post, you must get approval from the Head of HR IAT. Subsistence is at the usual rate for the country where treatment takes place.
2. If your partner travels to the UK, or to a third country, on medical grounds the cost of the travel may be met, together with that of any children of the family who are five years or under and who have not yet started primary education. It is not normally possible for your partner to travel to the UK at British Council expense unless International SOS certify that it is essential or a case is made to the Head of HR IAT.

Seeing a doctor

1. To see a doctor, obtain from your local office the list of approved local practitioners (also referred to as panel doctors).
2. You must obtain a referral from your doctor if you need to visit a hospital or obtain hospital treatment, and send it to International SOS together with a copy of the doctor's report and details of any investigations undertaken. See also Arranging for hospital treatment below.

Obtaining medicines

1. Normally you should obtain your medicines locally. However, if you are unable to do so, you can order them through International SOS. You will need to obtain a prescription request form from HR IAT and submit it to International SOS at least six weeks in advance of when the medicine is needed.
2. You should take with you to post adequate supplies of any medicines that you take regularly; three months' supply is usual, but six months' is preferable if your doctor will prescribe it.

Although the costs of the medicines are paid for by HR IAT, prescription charges for each item must be paid to your local medical budget, OMOC1113 or FABS equivalent, with GL Account 530030. See Health Benefits - Reference Information for information about prescription charges.

Arranging for hospital treatment

You can obtain access to UK National Health Service treatment through International SOS. It is not always possible, especially at short notice, to fix an appointment to suit the patient's convenience and, while every effort will be made to accommodate you, you will only be given priority according to medical need.

1. To arrange for an out-patient appointment to see a consultant or an in-patient admission, you must contact International SOS via the FCO Healthline on +44 (0)20 8762 8585, so that they can make the arrangements.

You should provide as much notice as possible (a minimum of three months is considered reasonable). If you have seen a doctor at post, you should send a copy of their report and details of any investigations undertaken to International SOS.

You can ask HR IAT to intervene if problems arise, but it is your responsibility to liaise with International SOS.

2. If you have private health care insurance and wish to use it, inform International SOS when you ask for an appointment as this might enable you to have an appointment sooner.
3. If the need for in-patient treatment is identified, International SOS will arrange admission to an NHS hospital in the UK (or a hospital in a third country, depending on the particulars of the case) as soon as possible. You need to be as flexible as you can about dates and give International SOS as much information as possible about your condition and your future planned availability.

Obtaining dental treatment

As UK-appointed staff, you and your family can claim refunds for dental treatment only if such treatment would have been given to a patient in the UK under the NHS and you obtained dental clearance prior to taking up the post. Only straightforward extractions, amalgam or resin fillings, root canal treatment or the provision of plastic/acrylic/synthetic resin dentures may be authorised in the country where you are working. All other non-emergency treatment must be referred to the Dental Practice Division via HR IAT for approval.

1. To obtain approval for non-emergency treatment, you must submit a Dental Estimate Form to HR IAT, who forward it to the Dental Practice Division to establish the NHS costs of such treatment and the subsequent appropriate NHS charge to the patient. For details of dental charges see Health Benefits - Reference Information.
2. Where emergency dental treatment is required, you can submit the form to HR IAT after the treatment has been given if necessary.

Treatment on home leave

Most staff and their families who are happy with their UK GP and local health centre do not cancel their registration when they are posted overseas, especially if they plan to return to live in the same area on leave and for subsequent home jobs. It is worth maintaining contact with your GP when you return on leave for any routine checks you may need, as this will ensure you stay on their register. If the surgery is aware that you are no longer locally resident, they may refuse to see you or charge you a fee. An alternative in this situation is to use the NHS walk-in centres which are becoming more widely available and offer fast access to NHS advice, information and treatment seven days a week with experienced NHS nurses, with no requirement to make an appointment. For more information, see the NHS Walk-in Centres website. In addition there are Medicentres (private clinics) at Waterloo, Victoria and Euston rail stations, as well as several other locations in London and many casualty departments within hospitals have a GP available.

Expacare Medical Insurance Contract

Overview

This section describes the Expacare Medical Insurance Contract.

Audience

This section applies to harmonised managers accepting an overseas posting. Please note that OAS staff and English and Exams staff on Network contracts are also covered by the Expacare Medical Insurance Contract.

Responsibilities

These procedures are carried out by harmonised managers.

Policy

Harmonised E&E/ OAS Managers and accompanying dependants* are covered by the Expacare medical insurance contract with the British Council.

*Note that the British Council reserves the right to refuse any benefit for a spouse, partner or child who is entitled to a similar benefit from another source.

Staff moving from a Harmonised post to an overseas Grant Funded Services (GFS) post will be covered by the FCO Healthcare contract in their new post (for more information, see *Health Benefits for Staff Working Overseas*). Staff moving from a GFS post to a Harmonised post will not be entitled to membership of the FCO Healthcare scheme.

Guidance / Procedures

1. You must register with Expacare before taking up your post and you must also advise Expacare when you transfer from post to post.
2. Registration is done online at <http://www.bcinternationalhealth.org>. The site contains all information you might require about the cover provided by the contract and should be referred to in the first instance for all questions. The site also contains a form to update your information if/when you move on to another centre, a FAQ page, and contact names.
3. You should ensure that you and accompanying members of your family undergo dental and eye checks before going to post, and on a regular basis thereafter.

Further general information about the Expacare scheme can be found in the relevant section of "The Guide to Teaching English with the British Council".

Maternity Services

Overview

This section describes the maternity services to which you or your partner are entitled when you accept an overseas posting.

Audience

This section applies to UK-appointed staff, excluding harmonised managers, accepting an overseas posting. Harmonised managers are covered by the Expacare contract (see Expacare Medical Insurance Contract). However, where provision under the Expacare contract falls short of the provisions outlined below, the British Council will make up the difference as detailed below.

Responsibilities

The procedures in this section are carried out by:

- staff accepting an overseas posting
- HR International Assignments Team (HR IAT).

Guidance / Procedures

Obtaining maternity services

1. If you or your spouse or partner becomes pregnant while working overseas, contact HR IAT in the first instance to clarify any statutory entitlements as these vary significantly depending on the individual.
2. International SOS maintains records of the medical suitability of maternity services available in individual overseas locations. They will recommend whether local delivery is advised or not. The British Council always pays for any local ante-natal charges and for the local costs of delivery.
3. Alternatively the British Council will pay for the mother to return to the UK to give birth, the airfare being treated as a medical journey and charged to OMOC 1113 or FABS equivalent with GL Account 530030.

Note: You should be aware that most airlines have a ban on pregnant women travelling close to the expected date of birth.

4. The British Council also pays for the mother's partner (airfares are economy class) to be present for the birth. Fares are also paid for dependant children resident at post aged five years or under who have not yet started primary education.
5. If the mother is returning to the UK to give birth because the overseas location is deemed unsuitable, the British Council additionally pays towards the costs of temporary accommodation in the UK. The payments are related to the type of accommodation:
 - hotel
 - rented
 - staying with friends or relatives.
6. Where the accommodation is in a hotel or with friends/relatives, then the amounts paid are reduced after 30 days (subsistence payments are limited to the mother only). HR IAT writes to the individual giving details of the exact amounts. The costs are met from Human Resources' healthcare budget.
7. If the mother is returning to the UK to give birth through choice, even if the medical facilities at post have been assessed by International SOS as adequate, the British Council will pay for return fares for the mother and any children at post aged five or under who have not yet started primary education but no subsistence in the UK is payable. Maternity journeys at public expense are not normally allowed during the three months following arrival at post or return from fare-paid leave.
8. A mother-to-be may choose to travel to a third country for the birth instead of the UK. In these cases the rules apply as above with payments restricted to the ceiling of the amount that would have been paid had the journey been made to the UK. In these instances medical costs are not reimbursed.

Obtaining maternity services at post

Maternity services (which include ante-natal classes) are reimbursable at post. HR IAT may also authorise the cost of regular visits by a nurse, midwife or health visitor for up to 14 days

from the date of delivery if this is not already provided in-country. The cost of domestic assistance is not refundable.

Taking to post babies born in the UK

It is recommended that the mother remains in the UK until after the routine six-week post natal checks. The following arrangements must be made to return to post with the baby:

1. If the mother wishes to return to post earlier than the recommended six weeks from the birth, she must contact International SOS.
2. If the mother or the baby has had any problems during pregnancy, delivery (including a Caesarean section) or the postnatal period, she must contact International SOS to discuss clearance prior to returning to post.
3. You are advised to arrange for your baby to be given BCG vaccination against tuberculosis and to begin a course of hepatitis B vaccinations. Although tuberculosis and hepatitis B are less of a problem in the UK, they are still common in many other countries.

In the UK, BCG immunisation is given between the ages of 10 to 14 years. Up to the age of three months, no skin test is needed to check whether exposure to tuberculosis has occurred; after that a skin test will be performed prior to BCG being given. As BCG is effective from birth, it is recommended to have it as soon after birth as possible, thus avoiding the inconvenience of a skin test later.

The hepatitis B immunisation regimen consists of three doses of vaccine. This can be started at birth, the second dose is given one month later and the third dose six months after the first dose. Like BCG vaccine, hepatitis B vaccine is effective from birth.

4. Remember that the baby requires passport facilities to be able to travel to post. Prospective parents must therefore bring their birth and marriage certificates to the United Kingdom and have available the child's full birth certificate to establish national status.
5. managers
6. a harmonised manager or the wife or partner of a harmonised manager becomes pregnant and the Expacare contract does not make provision for their preferred option for the birth, the Council will cover the difference in the following circumstances:
 - If the expectant mother wishes to travel to the UK to give birth on the NHS and Expacare will only pay for travel to the nearest centre of excellence, the British Council will pay any difference between the two air fares
 - If the expectant mother travels to the UK or to a third country to give birth the same provision for subsistence payments applies as for UK-appointed staff and partners as set out above.
 - The British Council also pays for the mother's partner (airfares are economy class) to be present for the birth. Fares are also paid for dependant children resident at post aged five years or under who have not yet started primary education.

Health Benefits Reference Information

Overview

This section provides reference information related to the health benefits to which you are entitled when you accept an overseas posting. It covers:

- names of FCO Health and Welfare staff
- schedule of current charges for prescriptions, optical and dental work.

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting.

FCO Health and Welfare staff

Diana Nelson	Team Leader, Health and Welfare
Val Hunt	Clinical Services Manager, with responsibility for FCO clinics overseas

Welfare team	
Claire Rose/Kate Christie job share	Family Welfare Officer
Jim Collins	Overseas Welfare Officer, Africa, Asia, Australasia and Far East
Robert Perry	Overseas Welfare Officer, Americas, W&E Europe and Middle East
Jan Sutton	Home Welfare Officer

If you want to make a formal complaint regarding service or treatment or have any queries or comments, you should contact:

Clinical Services Manager
 Health and Welfare Department
 Foreign and Commonwealth Office
 Old Admiralty Building
 London SW1A 2AF

Schedule of charges 2008/2009

Prescription charges

UK-appointed staff and their families are required to contribute to the cost of locally purchased medicines by paying the standard NHS prescription charge.

The following are exempt from paying prescription charges:

- hospital in-patients
- expectant mothers and mothers who have a child under one year of age
- dependant children up to 16 years of age or 19 if in full-time education.

With the exception of contraception prescribed by a panel doctor (which is free), the prescription charge with effect from 1 April 2008 is £7.10 per item, and the pre-payment certificate is £27.85 for three months and £102.50 for 12 months.

Optical charges

- **For children:** children resident at post under age 16 (or over 16 but under 19 and still in full time education) are eligible for reimbursement of optical charges. Children at boarding school in the UK visiting parents during school holidays are not eligible, except in emergencies. When new or replacement glasses are prescribed all lenses costs are met while £40.00 may be reclaimed against the cost of frames.
- **For adults:** only the costs for complex/powerful lenses are met. To qualify for a refund at least one lens must have a power in any one meridian of plus or minus 10 or more dioptres, or be in lenticular form. Amounts that can be claimed (for complex/powerful lenses only) are £15.00 for spectacles with single lenses and £30.00 for spectacles with bifocal lenses. All other costs must be met by the member of staff.
- **VDU eyesight tests:** rules about payment for eyesight tests for VDU and for spectacles, if required, can be found on the *Health and Safety intranet*.

Dental charges

- The British Council reimburses dental charges incurred locally for UK-appointed staff and their families who have current certificates of dental fitness, for routine treatment (see below) or for treatment approved by the Dental Practice Board, less the current contributions which would be charged by the NHS to patients in the UK.

Treatment under the NHS is free for hospital in-patients, expectant mothers who were pregnant at the start of the course of treatment, women who have had a child within the previous year and for full-time students under 19. Charges for anybody in one of these categories should therefore be paid for in full by the British Council.

- The table below shows the NHS dental charges to patients in the UK for the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009.

The actual cost of treatment at post is paid by the British Council minus the appropriate patient's contribution as shown below, which must be paid by the member of staff.

Either the British Council pays the entire bill and claims reimbursement from the member of staff for the appropriate contribution, or the member of staff pays the entire bill and claims from the British Council the difference between the total cost and the contribution they need to make according to the table below.

NHS patient's charges with effect from 1 April 2008

Charges to the patients fall into three bands. Treatment at post under the first two bands can be reimbursed minus the appropriate patient contribution; each course of treatment is subject to a separate contribution. Band 2 contributions include Band 1 treatments; ie if a Band 2 contribution is being paid it is not necessary to make a Band 1 contribution as well.

Treatment under Band 3 must be authorised by the Dental Practice Division of the NHS Business Services Authority by submission of a dental estimate form via HR International Assignments Team.

Band 1 (Patient contribution £16.20)

- (a) clinical examination, case assessment and report
- (b) orthodontic case assessment and report
- (c) advice, dental charting, diagnosis and treatment planning
- (d) radiographic examination, including panoral and lateral headplates, and radiological report

- (e) study casts including in association with occlusal analysis
- (f) colour photographs
- (g) instruction in the prevention of dental and oral disease including dietary advice and dental hygiene instruction
- (h) surface application as primary preventive measures of sealants and topical fluoride preparations
- (i) scaling, polishing and marginal correction of fillings
- (j) taking material for pathological examination
- (k) adjustments to and easing of dentures or orthodontic appliances
- (l) treatment of sensitive cementum

Band 2 (Patient contribution £44.60)

- (a) non-surgical periodontal treatment including root-planing, deep scaling, irrigation of periodontal pockets and subgingival curettage and all necessary scaling and polishing
- (b) surgical periodontal treatment, including gingivectomy, gingivoplasty or removal of an operculum
- (c) surgical periodontal treatment, including raising and replacement of a mucoperiosteal flap, curettage, root planing and bone resection
- (d) free gingival grafts
- (e) permanent fillings in amalgam, composite resin, synthetic resin, glass ionomer, compomers, silicate or silico-phosphate, including acid etch retention
- (f) sealant restorations
- (g) endodontic treatment of permanent or retained deciduous teeth
- (h) pulpotomy
- (i) apicectomy
- (j) extraction of teeth
- (k) transplantation of teeth
- (l) oral surgery including surgical removal of cyst, buried root, unerupted tooth, impacted tooth or exostosed tooth and alveolectomy
- (m) soft tissue surgery in relation to the buccal cavity and lips
- (n) frenectomy, frenoplasty and frenotomy
- (o) relining and rebasing dentures including soft linings
- (p) addition of tooth, clasp, labial or buccal flange to dentures
- (q) splints (other than laboratory fabricated splints) in relation to periodontally compromised teeth and in connection with external trauma
- (r) bite raising appliances (other than laboratory fabricated appliances)

Band 3 (Treatment under Band 3 must be authorised by the Dental Practice Division by submission of a dental estimate form via HR International Assignments Team)

- (a) porcelain, composite or acrylic mastique veneers, including acid etch retention
- (b) inlays, pinlays, onlays and palatal veneers, in alloys containing 60% or more fine gold,

porcelain,
composite resin and ceramics; Crowns including any pin or post aids to retention

(c) full or three quarter crown cast in alloys containing not less than 33% fine gold or platinum or palladium

(d) full or jacket crown cast in alloys containing stainless steel or cobalt chromium or nickel chromium

(e) crown in porcelain, synthetic resin and other non-metallic crowns

(f) full or jacket crowns in alloys containing not less than 33% fine gold or platinum or palladium, or
alloys containing stainless steel or cobalt chromium or nickel chromium, with thermally bonded porcelain

(g) jacket crown thermally bonded to wrought platinum coping

(h) prefabricated full or jacket crown, including any pin or post retention

(i) crowns in other materials; Bridges including any pin or post aids to retention

(j) bridges in alloys containing 60% or more fine gold with or without thermally bonded facings

(k) bridges cast in alloys containing stainless steel, cobalt chromium or nickel chromium, with or without thermally bonded facings

(l) acid etch retained bridges

(m) bridges in other materials

(n) provision of full (complete) or partial dentures, overdentures and obturators in synthetic resin or
metal or both synthetic resin and metal, including any cast or wrought metal components or aids to

Urgent Treatment (Band 1 charge)

- (a) examination, assessment and advice
- (b) radiographic examination and radiological report
- (c) dressing of teeth and palliative treatment
- (d) pulpectomy or vital pulpotomy
- (e) re-implantation of a luxated or subluxated permanent tooth following trauma including any necessary endodontic treatment
- (f) repair and refixing of inlays and crowns
- (g) refixing a bridge
- (h) temporary bridges
- (i) extraction of not more than 2 teeth
- (j) provision of post-operative care including treatment of infected sockets
- (k) adjustment and alteration of dentures or orthodontic appliances
- (l) urgent treatment for acute conditions of the gingivae or oral mucosa, including treatment for pericoronitis or for ulcers and herpetic lesions, and any necessary oral hygiene instruction in connection with such treatment
- (m) treatment of sensitive cementum or dentine
- (n) incising an abscess
- (o) other treatment immediately necessary as a result of trauma
- (p) not more than 1 permanent filling in amalgam, composite resin, synthetic resin, glass ionomer, compomers, silicate or silico-phosphate including acid etch retention

Benefits for a Partner Accepting an Overseas Posting

Overview

This section describes the benefits to which your partner is entitled when you accept an overseas posting.

Audience

This section applies to UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting.

Responsibilities

This policy information is to be followed by:

- the member of staff accepting an overseas posting
- HR International Assignments Team (HR IAT)
- the British Council Families Association (BCFA).

Policy

Healthcare and travel

When your partner accompanies you overseas the British Council provides the same levels of health care and international travel for them as we do for you. If your partner does not accompany you, the British Council will provide one airfare a year for them to visit you. This will be the same class of travel as you qualify for yourself.

National Insurance

Your spouse/partner/civil partner may be eligible for reimbursement of the cost of voluntary National Insurance contributions. For more information please see the section on tax, NI and pensions for staff on an overseas posting.

Language training

Your partner is eligible for up to 100 hours of tuition in the local language, paid for locally. In some cases this entitlement can be used before you are posted to the new country provided you have the agreement of the relevant Geographical Director.

If your partner passes one of the Diplomatic Service language examinations in the language of the country in which you are working, we will pay them a bonus. The amounts are as follows:

Level	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Survival	£175	£250	£300
Functional	£325	£450	£700
Operational	£650	£850	£1,300
Extensive	£1,000	£1,225	£1,750

See also *Language Skills Acquisition*.

British Council Families Association

The British Council Families Association (BCFA) gives valuable support to the partners of staff overseas and to local staff moving on internal transfers to the UK. Membership is free, but not automatic, so those wishing to join should contact the BCFA Manager.

The Association is run by a members' committee and a Manager, employed by the British Council, who works alongside the International Assignments Team.

The BCFA has many ways of supporting your partner and family including career development initiatives, a resource unit containing information on a wide range of topics (including country information), a network of members throughout the world, and more. All registered members will receive details of the Association's activities through a newsletter. For more information about the BCFA, contact the BCFA manager or visit the BCFA web site.

Language Skill Acquisition

Overview

This section describes the opportunities available to you to learn the local language when you accept an overseas posting.

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting.

Responsibilities

These guidance notes are to be followed by:

- UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting
- Regional Directors
- HR International Assignments Team (HR IAT).

Policy

Your effectiveness in another country, and your enjoyment of living there, will be enhanced by your ability to speak the local language. Unless you are a native speaker or already fluent, the British Council normally helps you to study the language of the country where you are going to be working. There are three types of language training available:

- self access
- language training at post
- full-time language training.

Guidance

Language training at post

Both you and your partner/spouse are entitled to local language training, which is charged to OMOC 1115 (EDOC/EXOC 1899 for harmonised managers) or the appropriate WBS, provided provision has been made for it in the country's financial plan.

A maximum of 100 hours of tuition, in the official language of the country of posting, may be made available provided the tuition is completed before the last six months of the post. One to one or group tuition may be used. In addition half the cost of course materials can be claimed. You should review with your line manager whether language learning should be included in your job plan.

Full time language training

The level of full-time language training you need to undertake depends on the language, and how useful it is in your specific job.

Lengthy full-time language training to functional or operational level is provided for languages that are likely to be of use more than once in a British Council career (Arabic, Chinese, the Slavonics and Japanese/Korean).

Specific posts

Training is available for specific posts, identified at the point of recruitment, and recruitment is timed to allow for the training.

- To apply for these posts, you must either already have the relevant language, or demonstrate your ability to learn a language to an appropriate level.
- The length of training is likely to be between six and 12 months, depending on the level that is needed for the job, and the difficulty of the language. It may take place in the UK, or overseas, or a combination.
- You are required to sit the diplomatic service exam, and your performance in a language training post will be measured on your results.
- You are expected to serve a minimum of four years in a post following full time language training, or five years for posts in band 10.
- You are expected to use the language in a subsequent posting - further full-time language training may then be available, to enable you to increase the level of skill, or to enable you to acquire a related language, for example, to learn Russian when you already have Polish.

Some posts require difficult languages which are likely to be of use only once in a career (Persian, Thai, Turkish, Vietnamese, Hungarian and Greek). For specific posts full-time language training of three to six months may be available to survival level, with a focus on cultural issues, prior to postings in countries where English is not widely spoken. The training is given at the discretion of the regional director, and funded from regional budgets. It is specified at the point of recruitment, and is likely to be in the country of posting.

Posts requiring languages which are more widely spoken (French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese) normally specify the language to functional level as an essential competence. Top up or refresher training of up to three months may be to enable you to reach this competence - for example in a language you have not used for a long time.

Entitlements on pre-posting language training

General

- Language training immediately precedes the substantive posting.
- The language training will not exceed one year.
- Promotion will begin when the post-holder takes up his/her substantive posting and not during the preceding language training (whether in country or elsewhere).
- Regional Directorates will advise post and HR IAT on the charging instruction.

Allowances and entitlements

Language training takes place...	Allowances and entitlements...
...in the country and town of substantive posting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overseas allowances (expatriate, location and cost of living allowance (COLA) if applicable) are payable from day one. ▪ If it is not possible to move into the accommodation that will be provided for the main posting (for example, if there is an overlap with a predecessor) room costs will be paid at a hotel or alternative accommodation but no subsistence or personal incidental expenses (PIE) may be claimed. Meals and incidental expenses must be paid for from overseas allowances. ▪ No travel allowance is payable; the individual covers the

	<p>cost of travel to and from the language training venue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If the new post is on promotion, the new salary is only payable from the first day of duty in the substantive post; prior to that salary is at the previous pay band and the overseas allowances are calculated according to that pay band.
...in the country of posting but in a different town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expatriate allowance is payable from day one. ▪ If accommodation is in a hotel, location allowance and COLA are payable if applicable; the room cost is paid by the British Council but meals and incidentals must be paid for out of the overseas allowances by the individual. ▪ If the training is 'immersion' type, with accommodation and meals provided with a family, only PIE is payable.
...in a third country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expatriate allowance is payable from day one. ▪ If accommodation is in a hotel, location allowance and COLA are payable, if applicable, at the rates for the country where the language training is taking place; the room cost is paid by the British Council but meals and incidentals must be paid for out of the overseas allowances by the individual. ▪ If the training is 'immersion' type, with accommodation and meals provided with a family, only PIE is payable. ▪ The unaccompanied air freight (UAF) entitlement for the main posting also applies to the country where language training is taking place.
...in London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If the member of staff is London-based, no change to salary or allowances is made. ▪ If the member of staff is moving from one overseas post to another they should stay in their own home if possible; if not, a case may be made to Head of Pay and Employment Relations (PER) for hotel costs, meal allowances and PIE to be paid for up to a maximum of two months. ▪ If the member of staff is normally based in Manchester or another office, hotel and meal allowances and PIE are payable as on a normal business trip. ▪ If the training lasts for more than three months, detached duty terms may apply; individual cases should be referred to the Pensions and Benefits Manager.
...elsewhere in the UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Standard hotel and meal allowances and PIE are payable, unless the training is taking place in the town where the member of staff normally lives and works in which case no additional allowances are payable.

Language bonuses for staff

Note: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is revising its exam levels. We have not yet worked out the new bonus structure that will reflect these changes. The information and table below is for illustrative purposes only. We will post the correct information as soon as possible.

The British Council pays you a bonus whenever you successfully complete Diplomatic Service exams at functional level and above, in the language of the country where you are working. The amount is determined by the difficulty of the language and the level reached. See Language bonuses below for a list of the amounts payable. You should claim the bonus through HR IAT. Bonuses can only be paid if you have six months or more remaining at post. Each of the language examinations consists of separate oral and written modules. If you qualify at different levels for each module, or opt to take only one module, you will receive half the appropriate bonus for each module.

No bonus is payable for passing exams at the Survival/Lower Functional level, and the British Council does not normally pay a bonus for passing an exam at a level which you have already achieved in that language.

Language bonuses

Level	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Functional	£500	£1,000	£1,500
Operational	£1,000	£1,500	£2,000
Extensive	£1,500	£2,000	£2,500
Language	Afrikaans Bahasa Indonesian Bahasa Malay Bengali (Bangla) Dutch French German Hindi Italian Nepali Portuguese Romanian Shona Sinhalese Spanish Swahili Swedish Tagalog Urdu Zulu	Bulgarian Croatian Czech Greek Hebrew Latvian Maltese Persian Polish Russian Serbian Slovak Slovene Ukrainian	Amharic Arabic Burmese Cantonese Hungarian Japanese Korean Mandarin Thai Turkish Uzbek Vietnamese

Hard language bonus

Wherever you are working at the time, you will receive the bonus if you qualify in Arabic, Cantonese, Japanese, Mandarin or Russian at any time, as long as the language is expected to be used in a future posting.

Car Purchase and Shipping

Overview

This section covers:

- applying for a loan to buy a car for use during your overseas posting
- buying and transporting the car to post (unless purchased at post)
- disposing of the car at the end of your posting.

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting, but note that there are differences for harmonised managers.

Responsibilities

The procedures in this section are carried out by:

- staff (including harmonised managers) accepting an overseas posting
- HR International Assignments Team (HR IAT).

Policy

You may apply for an interest-free loan of up to £10,500 or 90 per cent of the purchase price of a car, whichever is less. Loans are repayable over 24 months and recovery usually starts at the end of your first month at post.

You are normally expected to buy a car locally at post or from the regional purchase centre. The British Council pays freight and marine insurance for UK-appointed staff on a car purchased from a designated regional purchase centre. The Council will pay import duty if it is charged and is inescapable. Note: This does not apply to harmonised managers, who either purchase a car locally or pay the freight and duty costs themselves.

Procedure**Applying for a car loan**

1. To apply for a car loan, consult your desk officer in HR IAT.
2. Complete a Private Car Loan Application Form and provide a copy of the Pro-Forma Invoice for the car.
3. If the car you are buying is older than three years, provide a certificate of roadworthiness (or local equivalent) and a note from the vendor confirming the car details, purchase price and that you are the purchaser.

Buying and delivering the car

1. You are normally expected to buy your new car locally at post or from the regional purchase centre if your country of posting is eligible (see Regional purchase centres below).
2. If you intend to ship the car from a regional purchase centre, obtain estimates from three shipping contractors.
3. On the Private Car Loan Application Form, make it clear that you want to ship the car to post, and give details of the dealer's/vendor's contact address and telephone number. You must also attach the estimates from the shipping contractors.
4. Once HR IAT has approved your loan application, they use your estimates to select the contractor and make the necessary arrangements with the contractor to ship the car.
5. It is your responsibility to arrange delivery of the car to the shipping contractor's warehouse. You must meet any charge made by the dealer/vendor for delivery or the shipping contractor for collection.

Disposing of the car at the end of your posting

1. When you leave a country at the end of your posting, you are expected to sell your car and buy another one for your next overseas job.

Special rules apply to any profits arising from the sale of cars where funds are remitted through the official account. In this case you must share the profits with

British Council (see Essential finance, Sales of Cars and Personal Effects).

2. The British Council normally expects staff to sell their car in-country. However, if this is not possible, or it is going to result in a considerable financial loss to the member of staff, the British Council will consider a request to pay to freight the car back to the UK, if you are being posted back to the UK. You must obtain approval for this from the Head of HR IAT.

Note: This does not apply to harmonised managers, who sell the car or pay the freight themselves.

3. If it is agreed that the British Council will pay to freight the car back to the UK, the British Council will pay for:
 - freight costs incurred to deliver the car to the shipping contractor's warehouse
 - any marine insurance costs.
4. You must obtain three independent estimates of the car freight costs.
5. It is your responsibility to arrange delivery of the car from the shipping contractor's warehouse and to cover any UK import duty, VAT or other taxes.
6. You are also responsible for ensuring that the vehicle conforms to UK or EU regulations.

You may find it useful to obtain HM Revenue and Customs Notice 3 Bringing your belongings and private motor vehicle to the UK from outside the EC, which gives guidance on UK requirements. You can get a copy from HM Revenue and Customs, the local Embassy or High Commission, or from HR IAT.

Regional purchase centres

Posts where car freight is paid for from the Regional Purchase Centre (RPC) to the post			
Post	RPC	Post	RPC
A		L	
Abuja	Europe	Lagos	Europe
Accra	Europe	Lilongwe	South Africa
Addis Ababa	Europe	Lima	Japan
Alexandria	Europe	Ljubljana	Europe
Amman	Europe	Lusaka	South Africa
Ankara	Europe	M-R	
B		Manila	Japan
Baku	Europe	Maputo	South Africa
Bandar Seri Begawan	Japan	Moscow	Europe
Bangkok	Japan	Mumbai	Japan
Beijing	Japan	Nairobi	Europe

Beirut	Europe	New Delhi	Japan
Belgrade	Europe	Nicosia	Europe
Bogota	Miami	Rabat	Europe
Brasilia	Miami	Rangoon	Japan
Bucharest	Europe	Rio De Janeiro	Miami
Buenos Aires	Europe	S	
C-E		Sana'a	Japan
Cairo	Europe	Santiago	Japan
Casablanca	Europe	Sao Paulo	Miami
Chennai	Japan	Sarajevo	Europe
Chiang Mai	Japan	Shanghai	Japan
Colombo	Japan	Singapore	Japan
Dakar	Europe	Skopje	Europe
Damascus	Europe	Sofia	Europe
Dar es Salaam	South Africa	St Petersburg	Europe
Dhaka	Japan	T-Z	
F-J		Tashkent	Europe
Freetown	Europe	Tbilisi	Europe
Guangzhou	Hong Kong	Tehran	Dubai
Harare	South Africa	Tirana	Europe
Havana	UK	Tripoli	Europe
Hong Kong	Japan	Tunis	Europe
Islamabad	Japan	Yaounde	Europe
Istanbul	Europe	Yerevan	Europe
Jakarta	Europe	Zagreb	Europe
K			
Kampala	UK		
Karachi	Japan		
Kathmandu	Europe		
Khartoum	Europe		

Kiev	Europe		
Kolkata	Japan		

Transfer Grants

Overview

This section describes the transfer grant to which you are entitled when you accept an overseas posting.

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting.

Responsibilities

UK-Appointed staff accepting an overseas posting or returning to the UK from an overseas posting use these guidance notes.

Policy

The transfer grant is a one-off payment to cover all pre-departure expenses, except for visas, and the cost of setting up home in a new location. It is paid whenever you transfer substantively to a new job and to a new location overseas, or from overseas to a job in the UK.

Notes:

- The actual cost of visas for you and your family, where they are required, is refunded separately.
- The grant is paid only after pre-posting medical clearance has been received, except for harmonised managers who are covered by the Expacare medical insurance scheme and do not undergo a clearance process.

Guidance

The transfer grant is paid at one of three rates that are reviewed annually, and depends on whether or not you are accompanied, and by how many people. The categories are:

- not accompanied
- accompanied by one or two others
- accompanied by three or more.

See Allowances - Current Rates for the transfer grant rates that currently apply.

The rates are set out in these terms, rather than, for example, 'accompanied by partner and children', to take account of variations such as single parents, staff with accompanying children whose partner stays in the UK, and so on.

If you retire from British Council service while on an overseas posting, you will receive 25 per cent of the normal rate of transfer grant whether returning to the UK or not, as you will not be taking up a substantive post.

If you resign from British Council service while on an overseas posting you do not receive any transfer grant.

If this is your first UK-appointed Grant Funded Services (GFS) or first Harmonised Band 8 posting to a new job overseas, you will also receive a First Postings Grant. This is a one-off payment of £1,500 in order to set staff up with the general household items needed during a career spent frequently overseas.

These payments are all made by the HR International Assignments Team (HR IAT) and should not be made by the overseas office.

Travel to Post

Overview

This section describes the travel to post entitlement when you accept an overseas posting. It covers:

- your entitlement to the cost of travel to post, either from the UK or from another overseas post
- how to arrange the travel.

Audience

This section applies to UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting but note that there are restrictions for harmonised managers.

Responsibilities

These procedures are carried out by:

- staff accepting an overseas posting
- HR International Assignment Team (HR IAT)
- Office Managers overseas.

Policy

The British Council provides the cost of travel for you and any accompanying partner and/or children to your new posting.

Guidance

- The journey to take up your job is usually by air and the British Council provides you, and any accompanying partner and/or children, with air tickets either from London or Manchester or from the city where you are working immediately prior to posting, if you are based at another British Council office in the UK, or from your current overseas post.
- If the flight involves five hours or more air time (not including stopovers), you are entitled to travel business class.
- UK-appointed staff are covered by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Healthcare Contract for the journey to post though this may not apply if you choose to travel by an indirect route.

Note: The FCO Healthcare Contract does not **normally** apply to **harmonised managers** and their dependants who are covered by a separate arrangement with Expacare. See *Health Benefits for Staff Working Overseas* and *Expacare Medical Insurance Contract* for more information about the FCO Healthcare contract and the Expacare contract.

- The costs of local travel to and from airports and other incidental expenses arising during the journey are covered by the transfer grant, which is paid to you separately. See *Transfer Grants*.
- If you wish to make your own travel arrangements, the British Council will pay the cash equivalent of the air tickets which the British Council would otherwise provide.

Procedure

1. Whether you choose to accept the British Council's travel arrangements or make your own arrangements, you must fill in the Travel Arrangements on Transfer Journey form, which is the form specifying what your travel requirements are and whether you want IAT to make the booking for you or to receive cash in lieu. This form is for use in

the UK; overseas offices have their own equivalent.

2. If you choose to travel by an indirect route, you may need to take out your own medical cover and other insurance for the whole journey, as the FCO Healthcare Contract covers only the standard route.

For information on travel allowances when taking fare-paid leave, see *Fare-Paid Leave Travel Allowances*

Fare-Paid Leave Travel Allowances

Overview

This section describes the fare-paid leave travel allowances to which you are entitled when you accept an overseas posting. It covers:

- your entitlement to fare-paid leave travel allowances
- how to make arrangements for the travel.

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting.

Responsibility

The procedures in this section are carried out by:

- the staff member applying for fare-paid leave
- Office Managers overseas.

Policy

You are entitled to annual fare-paid leave, and the British Council provides air tickets, or their cash equivalent, for you and any accompanying member of your family. Leave periods have to be agreed with your line manager. You are entitled to take fare-paid leave after each completed twelve months in the job, that is, the anniversary of the date on which you started the job. For operational or personal reasons you may bring it forward, or delay it, by up to six months.

Guidance / Procedure

Applying for and arranging fare-paid leave

1. You must ensure that the anniversary date has been, or will be, reached before taking fare-paid leave. You must not use the option to anticipate the journey by up to six months as an opportunity for an extra leave journey before the end of a posting.
2. On each fare-paid leave journey you are entitled to receive tickets for, or claim the costs of, the return airfares and to claim an incidentals allowance (£60 in each direction for each adult and £10 each way for each child based at post).
3. If you take cash in lieu of the tickets you and your family can choose how and when to spend this allowance. You do not have to travel to the UK or leave the country of posting, although you are normally expected to return to the UK every two years.
4. However the payment must be associated with a period of leave because that is the reason it is paid.
5. The office manager establishes the baseline fares to be paid on the basis that:
 - normally you must use the standard route, using the cheapest quote, to our UK headquarters, either London or Manchester, or to the city where you were working for the British Council if you were based in the UK immediately prior

- to being posted overseas
- if the flight involves five hours or more air time, then you are entitled to travel business class
 - if one leg of the journey involves more than five hours air time and one leg involves less than five hours air time, a return business class fare should be paid only if it is cheaper than the total cost of the appropriate single fares
 - the agreed fares should not be 'restricted' fares but may include any discounts that the British Council is able to obtain locally. Restricted in this case means that the date of the flight cannot be changed and/or the ticket is not refundable. Restricting changes to the same airline is acceptable.
6. The office manager, having paid you the agreed fares, must ask you to sign that you have received the money but any accountability ends there. You may spend the money as you choose.
 7. If you are posted from one overseas location to another within three months of the anniversary of your post start date you may combine your transfer journey with a leave journey to the UK, as long as you have not already taken the leave trip associated with that anniversary. If you do not wish to travel via the UK the tickets can be booked via another destination as long as the cost does not exceed that of travelling via the UK. The total cost of fares for both legs of the journey is paid from the budget of the office you are leaving. Cash in lieu of tickets cannot be claimed for these journeys. The calculation of entitlement to fare-paid leave starts again from the day you start work in your new post.
 8. The allowance for incidentals is not paid if you are taking leave between postings and are receiving a transfer grant.
 9. The office manager must keep a log of when leave is taken and record the anniversary date for calculating the timings of the entitlement. Fares and incidentals should be split equally between OMOC 1117 and OMOC 1080 (EDOC/EXOC 1853 for harmonised E&E managers, GREC 1853 for harmonised OAS staff) or the FABS equivalent.

Transporting your belongings

You are entitled to use the Unaccompanied Air Freight (UAF) method to transport some of your belongings when you take fare-paid leave. See *Transporting your Belongings Overseas*.

Transporting your Belongings Overseas

Overview

This section describes the transport arrangements that you need to make for your belongings when you move overseas, and the allowances to which you are entitled. It covers:

- arranging for the transport of heavy baggage (see Heavy Baggage)
- arranging for Unaccompanied Air Freight (UAF) (see Unaccompanied Air Freight)
- charging the costs of shipping (see *Charging the costs* below)
- insuring your belongings (see *Insuring your belongings* below).

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting, but note that there are differences for harmonised managers.

Responsibilities

The procedures in this section are carried out by:

- UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting or taking annual fare-paid leave
- Office Managers or equivalent overseas.

Policy

The British Council pays to transport your personal effects to your post, subject to limits on cost and the type of goods:

- for UK appointed staff, cost limitations are based on volume entitlement dependent on family size
- for harmonised managers, the entitlement is expressed as a cost ceiling rather than volume and this is dependent on whether or not the member of staff is accompanied.

Your heavy baggage entitlement is designed to enable you to take sufficient personal and household effects with you to turn officially provided furnished accommodation into a home. As a general guide, these include: clothing and footwear; linen; kitchen equipment, cutlery, crockery; glassware; household appliances; ornaments; pictures; books; sports, hobbies and recreational equipment; children's toys and nursery equipment. You should not pack any items that you will need urgently, or any valuable items or important papers, as your heavy baggage will probably take some weeks to reach you.

Note that household furniture is excluded from the definition of personal and household effects, because the British Council provides furnished accommodation for UK-appointed staff and harmonised managers overseas. However, small items, such as small coffee tables, table lamps and chests may be included, as may items of high personal value and items for pleasure and recreation, such as pianos and sporting equipment.

Note, however, that you must meet the costs of any excess over the British Council entitlement and any special packing/crating and handling charges arising from the inclusion of such items. See Heavy Baggage below for details of entitlements and procedures for shipping your heavy baggage.

You also have an Unaccompanied Air Freight (UAF) entitlement which you can use for a small quantity of items which you will need soon after you arrive at your new location. See Unaccompanied Air Freight below for details of entitlements and procedures.

Note: Certain items may not be shipped or stored. See *Prohibited Items for Heavy Baggage and UAF* below.

Guidance / Procedures

Charging the costs

The costs of shipping are charged to 1116OMOC (EDOC/EXOC 1855 for harmonised E&E managers, GREC1855 for harmonised OAS staff) or FABS equivalent. The charges are applied as follows:

- UK to post: to the receiving country's budget unless you are taking UAF via the UK on fare-paid leave between postings in which case the costs are all charged to the departing country
- Post to UK / post to post: to the departing country's budget
- Fare-paid leave: to the country of posting's budget.

Insuring your belongings

You must take out world-wide all risks insurance cover on your personal and household effects to cover your belongings when they are in transit to and from the UK, between overseas postings, and for the duration of the period you are at post overseas (see *Obtaining Insurance for Your Belongings*).

Heavy Baggage

Overview

This section describes the guidelines and procedures for arranging for the transport of heavy baggage when you move to a new overseas posting or from overseas to the UK.

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting.

Responsibilities

The procedures in this section are carried out by:

- UK-appointed staff (including harmonised managers) accepting or returning from an overseas posting
- HR International Assignments Team (HR IAT)
- Office Managers or equivalent in overseas offices

Guidance / Procedures

Heavy baggage entitlements

UK-appointed staff:	The current rates of heavy baggage allowance are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ member of staff alone or plus one other 450 cu.ft ▪ member of staff plus two others 550 cu.ft ▪ member of staff plus three or more 590 cu.ft.
Harmonised managers:	The current cost ceilings are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ single member of staff, up to: £3,000 ▪ member of staff with partner and/or child/children at post, up to: £4,000

Procedure for shipping

The British Council has a contract with Crown Relocations to move all heavy baggage consignments for UK-appointed staff from the UK to overseas.

Overseas offices are responsible for making arrangements to move heavy baggage consignments to the UK or to a new overseas location.

Note: This arrangement does not apply to harmonised managers. See below for guidance.

UK-appointed staff going overseas from UK

As soon as you know you are due to move, contact the dedicated British Council Move Manager.

Senior Move Manager
 Crown Worldwide Ltd
 19 Stonefield Way
 South Ruislip
 HA4 0BJ

1. Once you receive your personal reference number from the Move Manager, you can use the Crown website dedicated to British Council staff to estimate your baggage volume in advance and to track your consignment.
2. Crown will collect heavy baggage within a 70-mile radius of Charing Cross or a 35-mile radius of Manchester Piccadilly under the terms of the contract. If you were working in Belfast, Cardiff or Edinburgh before your posting your heavy baggage can be collected from within a 35-mile radius of the relevant city centre at British Council expense. Collection and delivery has to take place during working hours on weekdays under the contract. Any additional cost for collection or delivery outside these limits will be a charge to the member of staff.

UK-appointed staff moving from overseas to the UK or to another overseas post

1. The office manager or equivalent should make arrangements for the movement of your heavy baggage to your next posting, either through the contracted freight agent if there is one or by getting comparative quotes in accordance with the guidelines in Essential Finance chapter 3 section C4.
2. The heavy baggage should be consigned through to the address at destination. If you are moving to the UK and do not yet have a residential address, the Council will pay to store your goods for up to 60 days following their clearance through UK customs. After the 60 days the cost of storage becomes your responsibility.
3. Split consignments (sending some belongings to one destination and some to another) can only be approved in exceptional circumstances and only if the total cost does not exceed the cost of sending the total volume within entitlement to the new location of posting. All split consignments have to be authorised by HR IAT.

Harmonised managers:

1. To arrange transport of your belongings, obtain quotations from three different agents and submit them either to HR IAT (if moving from the UK to overseas) or to your local office (if moving from an overseas post).
2. You may indicate your preference for a particular agent but the final decision is made by HR IAT or the local office.
3. The invoice is normally settled directly by the British Council. Any amount over the cost ceiling has to be paid by you.

Notes: There are clear ground rules about what you can and cannot take at British Council expense, including strictly applied lists of prohibited items. See *Prohibited Items for Heavy Baggage and UAF*.

Storing your goods in the UK

- Storage charges can be paid while you are overseas for goods that you would otherwise have taken with you, provided that the total volume of effects shipped to and from post plus those in store does not exceed your entitlement. Goods are stored with Crown, under the terms of the global contract. Overseas offices who need to arrange storage of goods in the UK for UK-appointed staff should seek guidance from HR IAT.

Note: This does not apply to harmonised managers.

- There are clear ground rules about what you can and cannot store at British Council expense, including strictly applied lists of prohibited items. See *Prohibited Items for Heavy Baggage and UAF*.

Note: This does not apply to harmonised managers.

- If you have items in long term storage in the UK, and/or you wish to store your consignment from post until your house is ready, the British Council will continue to pay for this for up to a further sixty days only, after your incoming consignment has cleared customs in the UK.

Note: This does not apply to harmonised managers.

- You can of course arrange to store additional goods at your own expense.
- Goods stored in the UK are not normally covered by a worldwide all risks insurance policy, so you must remember to check this and insure them separately if necessary.

Unaccompanied Air Freight

Overview

This section describes the guidelines and procedures for arranging for Unaccompanied Air Freight for your belongings when you move overseas to a new post or on fare-paid leave.

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting.

Responsibilities

The procedures in this section are carried out by:

- UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting or taking annual fare-paid leave
- HR International Assignments Team (HR IAT)
- Office Managers or equivalent overseas.

Guidance / Procedures

Unaccompanied Air Freight entitlements

Entitlements for transfer journeys	
To/from posts within Europe*	Member of staff plus others 20kg per person
To/from posts outside Europe*	Single or unaccompanied 80kg Member of staff plus accompanying spouse/partner 60kg per person First child resident at post 60kg Subsequent children resident 40kg each
Staff on temporary duty (up to one year)	For each month of anticipated duty 10kg up to a maximum of 120kg
Entitlements for fare-paid leave journeys	
To/from posts within Europe*	Member of staff plus accompanying family members 10kg per person each way or 20kg one way
To/from posts outside Europe*	Member of staff plus accompanying family members 20kg per person each way or 40kg one way
Entitlements for combined transfer and fare-paid leave journeys via the UK (or other country)	
To and from all posts	If you are not sending any UAF direct from post to post you can take the full transfer entitlement (as shown)

	<p>above) via the UK or other country.</p> <p>If you are sending your transfer entitlement of UAF from post to post you can only take your fare-paid leave entitlement via the UK or other country.</p> <p>The entitlement for both legs of the journey is the within-Europe rate if both country of last posting and new posting are in Europe, otherwise it is the outside-Europe rate .</p>			
Entitlements for maternity journeys				
<p>A maternity journey does not attract a UAF entitlement for the mother in either direction. However, the new-born baby has its own entitlement on its first journey to post. A 20kg 'pram allowance' will be given for each child on its first journey only. In addition there is the following UAF entitlement:</p>				
Posts within Europe*	20kg for the first and all subsequent children			
Posts outside Europe*	60kg for the first child and 40kg for all subsequent children.			
*Countries designated as in Europe for UAF				
Austria Belgium Bosnia Bulgaria Croatia Czech Republic	Denmark Finland France Gibraltar Germany Greece	Hungary Ireland Italy Luxembourg Macedonia Netherlands	Norway Poland Portugal Romania Serbia and Montenegro Slovakia	Slovenia Spain Sweden Switzerland

Notes:

- Any unused UAF allowance may not be carried forward to future leave or transfer journeys.
- If you choose not to take up your UAF entitlement you may convert it to excess baggage. Note that the amount that you are able to take by this method is only about 12 per cent of the UAF entitlement. Should you wish to convert your UAF entitlement to excess baggage inform HR IAT and they will obtain an equivalence for your UAF and authorise you to purchase excess baggage up to that cash value.

Procedure for sending UAF

The despatch of UAF from the UK to post is handled for the British Council by:

Crown Worldwide Ltd
 19 Stonefield Way
 South Ruislip
 HA4 0BJ

Note: all UK-appointed staff, including harmonised managers, must use this contractor when despatching UAF on transfer to a new post from the UK or on the journey back to post from annual fare-paid leave journeys to the UK.

To send UAF from the UK to post:

1. Inform your HR IAT Desk Officer of your proposed departure date so that HR IAT can inform Crown of your entitlement and authorise the consignment.
2. Raj Gill of Crown will contact you to make arrangements for door-to-door transfer of your UAF. You will need to provide a contact name and number at the destination.

3. Crown will collect goods within a 70-mile radius of Charing Cross or a 35-mile radius of Manchester Piccadilly within the terms of the contract. If you were working in Belfast, Cardiff or Edinburgh prior to your posting your goods can be collected within a 35-mile radius of the relevant city. Any additional cost for collection of UAF outside these limits will be a charge to the member of staff. Individual packages or cases should not exceed 35kg in weight as they will be carried by one person. Goods should be packed as densely as possible to avoid volume surcharges. Any additional costs incurred will be the responsibility of the member of staff.
4. If you exceed your entitlement, it is your responsibility to pay any excess to Crown directly.
5. Under the contract Crown is responsible for transporting the UAF to your address overseas.

To send UAF from post to the UK:

1. Crown is not responsible for arranging for UAF to be despatched from post. You must make the arrangements locally. Your Office Manager must obtain three estimates for door-to-door service and select the best quote, or use the contracted agent.
2. Individual packages or cases should not exceed 35kg in weight. Goods should be packed as densely as possible to avoid volume surcharges. Any additional costs incurred will be the responsibility of the member of staff.. This includes any excess costs if you exceed your entitlement.
3. The overseas office must pay for the air freight charges and all local charges, charged to 1116 OMOC (EDOC/EXOC 1855 for harmonised E&E managers, GREC 1855 for harmonised OAS staff) or FABS equivalent.
4. Before despatching your packages, you may find it useful to consult HM Revenue and Customs Notice 3, dated September 2004, entitled Bringing your belongings and private motor vehicle to the UK from outside the EC. Copies are available at post or from HR IAT, or on the on the *HM Revenue and Customs website*.

You must complete a *C3 Declaration Form* and give it to the agent arranging despatch of the UAF. A stock of these forms should be kept at post. The form is also available on the *HM Revenue and Customs website*.

5. The agent should arrange delivery to your address in the UK. Charges for deliveries within a 70-mile radius of central London or a 35-mile radius of Manchester Piccadilly are met by the British Council. If you were working in Belfast, Cardiff or Edinburgh prior to your posting your UAF can be delivered within a 35-mile radius of the relevant city. Additional costs for deliveries outside these radii must be met by the member of staff.

To send UAF from post to post:

Arrangements for UAF should be made locally (having obtained three quotes as above) and paid for by the departing country on 1116OMOC (EDOC/EXOC 1855 for harmonised E&E managers, GREC1855 for harmonised OAS staff) or FABS equivalent.

Obtaining Insurance for Your Belongings

Overview

This section describes the guidelines and procedures for obtaining insurance for your belongings when they are in transit to and from UK, and between overseas postings, and while you are posted overseas.

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting.

Responsibilities

The procedures in this section are carried out by:

- staff accepting an overseas posting
- HR International Assignments Team (HR IAT).

Guidance / Procedures

A special arrangement exists between the British Council and the insurance brokers Marsh Private Client Services for the provision of insurance cover when your belongings are in transit to and from UK, and between overseas postings, and while you are posted overseas. Their contact details are:

Marsh Private Clients (FCO Dept.)
The Nexus Building
Broadway
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 3TT

Detailed information on the world-wide all risks insurance cover provided by Marsh including an application form is available from the dedicated Marsh British Council website www.marsh.co.uk/britishcouncil.

1. You must take out world-wide all risks insurance cover on your personal and household effects when you are posted overseas. You may use Marsh Private Client Services but you are free to insure with another company offering similar cover, if you prefer.
2. Subject to a ceiling on the insured value, the British Council pays two-thirds of the premium paid on a world wide all risks policy. The ceiling limits are £55,000 with an individual item limit of £10,000. You must insure your effects for their full value even if that is over the limit to which a contribution is made.
3. You must start any policy no later than the date of packing as the freight contractors do not arrange insurance of effects while at their warehouse or in transit and any claims would be made on your world wide all risks policy.
4. You must arrange to pay your one-third share of the premium by direct debit. Marsh recovers the balance of the premium from the British Council. If you take out cover with another company you must pay the total premium yourself and submit cover notes and receipts to HR IAT for them to reimburse you.
5. On return to the UK you must contact Marsh (or whichever other company you have used) to cancel your insurance or to make private arrangements once you have received, unpacked and checked your effects.
6. If there is any unused premium, this will be credited to your bank account by Marsh.
7. If you are returning to the UK, the British Council will continue to pay two-thirds of the premium on your personal effects insurance up to sixty days after your goods clear

customs or until they have been delivered and unpacked, whichever is sooner.

8. If you retire or resign from the British Council the two-thirds contribution will cease on your last day in pay if it is earlier than the deadlines specified above.
9. If you have not cancelled your policy by the time the British Council contribution ceases you will be solely responsible for any continued premium or renewal premium due thereafter.
10. If you leave your goods in store in the country from which you are departing, the two-thirds contribution will cease sixty days after the goods go into store.
11. You are responsible for obtaining and paying for your own insurance against personal accident for yourself and your family.

Prohibited Items for Heavy Baggage and UAF

Overview

This section lists the items that are prohibited from inclusion in heavy baggage and Unaccompanied Air Freight (UAF).

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting.

Prohibited items

The following items are prohibited from inclusion in personal effects (UAF and heavy baggage):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ammunition (all kinds) and explosives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ inflammable materials, for example, paints, dyes matches, solid fuel, fireworks, methylated spirits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ cigarettes, tobacco or tobacco products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ internal combustion engines or any part thereof, other than engines of go-karts or small outboard motors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ currency or currency instruments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ perishable foodstuffs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ dangerous drugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ pornographic material
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ firearms, including antique weapons, air rifles and air pistols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ wines and spirits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ furniture (other than small items) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ any item which, if it escapes or leaks from its container, could contaminate the baggage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ compressed gas and aerosol containers of all types, including gas table lighters, sub-aqua charged compressed air bottles, hair sprays, camping gas, and so on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ oxidising materials for example, bleaching agents, peroxide and potassium chlorate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ corrosive substances, for example, articles containing mercury such as barometers and thermometers, acids, alkalis and wet cell batteries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ poisonous substances

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ heavily magnetised articles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ portable electronic equipment, including transistor radios, TV sets, and so on, unless power packs and batteries have been removed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ offensive or irritating materials 	

You are strongly advised to check with the contractor (or their agent or sub-contractor) if you are in any doubt at all whether a particular item may be prohibited.

Schooling and Travel Allowances for Children

Overview

This section describes the schooling and travel allowances for children to which you are entitled when you accept an overseas posting. It covers:

- allowances for children's education in the UK and travel to visit parents
- allowances for children's education locally at the overseas postings
- support for children applying for home fee status at universities in the UK

Audience

This section applies to UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting but note that there are some differences for harmonised managers.

Responsibilities

The procedures in this section are carried out by:

- the staff member accepting an overseas posting (but note differences for harmonised managers)
- Office Managers overseas
- HR International Assignments Team (HR IAT).

Policy

Education

If you have children the British Council will, as far as possible, help you to maintain their standard of education either in the UK or overseas.

Note: Harmonised managers are not entitled to Boarding School Allowance (BSA). Instead, the British Council pays fees and other costs for children's education at post, at International Schools or equivalent. See Children accompanying parents to post below.

Visits

While you are working overseas, the British Council will pay for one, two or three fares (normally APEX economy) a year for each child to be reunited with you during school, college or university holidays, depending on circumstances (for details see Children's visits to post below).

Guidance / Procedures

Children at boarding school in the UK

Note: This section does not apply to harmonised managers.

If your children go to boarding school in the UK while you and your partner are overseas, the British Council will pay a Boarding School Allowance (BSA) for up to five children. The British Council itself does not provide an advisory service to staff on suitable schools, but our offices do hold relevant reference information which you can draw on. The British Council Families Association (BCFA) is also a helpful source of advice.

You can qualify for boarding school allowance while your child is between the ages of five and 19. It is paid as actuals up to one of two ceiling rates: junior and senior. The amounts are reviewed each year (see Allowances - Current Rates).

If your children continue in boarding school when you transfer to the UK, the allowance may continue, provided you are expected to go overseas for your next job within five years of your return to the UK. Where this is not the case, payment will continue until the completion of the examination course already embarked on, for example, GCSE examinations.

Note: boarding school allowance is payable only when your partner accompanies you overseas.

Procedure

1. To claim the boarding school allowance, you must fill in a BSA Initial Application Form.
2. Payments are made in three instalments in August, December and March to enable you to pay the school bills.
3. To make a claim you must submit a BSA Claim Form, which should include the previous term's permissible actuals (see Boarding school allowance: permissible extras below), and a copy of the school invoice/receipt to HR IAT. On receipt of these documents, HR IAT will authorise the following term's BSA payment.

Boarding school allowance: permissible extras

Certain extra charges on boarding school bills may be included in the total fee for calculation of BSA entitlements within the ceilings laid down. The lists below are not exhaustive. Human Resources normally allow as extras any item which is compulsory or which would normally be provided free at a state school.

Permitted extras

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commercial subjects (e.g. typing) ▪ Common Entrance Examination fees (these will be refunds without reference to the ceilings) ▪ Compulsory games fees ▪ Domestic science ▪ Drawing ▪ Field/study trips, educational expeditions and outings (for example, museum visits undertaken during term time and fulfilling requirements specified in the syllabus for prescribed public examinations or to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum) ▪ GCSE, 'A' level and other leaving certificate examinations (these will be refunds without reference to the ceilings) ▪ Handicrafts/CDT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Laundry and dry cleaning ▪ Linen charge ▪ Music lessons (in a class) ▪ Needlework ▪ Registration fee/non-refundable deposit (only for the school the child attends) ▪ Remedial/Special needs tuition ▪ School stationery ▪ Text books and library fees ▪ Trunk storage costs
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Excluded extras

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ballet lessons ▪ Breakages ▪ Calculators ▪ Church collections ▪ Club subscriptions ▪ Elocution lessons ▪ Escorts to/from airports ▪ Extra fruit or milk ▪ Extra language lessons ▪ Fares to and tickets for concerts, outings, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hair washing and cutting ▪ Individual tuition in any subject ▪ Insurance premiums ▪ Medical and drug charges ▪ Papers and comics ▪ Photographs ▪ Pocket money ▪ Postage ▪ Radio and television 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rail and coach fares to 'away' matches ▪ Sports equipment and kit ▪ Sweets ▪ Taxis and other travelling expenses ▪ Telephone calls ▪ Toilet articles ▪ Uniforms and clothing
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Children's visits to post

While you are working overseas, the British Council pays one, two or three fares (normally APEX) a year for each child to be reunited with you during school, college or university holidays, depending on circumstances:

- **If your partner accompanies you overseas**, the British Council will pay for up to three visits a year for children in full-time primary or secondary education in the UK and two visits a year when they are in full-time tertiary education at or below first degree level. If your child is in a 'gap year' British Council will pay for one visit a year.
- **If your partner does not accompany you overseas**, the British Council will pay for two visits per year for each child up to the end of secondary education, and one for a child in tertiary education (with the same level of provision for children who are resident with a previous partner).

Notes:

- One of the visits may not be needed if you are able to take your annual leave in the UK during one of the school holiday periods - which is what you should aim to do.
- The maximum number of children for whom you may claim fares is five.
- In all cases, this provision ends when the child leaves full-time education or reaches 23, whichever happens sooner.

Procedure

1. You must fill in a *Child's Holiday Visit Application Form* for each visit.
2. You should read the notes that follow on from the form as these explain the various conditions that apply.
3. Children's holiday visits to post are administered locally at post through Carlson Wagonlit. The airfare (and visa costs, if any) must be charged to 1080 OMOG (EDOC/EXOC for harmonised managers) or FABS equivalent.
4. A FABS Purchase Order must be raised for each visit. In offices which are not yet on the FABS system, staff overseas must send full details of the booking to their desk officer in HR IAT who will raise the Purchase Order for them. Without this Carlson Wagonlit will not issue the tickets.

Reverse visits

If your children are eligible for an airfare to visit you overseas, you can choose to use the fare for your partner or yourself to return to the UK instead. The entitlement is an APEX economy return. Reverse children's holiday visits are administered locally at post.

Procedure

1. The office manager must obtain a quote through Carlson Wagonlit for the fare which would have been paid for the child.

Note: Children under 12 pay only 67 per cent of the adult fare.

2. The airfare should be charged to 1080 OMOC (EDOC/EXOC for harmonised managers) or FABS equivalent.

Additional parental visits

Note: this section does not apply to harmonised managers.

The British Council can pay an additional economy airfare if it is essential for you or your partner to return to the UK to settle a child into a new boarding school and this cannot be managed within existing fare-paid leave arrangements. The British Council normally expects you to be able to time your annual fare-paid leave to coincide with children starting in school (or to make use of a reverse airfare, as explained above), but it is recognised that this may not always be operationally feasible.

Children accompanying parents to post

If you wish your children to accompany you to post, the British Council aims to enable your children to be educated at post where appropriate schooling exists.

- If your children attend schools in the city of posting, the British Council pays for whatever would normally be provided free in the UK.
- For children under five years old, the British Council does not pay for the costs of day nurseries or other childcare, but some of the costs of nursery schooling may be reimbursed. See *Eligibility for reimbursement of local nursery school fees* below for more information.
- Full actual costs of day-school fees incurred locally for five-year olds and above are reimbursable, up to the appropriate ceiling of BSA (see Allowances - Current Rates), depending on the child's age. Where local day-school fees are higher than these limits and there is no choice of appropriate schooling within the limits (for example, in Japan and Korea in the past), agreement is usually given on a case by case basis to exceed the BSA ceiling in question. Power to give approval in such cases lies with the Head of HR Pay and Employment Relations (HR PER).
- Payment of a deposit or refundable registration fee, which you can expect to receive back in full when your child leaves the school, is treated as a request for a salary advance. If HR IAT approves this, it is recovered, as for other salary advances, via the payroll over an appropriate period of up to 24 months. In the case of non-refundable registration fees, the British Council pays one for each child during any one posting.
- The cost of travel between home and school by school bus or public transport, may be reimbursed. See *Eligibility for reimbursement of daily travel costs between home and school* below for more information.
- Where the costs of textbooks, stationery and/or other materials are not already included in the school fees, these costs can also be refunded, where these items would have been provided free in the UK.

- The cost of school uniforms is not reimbursable.

Eligibility for reimbursement of local nursery school fees

Nursery schooling means the nursery class of a primary school or a private nursery school, such as a Montessori school or the Maternelle class of a French school. Sessions for this age group are typically two and a half to three hours per day, that is, mornings or afternoons. The total number of hours per week is usually about fifteen. It does not mean childcare day nurseries, which provide a completely different service, for which the hours are much longer and the costs higher.

British Council does not contribute to the costs of day nurseries or other part-time or full-time childcare, as distinct from educational establishments.

Eligibility for reimbursement of nursery school fees is as follows:

- 4-year olds: The British Council locally pays the full costs, in order to match provision in the UK, where universal nursery provision for 4-year olds has been available since September 1998. This applies from the beginning of the term following the child's fourth birthday. It is not current UK policy to cover part-funding of the term during which the child's fourth birthday falls.
- 3-year olds: You pay the first £200 per term in all cases. The British Council locally refunds the balance of costs arising in any particular case. This is not based on current UK practice; it is a British Council benefit. This arrangement applies from the child's third birthday and continues until the beginning of the term following the child's fourth birthday.
- 2-year olds and below: You pay the full cost in all cases. This arrangement continues until the child's third birthday.

Eligibility for reimbursement of daily travel costs between home and school

- Actual daily fares paid for travel by school bus or public transport between a child's home and school may be claimed from the British Council locally for children attending day schools at post. For audit purposes, you must supply documentary proof that the amounts claimed have actually been spent.
- Where neither school bus nor public transport is available, you are expected to use your own car. The British Council cannot pay mileage allowance for these journeys because the element in COLA intended to cover the expense of running a car is sufficient to absorb the cost.
- The British Council does not normally refund any charges for the use of taxis or other vehicles hired to transport children to school.
- Whenever official transport is provided, it is provided free of charge to the member of staff.
- All costs, which may be reimbursed, are handled by the local British Council office and charged to 1080 OMOG (EDOC/EXOC 1861 for harmonised managers) or FABS equivalent.

Young people going on to higher or further education in the UK

- Under British government legislation, young people proceeding to publicly funded higher or further educational institutions in the UK are only eligible to be charged the lower home student rate of fee if they meet the residence and immigration status requirements. In order to do so, they must normally have been ordinarily resident in the UK for a full three-year period immediately before the beginning of the higher or further education course in question.

Note: If the period of residence was for full-time study, then it does not count as being ordinarily resident.

This means that a young person does not qualify if they were at school in the UK while the parents were abroad. If, however, they can demonstrate that they have not been ordinarily resident in the UK only because they, their parent or partner were temporarily working abroad for all or part of the three-year period, they are considered to have been ordinarily resident.

- There is a different, but similar, set of regulations for awards, which pay part or all of the fees and may give students a maintenance grant. Again, if young people cannot fulfil the residence requirement only because they, their parent or partner have been temporarily employed outside the UK for all or part of the relevant period, they are still considered to meet the residence requirement.
- You can obtain a Standard Letter confirming young people's residential status from HR IAT.
- Comprehensive information on all this is available on the Department for Education and Skills website, in particular the forms and guides section. Other important guidance is available on the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) website.

Accommodation and Related Allowances

Overview

This section describes the accommodation and related allowances to which you are entitled when you accept an overseas posting.

This section covers:

- your entitlement to accommodation and the cost of utilities
- information about the furniture and equipment that may be provided at British Council expense
- information about items you have to provide yourself.

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting.

Responsibilities

These procedures are carried out by:

- staff accepting an overseas posting
- Country Directors in the location of the overseas posting.

Policy

British Council provides you with free, suitable accommodation in a house or flat adequately equipped with furniture and fittings. See *Furnishings and equipment* below for a list of the furniture and equipment that can be provided at British Council expense in the accommodation provided.

Guidance / Procedures

Accommodation

- You are asked to check an inventory when you first move into your accommodation. You then take on responsibility for the furniture and equipment provided.
- There is provision for periodic redecoration, at the expense of the British Council or the landlord, but you are expected to keep the property in a condition consistent with its use.
- At any time when you are without your personal household goods (for example, at the beginning and end of your posting) you can make use of an 'emergency kit' provided by the office. It is intended to provide you with what you and your family need for general day-to-day living.
- The accommodation may be occupied by someone else when you are away on annual leave.

Utilities

- The British Council meets the reasonable costs of utilities (electricity, gas, water and so on). You are not required to contribute to these unless your usage exceeds a reasonable level.
- Telephone rental is paid for by the British Council but not the cost of telephone calls.
- The British Council also pays for security measures as determined by the Director in consultation with the local Embassy/High Commission.

Temporary accommodation

If it is necessary for you to spend a few days in a hotel or other temporary accommodation on arrival at or departure from post, the room cost will be met by the British Council. As you will be receiving overseas allowances (see section on overseas allowances in Pay and Overseas Allowances), you are responsible for covering the cost of food and other expenses yourself, and will not receive meal allowances or personal incidental expenses (PIE).

Furnishings and equipment

Items provided by the British Council

The list below itemises the furniture and equipment that can be provided at British Council expense in the accommodation provided overseas for staff accepting an overseas posting. The British Council is not required to provide ALL the items listed, as what is provided will depend to some extent on circumstances (for example, if the accommodation is a flat, garden equipment would not be required). If a Director wishes to approve an item that does not appear on the list, they should consult the Head of the HR International Assignments Team (HR IAT).

Note: When accommodation is being redecorated or new furnishings purchased, standard styles and models, and neutral colour schemes, should be favoured so that they will be acceptable to subsequent occupants. British Council funds must not be used to change items or décor in good condition solely because of differences in taste. Country Directors should ensure that purchases are made in line with corporate guidelines and represent good value for money. This will be monitored during visits by Internal Audit.

Purchases for, or expenditure on refurbishment of, the Director's own accommodation should be approved by their line manager. This does not apply to routine repairs and maintenance.

<p>Sitting Room</p> <p>Comfortable seating, for example, settee, arm chairs (quantity dependant on size of room)</p> <p>Coffee table(s)</p> <p>Book shelves and/or display cabinet</p> <p>Table lamps</p> <p>Television</p> <p>TV/VCR Trolley</p> <p>Dining Room</p> <p>Dining table and chairs</p> <p>Sideboard or equivalent</p>	<p>Kitchen</p> <p>Cooker/oven</p> <p>Fridge</p> <p>Freezer</p> <p>Dish washer</p> <p>Pedal bin</p> <p>Table and chairs (where appropriate)</p> <p>Extractor fan or cooker hood (where no air conditioning)</p> <p>Step stool</p> <p>Microwave oven</p> <p>Water filter (where required)</p> <p>Storage units/cupboards</p>
<p>Study (if applicable)</p> <p>Desk</p> <p>Desk light</p> <p>Computer trolley</p> <p>Chair</p> <p>Bookshelves/cupboards</p> <p>Filing cabinet</p> <p>A computer (and associated equipment) may be provided by the office if it is essential for the member of staff to work at home, from existing office stock if practicable</p>	<p>Utility Room</p> <p>Washing machine</p> <p>Tumble drier (if appropriate, for example, in very humid climates or in flats with no drying space)</p> <p>Ironing board</p> <p>Vacuum cleaner</p> <p>Dustbin</p> <p>Clothes airer</p> <p>Additional freezer where necessary (for example, in tropical countries)</p>
<p>Bedroom</p> <p>Bed and mattress</p> <p>Pillows</p> <p>Wardrobe</p> <p>Dressing table and stool</p> <p>Chair</p> <p>Chest of drawers</p> <p>Bedside tables</p> <p>Mirror</p> <p>Shelving and work area where required for children's bedrooms</p> <p>Mosquito nets where necessary if screening is not provided</p>	<p>Garden/outside</p> <p>Garden table and chairs</p> <p>TV satellite dish (in countries where local media do not provide adequate/accurate access to news)</p> <p>Barbecue</p> <p>Power mower (where necessary)</p> <p>Power shears (where necessary)</p> <p>Garden tools</p> <p>Garden hose</p> <p>Clothes line (rotary if appropriate)</p>
<p>Bathroom</p> <p>Shower curtains or shower screen</p>	<p>Hall</p> <p>Table and chair</p>

Linen box/basket	Coat stand (where appropriate)
Stool	Telephone / Answer phone
Lockable wall cabinet for medicines	Shoe storage

In all rooms curtains or blinds are provided, and carpets where necessary.

Items to be provided by the member of staff

Items which should be provided by the member of staff transferring overseas are listed below. These items can all be carried in heavy baggage or UAF subject to the regulations set out in Transporting your Belongings Overseas.

Note: Small quantities of those items marked * must also be provided by the local office in the temporary kit or 'float' that is loaned to staff on arrival or before departure when they are awaiting or have packed up their heavy baggage. Personal items such as clothing and toiletries are not included in this list.

*Table linen/mats	Food processor
*Crockery and china	*Kettle
*Cutlery	*Iron
*Glasses	All other small items of kitchen equipment such as a coffee grinder, sandwich toaster and so on
*Serving dishes	Brushes, mops and so on
*Cooking utensils	
*Storage utensils	
*Plastic ware (bucket, washing up bowl and so on)	
Vases and ornaments	*Bed linen
Pictures/paintings	*Duvets, counterpanes, quilts and so on
Decorative cushions and cloths	*Towels, flannels, bath mats
Video, DVD player, hi-fi system	Children's high chair
Sports equipment	Carry-cot, pram, push-chair
Musical instruments	All equipment for babies/children
Waste bins	Rugs

The local office should hold an adequately-sized entertainment float comprising china, glassware and cutlery appropriate for the scale of entertaining in the country, which can be loaned out to any member of staff for official entertainment events held at their house.

Allowances - Current Rates

Overview

This section describes the allowances that currently apply.

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting.

Allowances 1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009

Expatriate allowance		30% of gross salary
Location allowance		0 - 25% of gross salary (see <i>British Council location groupings</i>)
Transfer grant rates	member of staff alone	£2,000
	member of staff plus 1 or 2 others	£2,750
	member of staff plus 3 or more	£3,500
Baggage allowance	member of staff alone or plus 1 other	450 cu. ft
	member of staff plus 2 others	550 cu. ft.
	member of staff plus 3 or more	590 cu. ft.
Baggage allowance	harmonised managers	Accountable allowance of up to £3,000 per single/unaccompanied member of staff and up to £4,000 for accompanied staff, per transfer.
Boarding school allowance ceiling	Junior	£21,558 p.a.
	Senior	£24,525 p.a.
		For details of payments for extras, see <i>Schooling and Travel Allowances for Children</i> .

Naturalisation for Foreign-Born Spouses or Civil Partners

Overview

This section gives information about naturalisation for foreign-born spouses or civil partners.

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting.

Responsibilities

These procedures are carried out by:

- staff accepting an overseas posting.

Guidance / Procedures

Foreign-born spouses or civil partners of UK-appointed staff applying for settlement as British citizens do not need to meet the standard residence requirements provided that they show they have been living abroad as the spouse or civil partner of a UK-appointed member of staff.

Under the nationality laws of some countries a person automatically loses their nationality if they become a citizen of another country. If you have any questions about this, you should ask the authorities of the country of which your spouse or civil partner is a citizen before you make an application.

1. You may apply for naturalisation as a British citizen for your spouse or civil partner if you are a British citizen and you have been married/civil partnered for more than three years.
2. You must complete an Application for Naturalisation Form (available from the British Consulate/Embassy/High Commission or from HR IAT) and submit it to the local embassy with the following enclosures:
 - copy of the data pages of your spouse or civil partner's current passport
 - copy of the data pages of your current passport
 - copy of your marriage/civil partnership certificate
 - copy of your spouse or civil partner's birth certificate
 - cheque for £575 (half of this fee is refunded by HR IAT with receipt)
 - letter of support from HR IAT.
3. You must check with the local Embassy/High Commission that the above list matches their requirements. In some cases they may require the original documents.
4. HR IAT provides you with a letter of support, for which you must provide the following information:
 - the surname used by your spouse or civil partner
 - the length of time you have worked for the British Council
 - the length of time you have been married/civil partnered and the date of the marriage/civil partnership
 - the length of time your spouse or civil partner has accompanied you on overseas postings.

Things to Do Before You Move Overseas

Overview

This section describes some of the things you need to think about when you move overseas from the UK. It covers:

- arranging for passports and visas, with assistance from the HR International Assignments Team (HR IAT) if your post is diplomatic
- ensuring you can continue to vote in UK elections
- maintaining your position on your doctor's register
- ensuring you have a will
- making arrangements for mail
- letting your UK house.

Audience

This section applies to all UK-appointed staff accepting an overseas posting.

Responsibilities

These procedures are carried out by:

- staff accepting an overseas posting.

Policy

Preparations for an overseas posting are the responsibility of the individual being posted. International Assignments Team will give advice and support in specific areas.

Guidance / Procedures

See the following checklists:

- Check List for UK-appointed staff moving from post to post
- Check List for UK-appointed staff moving overseas
- Check List for UK-appointed staff returning to the UK.

Visas, passports and diplomatic status

1. Get advice from HR IAT on visa requirements. You are responsible for obtaining ordinary visas and claiming reimbursement for the cost of the visa from HR IAT.
2. You are responsible for the cost of your ordinary passport, including replacements and second passports.
3. If the job you are going to has diplomatic status, get help from HR IAT in obtaining diplomatic passports and/or visas for you and accompanying members of your family. Diplomatic passports are for use on official journeys for the duration of the posting. You continue to use your ordinary passport for other journeys. Current Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) rules state that diplomatic passports can be provided to spouses but not partners. The relevant FCO regulation reads as follows: "Members of the family" are generally defined as spouses and dependants resident at Post or dependants whose fares to Post have been paid from public funds, excluding children who travel to Post on Child's Journeys (CJs). However, if it can be fully demonstrated that there is an essential need for a child who travels to post on CJs to have diplomatic/official status, and only in exceptional circumstances, the Head of Mission should consider the request and make a decision on a case by case basis. This does not entitle them to a diplomatic/official passport. It is important to note, however, the attitude towards unmarried/same sex /civil partners (even if officially recognised by FCO) varies from one receiving State to another and local status cannot be guaranteed. The VCDR (Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations) does not refer to partners and even if a receiving State appears to be prepared to accept the diplomatic status of a partner, a local court may decide that he or she does not enjoy diplomatic immunity.
4. Diplomatic passports will not be issued by the FCO until they have confirmed that you can have diplomatic status in the job; this must be done every time the post-holder changes and HR IAT will advise you about the process.
5. You may require security clearance for certain countries and jobs.

Ensuring you can continue to vote in UK elections

You and your family retain your rights to vote while abroad.

1. Each autumn you must complete the Electoral Registration Form for Crown Servants and British Council Employees and return it to the electoral registration officer for the district in the UK where you have your permanent home or where you were last registered before going overseas.
2. The registration form is available from the local British Embassy or High Commission or you can download it from the Electoral Register website.
3. You can find your local electoral registration officer at the Electoral Register website

Maintaining your position on your doctor's register

Most staff and their families who are happy with their UK GP and local health centre do not cancel their registration when they are posted overseas, especially if they plan to return to live in the same area on leave and for subsequent home jobs.

For more information, see *Health Benefits for Staff Working Overseas*.

Ensuring you have a will

It is sensible to make a will, if you have not already done so, and leave it with a bank or solicitor.

Arrangements for mail

1. You can usually use the diplomatic bag via the appropriate BFPO (British Forces Post Office) number for private correspondence. However, arrangements vary from place to place, and you need to set this up with FCO in London before going to your job overseas. HR IAT will help with this.
2. You will need to complete a Private Mail: Additions Form if you are going overseas from the UK or from another overseas post. When you leave post you will need to complete a Private Mail: Deletions Form.
3. You need to take a supply of British stamps overseas with you; the FCO does not pay for the UK postal costs of your personal mail.
4. The format for addressing mail through the FCO's BFPO system is as follows:

Name (staff number)
BFPO XXXX
HA4 6EP

Letting your UK house

You may have property in the UK or elsewhere which you want to let while you are overseas. We always recommend that you seek advice from a solicitor or a reputable letting agent before entering into any tenancy agreement. In any event, you need to be assured that the property can be well looked after while you are overseas as the British Council cannot handle this on your behalf.

Contacts and support information

- HR IAT provides a comprehensive service for the administration of your overseas job. Either contact your individual desk officer or email the team
- Rebus Northgate is the company which provides payroll services for the British Council. Any enquiry about what is on your payslip should be addressed to them in the first instance.
- The overseas HR team issues postings letters and Regional Directors hold funds for language training for you and your partner.
- The Regional Directorate will give you information about the job and about the directorate as a whole (such as policies, briefs, plans and reports).
- The Employee Assistance Programme provides a totally independent, professional counselling and advice service and it is available to all employees and their immediate dependants, including children at boarding school.
- The British Council Families Association (BCFA) can be contacted through the BCFA Manager, who is based with HR IAT in London. It has a small resource centre including a number of books about individual countries which can be borrowed by

staff going on a posting.

- Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA) Country Profiles can be accessed via their intranet.