

Global mobility policy: Education support elements

The provision of financial and/or practical educational support for families who relocate abroad is typically articulated within global mobility policy. Available allowances and benefits may be listed within the policy or cash sums may be provided to support education choices.

SCHOOL SEARCH

Assistance with finding schools is typically included within global mobility policy, with the fees of specialist consultants met. It can be difficult for parents to find and enrol children in schools abroad particularly if they are moving mid-term/school year. School search services aim to identify suitable schools and secure places linking these with appropriate housing locations.

SCHOOL FEES

Organisations may meet the full costs of school fees but usually there are some restrictions placed around this. Employers may: meet the costs up to a specified maximum based upon the average of those charged by a range of comparable institutions (typically excluding elite establishments); pay a percentage of the fees; pay a flat rate sum towards the cost; and/or place a cap on the number of years that support will be offered.

Organisations may apply a “home education deduction”. This means that the employer only pays the additional costs over and above those that were paid

for private education by the employee in the home country. In this way the employee does not profit through saving costs that they would have met at home.

School fees in the host country may be paid for all ages and stages of education but given the cost, support may be restricted to secondary school education.

Parents usually take children with them on their assignments, so it is less common today for employers to pay for boarding schools and travel costs between the home and host locations in school holidays.

Employers may meet the costs of local language training for assignees’ accompanying family members.

REMOTE LEARNING

Costs associated with remote education – such as lessons provided online by experienced tutors – might be funded as an alternative to traditional classroom-based education. The costs of “bridging” gaps via home tutoring while waiting for school places to become available may be met by employers.

REPATRIATION

Children’s education abroad may be disrupted by repatriation. Global mobility policy may make provision for the continuation of school fees until the child reaches the next critical education stage. It is likely that should this be offered, some form of clawback provision will apply if the employee leaves within a specified period after repatriation.

POLICY FLEXIBILITY

The need for flexibility in education support is usually recognised and addressed through policy. To give the business greater flexibility, education support may not be listed as a core element. Instead it may be presented as

an option that is offered to those on more senior grades and specialist assignments or to attract particular talent.

Rather than itemise education elements within policy, organisations may offer lump sums so that assignees can choose how to spend funds available as needed. Care must be taken if using this approach as parents will need advice on appropriate schools and to ensure special educational needs are met.



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