

Moving to Ascension Island

Congratulations on your offer of employment!

This document is intended to help you with your preparations in moving to Ascension Island. If at any time during your preparations you have any questions please feel free to contact Recruitment@Ascension.gov.ac.

You should already have had a Skype call with a member of the Human Resources Team. We will try to arrange calls with you throughout the transition process to answer any of your questions and talk you through the next steps.

Referencing

All offers for employment are subject to satisfactory references. You will not receive an unconditional offer of employment until all aspects of the references have been completed and confirmed satisfactory.

Without exception all appointments are subject to satisfactory employment references and medical clearance from the Ascension Island Government Senior Medical Officer. Some post also require a satisfactory Criminal Record Check. If your role requires a Criminal Record Check the Human Resource Department will send you the necessary information to obtain the relevant check.

Perhaps the biggest hurdle in the referencing is the Medical Clearance. Medical resources are limited on the island. All potential employees (and dependants travelling to Ascension Island) must undergo and pass a full and thorough medical examination before any offer of employment will be confirmed.

If you have a medical condition, please contact the Senior Medical Officer to discuss the impact of moving to the island and whether we will be able to support you living on island: SMO.hospital@ascension.gov.ac.

We will send you a medical questionnaire that you will need a qualified doctor to complete. This may be your GP. Alternatively, you may want to use a private GP (these tend to be quicker). We will reimburse you the cost of any medical examination up to £300 each for you and your dependants.

It is recommended to get the medical assessment undertaken as early as possible as this is the factor most likely to affect a job offer.

Life on Ascension

Moving to Ascension can be a significant step. As such, it is important to set the right expectation.

You should already have seen some pictures of the island through our recruitment site: www.ascensionisland.recruitee.com.

Ascension Island is predominately a working island. As such, things on island can sometimes appear basic. The infrastructure and housing is dated, with limited resources to renew. However, there is generally enough to live in relative comfort.

Two aspects of island life are more challenging than you might otherwise expect:

i) Broadband

Use of broadband is expensive. There are two residential broadband packages, both are expensive (approximately £60 or £130) and come with a maximum allowance. <http://www.sure.co.ac/pdf/Bbleaflet.pdf>

ii) Food

Food supply is basic. We have a hydroponics site that supplies the island with salad items and some herbs. There are three shops on island that sell a basic range of food. Fruit and vegetables are imported and can be of variable quality. Milk on the island is long life milk. It is possible to get eggs, butter, cheese, margarine and some cold meats. The cost of food varies across the shops - items can cost from a 25% mark up on UK prices up to two or three times the UK price (depending on the items). It may be necessary to shop at all three locations to get everything that you want.

Many individuals shop in the UK for non-perishable items, toiletries, household products and have them delivered to the island via a supply ship. Many internet shops can deliver in this manner.

It is also possible to have some fresh foods delivered from St Helena (bacon, cheese, ham etc), although these tend to be delivered frozen. A shop on St Helena (Thorpes) will provide this service: <http://www.thorpes.sh/ascension/>.

It is possible to catch fish to supplement your diet, while many also people grow fruit and vegetables. There are some wild bananas and raspberries on the island that can be harvested with permission.

If you are vegetarian it would be a good idea to bring some beans and other dried goods, although you can buy tinned and frozen. There is some Quorn available most of the time, although soya, herbs, spices and things that are hard to get hold of.

There is a limited supply of baby food, baby formula and nappies within the food shops.

Dog and cat food is available in some of the food shops.

Water – Tap water is safe to drink although some people prefer bottled water.

Status

Every contract has a status attached to it:

- Accompanied
- Single
- Household

Ascension Island Government is the only employer to offer 'Accompanied' status contracts. These allow you to bring your immediate family out with you. It will affect the all of the benefits you receive:

- Baggage allowance
- Freight allowance
- Flights
- Accommodation (including Water and Electricity allowances)
- Food allowance
- Medical provisions

These benefits are increased according to the number of people within your immediate family. Individuals with 'single' status receive correspondingly less allowances and tend to be accommodated in smaller accommodation, suitable for one person.

Individuals who are the spouse or partner of an individual working on the island will be given 'household' status if they work on the island. While they will have their own employment contract, the benefits associated by being on the island will be paid for by their partner/ spouse's employer. This means that Ascension Island Government will not be liable for these benefits (unless their spouse/ partner is also employed by the Government).

Baggage Allowances

You can bring up to 54 KG per person on the flight. There are no limits to the number of bags, although you may want to keep it to a minimum in order to manage the journey to Brize Norton.

Depending on how much you intend to bring on the flight, you may want to bring a large cool box (40-70 ltrs) with some of those 'must have' items that you can't get on island (such as cold meats, butter, fruits etc) as part of your baggage.

Shipping Goods to the Island

It is possible to have goods shipped to Ascension Island from the UK, St Helena and South Africa.

There are two shipping routes:

Falklands Islands Resupply Ship (FIRS) – From the UK
Royal Mail Ship (From South Africa and St Helena)

Freight and moving your personal effects

You are able to bring up to 3 cubic metres (3 x 1 cubic metre) of personal effects with additional allowances for partners and children. We will provide you with your allowance as part of your offer.

Your goods will be brought on the Falklands Island Resupply Ship (from the UK) or the Royal Mail Ship (from St Helena).

We have a contract with two removal companies in the UK: Richard James International (based in Bristol) and BMW Shipping Agents (based in Southampton). See www.richardjamesinternational.co.uk and www.bmw-shipping.co.uk

We will pay for your freight allowance to be packed, and moved to Marchwood in Southampton.

You should get two quotes for your shipping (either Richard James and BMW Shipping or two other companies if you live beyond 100 miles of Bristol or Southampton). We can arrange payment directly with local firms. If you plan on using an alternative removal company they will need to liaise with DLH based in Marchwood directly:

Jeffrey Tregarthen
FIRS Coordinator
DSCOM Contract
DHL Global Forwarding
Building 36
Sea Mounting Centre
Marchwood, Hampshire
SO40 4ZG

Jeffrey Tregarthen (DHL UK) <jeffrey.tregarthen@dhl.com>
Phone: +44 (0)2380 663711

If you are using an alternative company, they will need to give the FIRS Coordinator the names of everyone entering the site.

FIRS shipping dates can change a short notice. Check here for the most up to date position on the supply ship:

www.richardjamesinternational.co.uk/shipping-dates.aspx

The RMS shipping dates can be found here:

www.rms-st-helena.com/schedules-fares/latest-fares

Shipping a Personal Vehicle

Although Ascension Island is a relatively small place when compared with the UK, you might like to consider bringing a vehicle to the island, especially for leisure purposes. Please note that any vehicle brought to the island **must be a diesel powered vehicle** as there is a general prohibition on the import of petrol driven vehicles.

Where an individual is given a 2 year contract, and their post doesn't attract the private use of an AIG vehicle, they are entitled to bring a personal vehicle. AIG will pay for the freight of a vehicle *up to 14 cubic metres in size*. If your vehicle is larger than this, then you will be responsible for paying the excess freight. AIG will only pay for the shipment of a vehicle from Marchwood in Southampton but not for delivery or collection from your home, it will be your responsibility for costs involved in getting the vehicle to Marchwood.

If you would like information on how to arrange the shipment of a personal vehicle, please contact a member of the HR team: Recruitment@Ascension.gov.ac.

Accommodation

Accommodation is limited on the island. There are no privately owned houses. As such, accommodation is only provided by employers.

Accommodation is provided according to your status: Single or Accompanied.

There are different standards of house which will depend on the status of your role. You can request photos of your property from Recruitment@Ascension.gov.ac. Single employees will normally be housed in a studio type apartment, or accommodation with shared cooking and bathroom facilities.

The accommodation for those with 'accompanied' status is provided according to seniority: Senior posts will attract a better quality of accommodation. The size of the accommodation is allocated according to the number of accompanying family members, based on need at the time of approval. Accommodation is provided in one, two and three bedroomed properties.

While it is possible to request to move accommodation, limitations on housing stock mean that house transfers occur rarely if at all. If family circumstances change, you may request a change, but this may not be automatic, and will depend on your seniority.

All accommodation is furnished. Furniture is renewed based on the condition of the furniture. This can mean that furniture can be dated.

All houses vary but in the main living room there is generally a 3 piece suite, lounge unit, usually a nest of tables, and a dining table and chairs (*see Appendix I for more details*).

There is basic equipment in the kitchen including kettle, fridge/freezer, hoover, washing machine and cooker so you don't need to worry about those items. There

are also plates, bowls, glasses, mugs and cutlery usually for 4 or 6 people. There are some saucepans and a frying pan.

Items you may wish to bring with you:

- Television must be Full HD Freeview HD OR use a HD-T2 Freeview HD Box
- DVD Player
- Bookcases (if you have many books)
- Desk light
- A freezer (you will be provided with a fridge/freezer) – you might like to have extra capacity for such things as frozen vegetables, meat, etc. as fresh produce is generally in short supply and is usually snapped up as soon as a ship arrives
- Stereo system
- Microwave
- Toaster
- Baking Trays
- Plastic Storage Boxes
- Dinner set (only basic provided)
- Cutlery (only a basic set provided – nothing posh)
- Medium – large pots and pans
- Serving dishes
- Various utensils
- Bed linen
- Towels
- Tea towels
- Clothes hangers
- Pegs

There are usually lamps in the living room and bedrooms. The shades are basic and may not be to your own taste. The bedrooms have basic furniture of a bed, bedside cabinets, wardrobe and chest of drawers. Storage space is otherwise limited.

Most houses have a patio area. There is usually a plastic table and 4 chairs. You may like to bring a hammock with you if you have one.

Bedding

Pillows can be provided for you. You will need to provide your own sheets, bedding and towels. A bedspread or duvet cover is usually sufficient most of the year but you may wish to include a duvet as it can get relatively cold at night in the winter (around 22 C). A mattress protector is provided.

TV and Radio

You will need to bring a TV/ DVD player with you as they are not provided in the accommodation. TV is currently limited to:

- BBC1
- BBC2 / CBeebies (shared channel)
- ITV1
- BFBS Extra (a mixture of programmes from the UK and US)
- SKY News

There are most of the UK soaps and various sports but the range is nowhere near as extensive as in the UK or other places.

Clothing

The weather stays at about 25°C to 32°C most of the year so the warmest thing you'd need is a cardigan and a fleece perhaps. It is worth bringing an umbrella or a light jacket for the rainy season (June – Sept). We do have torrential rain at times but it quickly dries up afterwards and is still usually warm. If you might end up travelling to the UK in UK winter time or to the Falklands during holiday time then bring warm clothes to travel in.

Due to the sunlight and salt water swimwear does not last too long so it is best to bring a few costumes for the beach and more serious swimming.

It is best to pack some clothes hangers too as there may not be enough in the house when you move in.

Clinker on the island can make footwear wear quickly, so you may want to bring a few pairs of trainers/ shoes etc.

If you are into walking then walking shoes/boots and associated clothes are a must. With lots of clinker (volcanic rock) around the boots/shoes do wear out quickly.

You can buy some clothes and shoes on the island but there is not a wide range of shops and the range is very limited in terms of fashion and sizes. You can however buy online and have goods delivered to Richard James International in Bristol.

Clothes for work

Because of the weather we tend to dress smart casual for work. No-one wears suits. Women will tend to wear a dress, shorts, skirts or trousers and light blouse. Men tend to wear light trousers with short sleeve open neck shirts. Strappy sun dresses or tops for women are not recommended for work. There are some formal events from time to time so some posh-ish dresses and light suits are handy. People do tend to make an effort at special occasions especially Christmas.

Medical Care

You do not require any special injections to come here.

Although the medical resources on Ascension are somewhat limited, you will receive full medical care whilst you are here. There are 2 doctors, a midwife and several nurses.



There are facilities locally to carry out basic blood tests and for more complex ones blood is sent to the US. There is an x-ray machine and full operating room. For more complex medical conditions there are medical referrals to the UK. These are usually carried out in Oxford.

Dental care – there are 6 monthly check ups for all employees and their dependents. Free full dental care is provided here. Cosmetic dentistry is not carried out here.

Mosquitoes

There are mosquitoes on island but they are not the malarial variety. Some people are more susceptible to the bites than others. It is recommended that you bring adequate supplies to deal with mosquitos in your freight allowance. Things you may want to consider bringing:

Insect repellent

Mosquito plug-ins

Mosquito repellent bracelets

Mosquito net

Magnetic Flying Insect Door Window Curtain Magic Bug Mesh Fly Screen (search on Amazon)

Incense sticks / a mosquito coil or blue lamp may also be advisable.

Suncare

It is sunny on island almost every day. As such, you should ensure you bring adequate sun protection/after sun. You may also want to bring a hat. Some sunscreen is available on island, although the range is limited.

Taxation

General Income Tax is payable by everyone who works on or benefits from being on Ascension Island; these include:

- Any office or employment
- Any pension
- Monetary allowances.

Partners can transfer their allowance as long as they are part of the same household.

Benefits in kind, such as rent free accommodation, are also taxable (ranging from £1,200 to £3,000 per year).

Banking and Money Matters

The local currency is the St Helena pound which has the same value as the UK pound. On the US Base you can also use American dollars.

There is a bank on island. (<http://www.sainthelenabank.com>). There are currently no cashpoints on island.

Cashback is available from one of the stores.

It is possible to split your salary between a bank account on St Helena and an account overseas. You can define what proportion is sent to what account.

It can take up to 4 weeks to open a bank account with the Bank of St Helena. As such it is advisable to bring sufficient money for your first month.

Personal Allowance

Each adult gets an allowance of £3500. This is increased with each child:

1 st Child	£300
2 nd Child	£200
3 rd Child +	£75

Tax Bands

There are two income tax bands: 15% and 27%.

£0 - £4000 is taxed at 15%

£4001 is taxed at 27%

Personal Tax Calculation:

Salary	£10,000
Subsistence allowance	£ 2,853 (single)
Less personal allowance	£ (3,500)
Plus Benefit	<u>£ 1,200</u>
Taxable Income	£10,533

Tax Payable:

(£) 0-4000 @15%	£ 600
£4001 – £10533 @27%	<u>£ 1,764</u>
	£ 2,364 per annum

Normalised through PAYE scheme as £197.00 per month

Please note that the information contained in this fact sheet is for illustrative use only and may be subject to periodic changes. Individual circumstances would need to be assessed by an Income Tax Officer.

School

At Two Boats School, provision is made for the educational needs of all children aged 3-16 on Ascension Island. The school is housed in a purpose-built building, situated in Two Boats village. The majority of pupils live in Two Boats village or Georgetown, 6km away, and the pupils from Georgetown are transported to and from school by school buses.

The Report of an inspection carried out in November 2014 by School Inspection Service, one of the contractors licensed to conduct inspections under the Ofsted-

accredited regime for British Schools Overseas found the school's provision to be good with many excellent features. Specifically:

- Two Boats School is highly successful in meeting its aims
- It provides a good education for its pupils, making use of its stimulating location
- Commitment by staff to the interests and education of the pupils is paramount
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent
- No teaching is less than good and a third of that observed was outstanding
- The curriculum is good, and is broad and balanced
- Pupils make good progress
- Social and moral development of the pupils is excellent and their cultural and spiritual development is good
- The school puts great emphasis on communication with parents
- The school is very well led and managed
- The school is well resourced
- The school is successful in achieving high standards of performance
- Strong emphasis is placed on safeguarding
- Attention to the welfare, health and safety of pupils is excellent.

Pupils follow a curriculum modeled on the National Curriculum for England and take English National Curriculum tests at age seven and eleven followed by IGCSEs at age sixteen. 71% of pupils leaving in 2014 achieved 5 or more A*-C grades including English and Maths, up from 56% in 2013 and 60% in 2012. The other two pupils in the 2014 cohort achieved a range of A-G passes despite their profound special educational needs. These were Two Boats School's best results ever, and the best results in the South Atlantic by some distance, with very pleasing results at other key stages.

Although this is a state school maintained by the Ascension Island Government, it has many features of a British International School. The school enjoys strong support from the island community. Ascension has no permanent population so the majority of our pupils are St. Helenian British with significant minorities from mixed and UK backgrounds.

Resourcing at the school is generous and this is particularly true of staffing resources – there are 18 teaching and support staff (from the UK and St. Helena) for the 100 plus pupils. There are specialist rooms in school for Science, Home Economics and Design Technology as well as two fully equipped ICT suites. There is a Library on site that serves both the school and the local community.

Shops on the Island

Solomon's	Food and general provisions and prepacked meat
NAAFI	Food and general provisions, magazines, some electrical goods
Post office	Stamps, Greeting Cards, etc.
Solomon's Petrol Station	Petrol, car things and snacks
Obsidian Hotel	Tourist books, local gifts, tee shirts, souvenirs
Sue Ryder shop	Second hand clothes, books and bits and pieces

A & P's	Good range of souvenirs, greeting cards, limited amount
of	crockery, cutlery, tinned foodstuffs, spices etc.
The Movie Shack	DVDs for hire
Glamour	Shoes, toiletries, etc.
JAMS	Food and general provisions

Post to and from Ascension



You can have post sent here directly and the island post code is ASCN 1ZZ. This is not always recognised by all online providers. International recorded mail arrives more reliably from the UK but is more expensive.

Transport

There is limited public transport on the island, i.e. only available during the evening at weekends. There is a possibility that the supply of petrol to the Island might cease in the near future, hence a prohibition on the import of petrol driven vehicles to the Island. If you intend bringing a vehicle to the Island, you must bring a diesel vehicle instead of a petrol one.

It is possible to cycle most places as long as you don't mind some very steep hills. You can also hitchhike and this is perfectly safe. Those driving company vehicles are not allowed to give you a lift but those in private vehicles will usually pick you up.

You can hire cars from Solomon's or the Obsidian for approximately £15-£25 a day.

Electricity supply

The electricity supply is 240v standard UK 3 pin plugs.

Eating out

There are a few places to eat out but none are as fancy as you may be used to.

Obsidian Hotel	Has an evening menu
Volcano Club Snack Bar (US base)	Open Tuesday – Saturday - American diner
Chicken Inn (NAAFI)	Open daily – take out or eat in
Two Boats Club	Lunchtime menu
Saints Club	Limited lunchtime menu
Officer's Mess	RAF members social club

Clubs and Bars



Two Boats Club



Saints Club

There are several clubs on the island:

Saints Club – Georgetown

Two Boats Club – Two Boats

Volcano Club

Mountain View Club (NAAFI)

One Boat Golf Club

There is also a bar at the Obsidian Hotel called the Anchor Inn.

There is usually some event happening on a Friday or Saturday night and the clubs tend to get together to share events out.

There are several local bands that play live and there are usually discos every weekend. Along the coast lines there are several beach huts where there are often private parties and you can become members of some of these and hire them for yourself too.

Library

There is a library and resource centre at the school which is open to members of the public. This houses a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books and DVDs. It is free to borrow books and there is no charge for overdue items. If you wish to donate books, videos or DVDs once you no longer need them the library gladly accepts donations.

Sports and Keep Fit

There is a broad range of sporting activities available.

There are three swimming pools – one in Two Boats (open all the time, no lifeguard), one in Georgetown with sea water (open all the time except when water is being changed usually Thursday, no lifeguard) and one at Travellers which has sun beds around it and has a life guard. Opening times vary and so it is worth checking.

Travellers Hill has a gym, for which there is a monthly membership fee.

The MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) at Two Boats can be used for football, tennis or cricket. It is free to use and does not need to be booked. There is an additional, larger football pitch next to Long Beach. There are usually football and cricket tournaments going on at various times of the year. Sea and rock fishing are also popular sports.

There are BSAC and PADI dive clubs on the island. Snorkelling is also very popular. Walking alone or in groups is a favourite activity for many. There is a hash every

Saturday afternoon whereby you can either walk or run and follow a trail of paper. This is usually followed by something to eat and drink.

Lots of people like to keep fit and either run, jog, walk or cycle along the roads.

Zumba and aerobics classes take place throughout the week in Two Boats.

Hairdressers

There is currently no formal hairdresser on the island.

Getting away from it all

This can be hard as the island is so small but it is possible.

You can rent out Garden Cottage for the weekend from the Obsidian Hotel. This costs about £25 a night and has three bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen. It is out of the way up the mountain and has fantastic views. There are plenty of walks to do around here too.

Many people do go camping for the weekend and it is worth bringing your sleeping bags and tent if this is something you enjoy.

It is also possible to fly south to visit the Falkland Islands which is well worth the trip.



Garden Cottage –Green Mountain



Ascension Lily

Churches



St. Mary's Church



The Grotto

There are two churches on the island. St Mary's caters for Anglicans and holds Mass on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings. The Grotto does not currently hold services but is open to all.

Visits by family members

It is possible for other members of your family to visit but they must obtain an entry permit prior to travelling to Ascension. Travel insurance (which includes medical evacuation) is **absolutely essential** for any family member wishing to visit Ascension.

APPENDIX I

MARRIED/ACCOMPANIED STATUS ACCOMMODATION INVENTORY (Typical Bungalow – Inventory will vary according to bungalow size)

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION
LOUNGE	
1 set	Curtains
1	Occasional table
2	Coffee tables
1	Lounge unit
2	Ceiling shades
1	3 piece Suite
KITCHEN	
1	Kitchen Table
6	Chairs
1	Electric Cooker
1	Fridge/Freezer
1	Vacuum Cleaner
1	Kettle
1	Washing Machine
1	Ironing Board
1	Iron
BEDROOM NO. 1 (MASTER)	
1set	Curtains
1	Double Bed c/w headboard
1	Double Mattress
1	Mattress Cover - Double
4	Pillows
1	Wardrobe
1	Dressing table
2	Bedside lamps
1	Fan
1	Ceiling shade
2	Bedside cabinets
BEDROOM NO. 2	
1set	Curtains
2	Single Beds c/w headboards
2	Single Mattresses
2	Mattress Covers - single
4	Pillows
1	Wardrobe
1	Dressing table
1	Bedside cabinet
1	Fan
1	Ceiling shade
BEDROOM NO. 3	
1set	Curtains
1	Single Bed c/w headboard
1	Single Mattress
1	Mattress Cover - single
2	Pillows
1	Wardrobe
1	Bedside cabinet
1	Ceiling shade
1	Dressing table

	BATHROOM/TOILET
1pr	Curtains
1	Bathroom cabinet with mirror
1	Linen basket
1	Laundry basket
	PATIO/EXTERIOR
4	Patio chairs
1	Patio table
1	Dustbin

APPENDIX II
SINGLE STATUS ACCOMMODATION INVENTORY
(Basic Single *Ensuite* Bedroom)

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION
BEDROOM	
1	Bed
1	Mattress
1	Headboard
1	Mattress cover
2	Pillows
1	Chest of drawers
1	Bedside cabinet
1	Bedside lamp
1 set	Curtains
1	Fan
BATHROOM	
1	Bathroom cabinet
1	Shower curtain

SINGLE STATUS ACCOMMODATION INVENTORY
(Communal Catering)

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION
BEDROOM	
1	Single divan with side drawers
1	Single headboard
1	Mattress cover
2	Pillows
1	Three door wardrobe
1	Chest of drawers
1	Bedside cabinet
1	Bedside lamp
1	Two seater faux leather
1	Coffee table with shelf
1	Dining set with two chairs
1	Waste paper bin
2 prs	Curtains
1	Curtain
1	Roller blind
1	Bedspread
2	Sheets
2	Pillowcases
1	Fan
1	Carpet tiled throughout
BATHROOM	
1	Bathroom cabinet
1	Toilet brush & holder
1	Laundry basket
1	Bath mat set

SINGLE STATUS ACCOMMODATION INVENTORY
(Self Catering)

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION
	BEDROOM
1	Bed
1	Mattress
1	Headboard
1	Mattress cover
2	Pillows
1	Chest of drawers
1	Bedside cabinet
1	Chair
1	Bedside lamp
1	Waste paper bin
1 pair	Curtain
2	Bedsread
5	Sheets
4	Pillowcases
1	Ceiling fan
	BATHROOM
1	Bathroom cabinet
1	Shower curtain
1	Toilet brush & holder
1	Bath mat Set
1	Linen basket
	KITCHEN
1	Cooker
1	Fridge freezer
2	Dinner plates
1	Soup bowl
1	Cereal bowl
1	Side plate
1	Mug
1	Saucer
2	Frying pans
2	Pots
1	Kitchen utensils set
8	Cutlery set
1	Kitchen bin
	LOUNGE
1	2 Seater leather settee
1	Dining room table
2	Dining room chairs
1	Coffee table
1 pair	Curtains
1	Fan