

# REMOTE CONNECTIVITY POLICY

[GEN006] INTERIM



Policy owner: Executive Director: Finance  
Responsible for update: Director: Finance Systems and Policies  
Prior update:  
Update:  
Approved by: UCT Executive, April 2020

<http://www.staff.uct.ac.za/staff/finance/operations>



# REMOTE CONNECTIVITY POLICY [GEN006] INTERIM

## CONTENTS

1. Objective.....	3
2. Scope.....	3
3. Policy Context.....	3
4. Applicable to.....	4
5. Policy.....	4
5.1 Cell Phone Policy.....	4
5.2 Data Policy.....	5
6. Procedure.....	7
7. Related Policies & Guidelines.....	7
8. Additional Information.....	7
9. Implementation Responsibility.....	7
10. Contact.....	7

## ACRONYMS

<b>HOD</b>	Head of Department
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources
<b>PCard</b>	Purchasing Card
<b>PPS</b>	Procurement and Payments Services, a division of the Finance Department
<b>ISP</b>	Internet Service Provider





**Effective date:** During SA lockdown, and UCT remote working period.

Current unknown	Length of current SA lockdown period.
	Implications for UCT remote working period.
	TENET and USAf negotiations with Telco's regarding zero-rating URLs.
	Hope of a general reduction of data costs by Telco's in South Africa.

## 1. OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this **interim** policy is to:

- Enable staff who are required to work remotely to ensure business continuity, while at the same time limiting additional operating costs;
- Ensure that, where appropriate, staff are reimbursed for the data used in conducting UCT business remotely;
- Provide a clear framework to assist managers and supervisors to permit staff members who are required to work remotely to be reimbursed for the data used in the course of their work;
- Ensure that this University policy complies with the requirements of tax legislation and practice; and
- Streamline administrative processes for staff to be timeously reimbursed for the data costs incurred.

## 2. SCOPE

This interim policy covers the:

- Usage of a cell phone, where the regular use of a cell phone is necessary to meet the requirements of the job; and
- Reimbursement of data costs, where this is requirement of the job.

## 3. POLICY CONTEXT

Over time, the various technologies and data devices are such that applications and functions are no longer device specific, for example, calls are made from laptops, and emails are received on cell phones.

Prior to 27 March 2020, when the remote working period commenced, the current cell phone and ADSL reimbursement policies were under review, due to the changed technology landscape and associated tax risk.

When the cell phone policy and ADSL reimbursement policies were introduced 15 years ago, these were introduced to allow staff members to be reimbursed for the additional costs they personally incurred to perform their functions remotely.

Some staff may have been unaware of the above-mentioned policy. The UCT remote working period has highlighted inequities in the ability of UCT staff to work remotely, both in terms of the availability of devices as well as the affordability of the data costs incurred by staff when working remotely.

In addition, UCT's current policy approach that determines how staff are reimbursed for data costs is fragmented. Currently, eligible staff members receive a UCT cell phone allowance paid via the HR payroll system; and through Finance, the handling of UCT cellular and data contracts; reimbursements via Purchase Orders; and data purchases via the UCT PCard. The inequities in data costs based on devices and length of data contracts, is further impacting the cost of connectivity during this time, as well as the constant technology changes and offerings by the ISPs.

This interim policy ensures that UCT reimburses all eligible staff for their connectivity costs where staff members are required to keep UCT operations functioning.





## 4. APPLICABLE TO

All UCT staff.

## 5. POLICY

### 5.1 CELL PHONE POLICY (CURRENT POLICY IN PLACE)

- Cell phone users can be categorised, by job function, into staff who:
  - Use their own device where their UCT job functions require the use of a cell phone on campus (Cell Category 1);
  - Have a position where 24/7 connectivity is essential in meeting the requirements of the job both on and off campus (Cell Category 2); and
  - Have a UCT device as their position and UCT job function requires a permanent phone to be allocated (Cell Category 3).

#### Cell Category 1 (< R500 per month)

- A taxable allowance, administered via HR, is agreed by the Line manager bearing in mind that WIFI connectivity on UCT campus is provided by UCT.
- The cell phone contract will be in the name of the staff member who will be solely responsible for all payments to the service provider;
- Recipients of a cell phone allowance must notify their line manager of the cell phone number and must continue to maintain the cell phone rental or airtime/pay-as-you-go contract while in receipt of the allowance.

#### Cell Category 2 (>= R500 per month)

- These would generally be for senior positions in the university, where the requirement to be contactable is essential to their role.
- A taxable allowance, administered via HR, is agreed by the Line manager bearing in mind that WIFI connectivity on UCT campus is provided by UCT.
- The cell phone contract will be in the name of the staff member who will be solely responsible for all payments to the service provider.

#### Cell Category 3

- It is recognised that, in certain instances, staff require a cell phone in order to perform their functions effectively, and for various reasons, it is best that these phones be contract phones in the name of the University.
- These should be the exception and require motivation from the Line manager, and final sign off by the Executive Director: Finance.
- This is accommodated through cell phones that are allocated to the individual on an ad hoc or a permanent basis. For cell phones allocated on an ad hoc basis, these must be managed by the department.
- In these cases, line management must, on a regular basis, review the monthly statement amount, and assess whether this is in line with the functional requirements.
- Once approved, PPS will enter into agreements with cell phone providers and ancillary equipment on favourable terms. If possible, the agreement should include an insurance contract.





- Students requiring airtime to perform UCT roles or functions can either be reimbursed for airtime, or this can be purchased by a UCT staff member on their behalf via a PCard or staff reimbursement [FM045].

- Should there be additional data costs for any staff member, these would be covered by the Data categories below.
- As the cell phone policy was established in 2004, and before the invention of WIFI and smartphones, it is proposed that the HR data allowance are re-assessed post the UCT remote working period, based on job functions.
- UCT cell phone and data contracts are reviewed and assessed in terms of current need.

## 5.2 DATA POLICY

- Staff requiring data in order to perform their UCT job functions remotely can be categorised into those who:
  - Have their own connectivity devices available, and either have their own personal unlimited or adequate data packages (Data Category 1);
  - Have their own connectivity devices available (including smartphones), but do not have adequate personal data to cover their UCT job functions remotely (Data Category 2);
  - Do not have their own devices or data and are required to perform their UCT job functions remotely (Data Category 3).
- The above applies to the staff member's principal dwelling only.

### Data Category 1

- Staff who personally have their own devices and adequate remote connectivity available, will not currently be incurring any additional costs during this remote working period.
- Senior PASS and academic staff members, where connectivity is essential, would generally fall in this category.
- These staff members are thanked for their contribution to UCT financial sustainability.

### Data Category 2

- While these staff members have their own devices, their data packages are inadequate to meet the needs while performing their UCT job functions remotely.
- Currently the 'top up' amounts are either reimbursed or 'topped-up' using the PCard, and this can either be for a staff member, or on behalf of staff members in the department.
- In order to simplify and standardise the administration of these payments and ensure due tax compliance, an HR data allowance is recommended as the preferred method of reimbursement.
- The proposal for the reimbursement is via an HR data allowance (up to a maximum of R600 per month). The proposal will be such that it will allow for reimbursements according to predetermined bands based on the projected data required to perform the job function remotely. The table containing the rand value bands will be advised once there is more certainty around the data costs to be negotiated with the ISPs.

### Data Category 3

- UCT provides devices and a designated staff member is responsible for ensuring RICA compliance, topping these up, and to assess and manage the data requirement. The Faculty/PASS Finance manager is responsible for communicating the agreed process.
- These devices remain the property of UCT and must be managed and returned when no longer required.





- Currently the 'top up' amounts are either reimbursed or 'topped up' using the PCard on behalf of staff members in the department.
  - In order to simplify and standardise the administration of these payments and duly ensure tax compliance, an HR data allowance is recommended as the preferred method of reimbursement.
  - The proposal for the reimbursement is via a HR data allowance (up to a maximum of R600 per month). The proposal will be such that it will allow for reimbursements according to predetermined bands based on the projected data required to perform the job function remotely. The table containing the rand value bands will be advised once there is more certainty around the data costs to be negotiated with the ISPs.
- With the sudden implementation of remote working, it is acknowledged that the cost of data can be excessive as :
    - Short term data purchases are often more expensive than longer term (e.g. three month) deals;
    - Demand for dongles was under pressure, and were required in a short space of time;
    - Certain IT functions use more data than staff members are aware of; and
    - Remote workstations were set up, which required IT configuration and downloads.
  - While acknowledging the above, the focus of this policy is to ensure the optimum balance between ensuring business continuity through remote working and limiting the cost of the data costs during this period of uncertainty.
  - Where possible, staff are encouraged to purchase their own connectivity devices and manage the data costs via an HR data allowance. Access to a personal connectivity device and an appropriate package will reduce the requirement for cell phone data.
  - **ICTS** will advise on more cost-effective devices and data deals available to staff.
  - All HR data allowances will be reviewed after the UCT period of remote working is lifted.

- Where possible, staff are encouraged to purchase their own connectivity devices and manage their data requirements via longer terms contracts, while receiving an HR data allowance.
- The direct reimbursement of the R400 per month remote connectivity charge is discontinued and replaced with a monthly HR data allowance (if required) providing for the additional costs, nett of tax.

## 6. PROCEDURE

### HR Allowances – Data and Cell Phone

- Send duly authorised [\[HR109\]](#) (Cell Phone Allowance) to the HR Department for payment of the monthly (taxed) allowance via the payroll - to be included in the extract below.
- Send duly authorised [\[HR109a\]](#) (Data Allowance) to the HR department for payment of the monthly (taxed) allowance via the payroll – include name of form
- The monthly allowance will be reflected on the annual IRP5 for tax purposes.

### Staff Reimbursement

- Send duly authorised [\[FM045\]](#), with supporting documentation, clearly marking for whom data is purchased for, to your Purchaser, for processing via Creditors, Finance Department.

### PCard Spend

- Ensure the narration of the PCard spend includes the name of the individual(s) for whom data is purchased.





### UCT Contract

- Requires motivation by the Line manager, and final approval by the Executive Director: Finance. All UCT contracts must be negotiated via PPS, with clear roles and responsibilities regarding the review and approval of such invoices.

### Exceptions to Policy

- Send duly authorised [\[FM041\]](#), with a motivation request, to the Executive Director: Finance.

## 7. RELATED POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

- Funds deposited at or held by UCT [\[GEN001\]](#)
- PCard [\[PUR002\]](#)
- Reimbursements [\[PAY005\]](#)
- [Data connectivity staff guideline](#)

## 8. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This interim policy replaces the following:

- Reimbursements [\[PAY005\]](#) - Section relating to ADSL reimbursements of up to R400 per month
- Cell phone [\[GEN004\]](#) - replaced by this **interim** policy

## 9. IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY

The Line manager/HOD must ensure all policies and procedures are communicated to and implemented by the responsible individual(s), including research staff. The Faculty/PASS Finance manager must ensure reasonable controls exist to support the implementation of policies.

## 10. CONTACT

Finance helpdesk

[fnd-finance@uct.ac.za](mailto:fnd-finance@uct.ac.za)

021 650 2111

