

Education Grant and Related Benefits during COVID-19

All the below provisions will apply to Education Grant and Special Education Grant claims.

Attendance and determination of School Year

On-line attendance to classes or distance learning will be treated as full-time attendance for education grant purposes when schools made these arrangements as a substitute or an alternative to attendance on campus due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Example: Original school year 9 September 2019-19 June 2020
School started on-line classes on 16 March through 19 June 2020
School year remains 9 September 2019-19 June 2020
HR partners will consider this complete period (9 September 2019-19 June 2020) for determination of full-time attendance regardless of the method of instruction.

If schools decide to end the academic year earlier than scheduled or extend beyond the normal cycle due to the COVID-19 pandemic instead of offering on-line classes or distance learning arrangements, the HR partner will shorten or lengthen the original length of the school year accordingly when processing an EG claim.

Example: Original school year 9 September 2019-19 June 2020
School stopped classes on 16 March 2020
School year becomes 9 September 2019-15 March 2020 (approx. 6 months)
HR partners will consider this period (9 September 2019-15 March 2020) for determination of full-time attendance.

The period of the school year as determined by the schools in the paragraphs above will be used to calculate any necessary prorations as per the existing policy provisions.

Boarding Assistance/Capital Assessment

The flat sum of boarding assistance or capital assessment fee will not be prorated, if the child left the boarding and/or school earlier due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supporting Documentation

In the event that staff members cannot obtain original forms (P.45 or P.41) with school's seal or other supporting documents on school's official stationery, HR partners may accept the scanned copies of such documentation to process education grant claims or request for advance. However, staff members shall be required to retain scanned copies of all relevant documentation as well as e-mail communications received from schools sending the



scanned copies of those documents for a period of five years from the date of submission of the claim for payment.

Timeline for submission of claims

Under staff rule 3.17, staff members may claim an allowance, grant or payment within a year of the date on which the staff member would have been entitled to such payment. As staff members who did not receive an advance for the 2018-2019 school year may be approaching the one-year limit for submission of retroactive claims, HR partners may accept education grant claims within one year and a half following the end of the 2018-2019 school year by exercising an exceptional six-month extension of the one-year retroactivity rule if the delay in submission is due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Example: If staff member did not receive an education grant advance and has not submitted an education grant claim for the school year of 9 September 2018 to 19 June 2019, staff member can submit such claim within one year and a half following the end of school year, i.e. until 18 December 2020 (instead of until 18 June 2020).

Staff members who received education grant advance for the current 2019-2020 school year and experience difficulties obtaining supporting documentation from the school due to school closure, the recovery of the education grant advance (which normally takes place three months after the end of the academic year) would be postponed for a period not exceeding three months.

Example: If staff member received an education grant advance for the school year of 9 September 2019 to 19 June 2020, a staff member may settle the claim without recovery by submitting the documents mentioned above through 18 December 2020 (instead of by 18 September 2020).

Education Grant Travel

Education grant travel is normally undertaken during the academic year or within three months of the beginning or the end of the academic year. When the travel was disrupted as a result of COVID-19 pandemic, HR partners may extend the time limitations for a period not exceeding three months or until the travel restrictions are lifted in the affected locations, whichever is longer.

Refunds

When schools refund part of the tuition fees or other admissible expenses (including itemized boarding expenses in the case of special education grant claims) as a result of school closure or other circumstances, these amounts should be duly reflected on the documentation certified by the school. HR partners will consider this information when processing the education grant claim.