



Finance

REMOTE CONNECTIVITY POLICY [GEN006] INTERIM



Policy owner:	Executive Director: Finance
Responsible for update:	Director: Finance Systems and Policies
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REMOTE CONNECTIVITY POLICY [GEN006] INTERIM

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ACRONYMS

ED	Executive Director
HOD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
PCARD	Purchasing Card
PPS	Procurement and Payments Services, a division of the Finance Department
RWA	Remote Work Allowance

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

This 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.

In April 2020, an interim remote connectivity policy was introduced to ensure staff were operationally productive for the duration of remote working, and that additional connectivity costs were reimbursed. Given the extended period of this remote working arrangement, the focus is now on ensuring that all staff whose job functions require remote connectivity, are reimbursed.

This updated interim policy ensures that UCT reimburses all eligible staff for their connectivity costs, based on job function, where staff members are required to keep UCT operations functioning remotely. As technologies merge, this new Remote Work Allowance (RWA) will also include a review of current cell phone allowances.

4. APPLICABLE TO

All UCT staff.





5. POLICY

5.1 CELL PHONE

- 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 Remote Working Allowance.
- 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 with the introduction of the Remote Working Allowance, based on job function.
- UCT cell phone and data contracts are reviewed and assessed in terms of current need.

5.2 REMOTE WORK ALLOWANCE

- Staff requiring data in order to perform their UCT job functions remotely will receive a R700 per month Remote Work Allowance (RWA), on the following conditions.
 - Staff will be responsible for obtaining the most cost-effective connectivity device and data package available in their personal capacities.
 - The package selected must provide adequate data and speed (recommended uncapped and 20/20 MBPS) for the job function, including meeting attendance.
 - Staff will be required to have a backup plan in the event of load shedding (e.g., mobile dongle, inverter, battery pack, UPS or relocating temporarily to another area).
 - Staff are responsible for managing their data usage e.g., ensuring high data usage for updates run at cheaper times.
- The RWA will be for the current unknown period of remote working and will be reviewed when the longer-term hybrid working principles are agreed.
- The RWA will be effective from 1 August 2021.
- In the move from data allowances to the RWA based on job function, there may be a period of transition as personal packages are installed.
- [ICTS](#) have advised on more cost-effective devices and data deals available to staff.





6. PROCEDURE

HR Allowances – Cell Phone and Remote Work

- Send duly authorised [HR109] *Cell Phone Allowance* to the HR Department for payment of the monthly (taxed) allowance via the payroll.
- Send duly authorised [HR109a] *Remote Work Allowance Multiple Payments* to the HR department for payment of the monthly (taxed) allowance via the payroll.
- The monthly allowance will be reflected on the annual IRP5 for tax purposes.

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 ED: 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 ED: Finance.

7. RELATED POLICIES & 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

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