

## Information about Reimbursing Moving Expenses Last updated: 6 February 2024

The information below provides an overview of the procedure, requirements, and what you need to do if seeking the reimbursement of moving expenses.

### 1. Moving expenses—general information

Eligibility for and scope of reimbursement for moving expenses are based primarily on the German federal moving expenses reimbursement act (Gesetz über die Umzugskostenvergütung für die Bundesbeamten, Richter im Bundesdienst und Soldaten, BUKG). In addition, travel expense regulations (Hamburg travel expenses act (Hamburgisches Reisekostengesetz, HmbRKG) apply.

### 2. What are moving expenses and who is eligible for reimbursement thereof?

#### 2.1. What are moving expenses?

The term “moving allowances” covers various types of reimbursement for expenses incurred by a work-related measure—especially appointment—to a location other than your previous place of work.

Approval for reimbursement of moving costs requires housing **within the catchment** of your new work location (Universität Hamburg, specific building) -> at least 30 km between your residence and your new place of work (shortest, most commonly traveled route regardless of actual route).

#### 2.2. Who is entitled to reimbursement of moving expenses?

Anyone promised reimbursement for moving expenses when offered an appointment.

You must present at least 2 cost estimates from moving companies to HR (Team 631) to have these costs reimbursed later. Following a review, **HR** will send **approval** for reimbursement of moving expenses stating the amount that will be reimbursed (“moving expenses reimbursement approval”). Without this approval, you are not entitled to reimbursement for the costs of a moving company. For more information, see 3.1.1.

### 3. Types of reimbursement for moving expenses

Reimbursable expenses include moving company expenses, travel costs, rental costs, and special expenses.

#### 3.1. Moving company expenses

You can organize the move yourself or contract a moving company.

### 3.1.1. Hiring a moving company:

You may select any moving company. The moving company must provide an itemized, complete, and comprehensive list of items to be moved alongside their **binding cost estimate**.

You must obtain and send cost estimates from 2 legally and economically independent moving companies in a timely fashion. Legally independent companies are those enterprises that do not belong to the same group of companies. The moving company must fill out the form entitled *Erklärung des Speditionsunternehmens hinsichtlich einer Kartellzugehörigkeit* (moving company's statement with respect to group affiliation) for this review.

Check the cost estimates for completeness and submit them alongside the list of goods to be moved and explanations about corporate affiliation of the company to HR for review before you contract any moving company.

As circumstances require, the University may insist on obtaining a third offer.

The binding maximum price of the most cost-effective offer is also the highest possible reimbursement sum. The University does not reimburse any expenses charged for subsequent services.

After HR has confirmed that costs will be reimbursed, you may contract the moving company. Note that you are initially responsible for paying the invoice. Upon informal request, up to 90 percent of the moving company costs can be provided in advance.

#### **Important:**

- Moving boxes and crates: The University will only reimburse the costs for renting removal boxes and crates that are rented ("rental boxes"). We do not reimburse any moving boxes or crates that you have bought; if necessary, inform the moving company accordingly and request a new cost estimate.
- Other loading locations: Additional expenses that accrue because property is located at a location other than at the prior residence (e.g., office, second residence, vacation home, home of relatives) are only reimbursable under certain conditions. Only the moving goods (additional cubic meters) are reimbursable; any further moving expenses (work hours, km, etc.) are not. In case of doubt, you must submit cost estimates to prove which additional expenses would be incurred.

### 3.1.2. Handling your own move:

Moving expenses incurred without using a moving company are reimbursed only if demonstrated to be necessary. This does not apply to any expenses for labor conducted by yourself or any members of your household.

### 3.2. Travel expenses

Travel expenses within the scope of relocating are those expenses associated with searching and viewing apartments or houses, travel to the prior residence to make preparations for the move to a new residence, and travel expenses associated with the actual move.

Travel expenses associated with viewing potential new residences: Travel expenses for a maximum of 2 trips for one person or one trip for 2 persons will be reimbursed. A daily subsistence allowance and overnight accommodations (up to 2 travel days and 2 overnight stays) may be paid in addition to transportation expenses (only the reimbursement of the most cost-effective mode of travel).

Travel to prepare the move: Only transportation expenses (the lowest priced mode of transportation) for travel from the place of employment to the prior residence will be reimbursed for a journey to make preparations for the move.

Travel associated with the move: Transportation expenses (including by car) for all eligible family members from the prior residence to the new residence together with a daily subsistence allowance and overnight accommodation costs will be reimbursed.

### 3.3. Rent reimbursement

You may request a reimbursement of rent, provided that you had to pay rent simultaneously for 2 residences. The expenses for the residence not being used will be reimbursed.

Rent reimbursement for the prior residence is contingent, *inter alia*, on you moving into the new residence soon after the lease begins. Rent will not be reimbursed if you continue to maintain a residence in the prior residence.

Reimbursement is limited to a maximum of 6 months for the prior residence and 3 months for the new residence.

If you own the first residence (house or apartment), this is considered the same as a rental apartment (meaning you can receive the rent reimbursement). Reimbursement for the new residence, however, can be made only if that residence is a rental. If you have purchased a house or apartment in the new location, this is not comparable and rent cannot be reimbursed.

### 3.4. Other expenses

#### 3.4.1. Estate agency fees:

Real estate agent fees can be recognized and accepted only if they are necessary, e.g., because the apartment or house could not otherwise be rented. Only necessary real estate agent fees typical for the region can be reimbursed up to an amount of no more than 2 months' net rent, which does not include costs calculated for services charges and utilities. Real estate agent fees typical for the region are those fees pursuant to strict legal provisions that are charged by and paid directly to a real estate agent for services rendered. If you own the property, a fictional rent based on the local rent rates is established.

#### 3.4.2. Additional schooling for school-aged children

If the move means your children need additional tuition, you may also apply for an allowance towards these costs. Need must be ascertained by the new school. Documentation to this effect from the school is essential.

#### 3.4.3. Lump-sum payments for additional moving expenses

Lump-sum compensation effectively covers the reimbursement of all other moving expenses. The lump sum is based on the final base salary (salary group A 13) on the day prior to the loading of the

moving goods, with 15 percent thereof granted to the person directly entitled and 10 percent thereof to further entitled persons (spouse, partner, children, stepchildren, foster children) who will live with the entitled person following the move.

### 3.5. Non-reimbursable expenses

We do not reimburse several partial moves or storage expenses. Further non-reimbursable expenses are covered by the lump sum compensation (see 3.4.3).

## **4. Relocating from abroad**

If you move from abroad to work in Germany, you are entitled to the same treatment as if you were moving within Germany. Cost estimates (ground, sea, or air freight) must contain a firm and binding total price (maximum price) and list the following detailed information:

- estimated amount of belongings to be transported in m<sup>3</sup>
- margin of error in the estimation of amounts transported
- type and quantity of transport containers
- costs of packing, loading, and transport to airport or port
- freight charges
- charges for port and customs clearance
- charges for transport from the airport or port to the new residence, unloading, etc.
- other charges.

Three offers must be obtained for moves that are particularly extensive.

## **5. Repayment of moving expenses**

If you leave the service of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg for personal reasons within 2 years of completing your move, you are legally bound to repay the moving costs reimbursed to you. This also includes appointment to another university.

## **6. Reimbursement of moving expenses for nonprofessorial staff:**

Generally, the Executive University Board is responsible for affirming and approving the reimbursement of moving expenses for appointments (see 2.2). In certain justified cases the person in charge of the respective cost center (managing director or department head) may submit an application to the head of administration for a reimbursement of moving expenses for circumstances other than professorial appointments. Approvals are made on a case-by-case basis.

The following applies to financing from externally funded projects:

With funding from externally funded projects, the respective project head decides whether moving expenses will be reimbursed pursuant to the German federal moving expenses reimbursement act (Gesetz über die Umzugskostenvergütung für die Bundesbeamten, Richter im Bundesdienst und Soldaten, BUKG). The project head is also responsible for the budget within the scope of legal provisions and/or the funding provider's regulations. The head of the externally funded project must approve the reimbursement of moving expenses in written or electronic form. Approval may be granted only to employees who are financed through the externally funded project. Reimbursement of moving expenses may be approved when permitted by the external-funding sponsor's rules and regulations and these expenses can be entirely covered by the externally funded project.

## **7. Claim for and payment of moving expenses reimbursement**

You must submit the claim for approved reimbursement of the moving expenses in writing. The claim should be submitted as soon as possible after moving. The **cutoff deadline for submitting a claim expires one year after the move has been completed.**

Complete the correct form legibly and attach supporting documents and proof; this is the only way to be reimbursed as soon as possible.

It is therefore crucial that you carefully fill out and submit all forms, supporting documents, and proof.

You can find the request forms here:

[Staff Service Portal: Moving expenses](#)

## **8. Responsibilities**

Send the completed request, including all supporting documents/proof, to HR (Team 631):

[personalservice-631@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:personalservice-631@uni-hamburg.de)

After you accept your appointment, the staff of Team 631 (at the mail address above) will be happy to help you further.