

# Visa Reimbursement Scheme

## Version Control

Document Detail	
<b>Document Type:</b>	Employee Relations
<b>Document Name:</b>	Visa Reimbursement Scheme
<b>Purpose:</b>	To outline Queen Mary's position on the reimbursement of UK Visa & Immigration fees for specific visa categories.
<b>Version Number</b>	5.0
<b>Effective from:</b>	February 2025
<b>Owner:</b>	Human Resources
<b>Approved by</b>	SET
<b>Last Review</b>	1 March 2021
<b>Status:</b>	Approved by SET
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	February 2026

Change History		
Date	Change Details	Approved by
07/01/2019	Document changed to reflect the increase in the Immigration Health Surcharge from 8 January 2019	QMSE
01/10/2020	Document changed to reflect the increase in the Immigration Health Surcharge from 1 January 2020	HR
09/03/2021	Document changed to reflect the new scope of the scheme and the inclusion of the Global Talent visa.	SET
01/02/2025	Document changed to reflect new policy of reimbursement of up to 3 years' worth of IHS payments	SET

## Introduction

Queen Mary University of London has a vibrant international community. Our International staff form a key part of the University. As the cost of immigrating to the UK increases, Queen Mary wishes to provide financial assistance to our international staff coming to and working in the UK.

The Visa Reimbursement Scheme offers full reimbursement of the visa fee and immigration health surcharge costs for the Global Talent and the Skilled Worker visas.

The scheme is available to Queen Mary employees whether employed on an open-ended or fixed term contract, and applicable to new and existing staff.

## Visa Costs Covered

The following visa and associated costs are covered by the scheme:

- The Global Talent Visa (visa application fee and immigration health surcharge (**up to a maximum of 3 years' worth**)) and;
- The Skilled Worker Visa (visa application fee and immigration health surcharge (**up to a maximum of 3 years' worth**)) and;
- The biometric registration fee of £19.20, chargeable to UK based applicants.

And applies to:

- new employees with Global Talent/Skilled Worker visas ;
- current employees renewing (see Visa Renewal Request Section) Global Talent/Skilled Worker visas and;
- employees switching from another visa category into the Global Talent/Skilled Worker visa route (e.g. those on a Tier 4/Student Route visa or a dependents visa).

Only Global Talent visas issued to facilitate employment at Queen Mary will be reimbursed. Global Talent visas issued prior to or for employment not directly connected to Queen Mary are not covered by this scheme.

No visa costs, other than those described above, are covered by this scheme, including any visa costs associated to applications made in respect to dependant(s) and/or family members.

(a separate interest free loans scheme is available to assist with other related immigration cost and can be found [here](#))

For the avoidance of doubt, the scheme does not cover the cost of booking and staying in a quarantine hotel when new staff members from overseas enter the UK for work purposes.

## Visa Renewal Request

Where a visa renewal request is for less than 3 months (12 weeks), the visa cost will only be reimbursed where **PRIOR** authorisation has been given by the respective Faculty Strategic Human Resources Partner and Faculty Director of Operations. The decision will be communicated directly to the Line Manager of the employee requesting the reimbursement.

## Claim Amounts

Queen Mary will reimburse the actual cost incurred for either the Global Talent or Skilled Worker visa and the immigration health surcharge up to the maximum applicable fee, as shown in the tables below.

The maximum claimable amount will depend on the length of the visa and, for the Skilled Worker visa route, whether the application is being made within the UK or outside the UK.

If the cost incurred by the employee for their visa and immigration health surcharge is less than the figure shown in the tables below, then the University will only reimburse the cost incurred.

### Maximum costs for Global Talent Visa holders:

*Immigration Health Surcharge is capped at 3 years' worth of cost*

	Visa Fee	Health Surcharge
Applying for a 1 year visa	up to £716*	Up to £1,035
Applying for a 2 year visa	up to £716*	Up to £2,070
Applying for a 3 year visa	up to £716*	Up to £3,105
Applying for a 4 year visa	up to £716*	N/A
Applying for a 5 year visa	up to £716*	N/A

\*UK based applicants will also be able to claim an additional £19.20 for the cost of the biometric registration fee.

### Maximum costs for Skilled Worker Visa holders:

*Immigration Health Surcharge is capped at 3 years' worth of cost*

Application made:	Visa Fee	Health Surcharge
outside the UK for a visa up to 3 years	up to £610	Up to £3,105
outside the UK for a visa of 3 or more years	up to £1220	Up to £3,105
inside the UK for a visa up to 3 years	up to £723.20	Up to £3,105
inside the UK for a visa of 3 or more years	up to £1427.20	Up to £3,105

**The above visa fees are correct as of February 2025.**

## Making a Claim

Where an employee is sponsored via the Skilled Worker Route (new, renewal or switching), Human Resources will provide the employee with a Visa Reimbursement Scheme claim form (via email) as part of the University's sponsorship recruitment process.

Where an employee applies for the Global Talent visa route, Human Resources will provide the employee with a Visa Reimbursement Scheme claim form (via email) on receipt of notification of the intent to apply for this route.

The employee will be required to pay for visa expenses incurred at the time of making a visa application. On commencement of employment at Queen Mary and after completion of the required right to work checks, the employee may submit a claim for reimbursement.

Claim forms must be submitted directly to Human Resources (details are included on the form), attaching the relevant receipts. Payment will be made by BACS directly into the employee's bank account at the earliest opportunity, on receipt of the completed claim form and associated receipts.

## Personal Tax and National Insurance Implications

As the reimbursement of visa fees is classed as earnings by the UK tax authority, the University must deduct tax and national insurance contributions (NICs), where appropriate.

For those new to the UK you may qualify for tax exemption. This will be confirmed to you following completion of the claim form. The tax treatment of visa reimbursement may change to take account of revised tax guidance.

## Leaving Queen Mary

If you resign voluntarily from your employment with Queen Mary within **2** years of the reimbursement, you will be required to repay the University according to the following scale:

- Resignation during first year: 100%
- Resignation within second year: 50%

If your contract is fixed-term and the University does not renew the contract, you will not be required to repay any visa costs to the University.

## Other Conditions

The University's visa reimbursement scheme is not contractual and the University reserves the right to amend or withdraw the scheme at any time.

Where Institute/Schools wish to (locally) reimburse other visa related costs outside of those detailed in this scheme, an email request must be submitted to the Director of Human Resources providing detail and a rationale for the exceptional request. Any relevant Faculty, Institute, School or Department level management endorsement(s) should also be included with the request. Requests must be made in **advance** of a visa application; retrospective claims will not be considered.

Where new or existing employees have significant hardship issues related to the up-front payment of a visa cost ahead of joining Queen Mary or a reimbursement, the Line Manager can contact their respective Faculty Strategic Human Resources Partner to discuss what options may be available. Discussions will be treated in confidence, dealt with by exception and reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## **Further Support**

If you require any additional support or have any further questions about the scheme, please contact your HR Partner/Adviser. HR contact details can be found on the [HR Department](#) webpages.

A web version on the Visa Reimbursement Scheme form can be found on the [HR Webpages](#).

## REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Employee:

#### On commencement of employment

- Provide satisfactory evidence of costs (receipts) from a successful visa application and complete the claim form with accurate information.
- Send completed claim form and supplementary evidence to the named contact in Human Resources as detailed in the claim form. Claims must be submitted within six months of the commencement of employment.

### Finance (Accounts Payable) and Payroll:

#### During employment

- Ensure that all claims have the appropriate supporting evidence and that tax and National Insurance is levied if required.
- Process and reimbursement costs via monthly employee salary cycle.

#### At the end of employment

- Arrange for repayment of visa costs through salary, when appropriate.

### Human Resources:

#### Prior to employment

- Highlight the Visa Reimbursement Scheme to new Skilled Worker staff members and include guideline documents and claim form when sending out new starter paperwork.

#### During employment

- Ensure that all claims have the appropriate supporting evidence before claim is signed off

#### At the end of employment

- Check leaver form to see if it has been highlighted that repayment of the visa costs are required and highlight this to finance and payroll if needed.