

Language Assistants

Long / Short Posts Explained

Long/Short Posts Explained

In order to minimise costs as far as possible for UK institutions hoping to host a language assistant, we have made some changes to the Modern Language Assistants (MLA).

The overall expenses incurred by host institutions will depend on the length of time that an assistant spends in the UK, and we therefore provide options for the period of appointment which an assistant can be employed for.

Institutions applying for German, French, Italian, or Spanish speaking MLAs have the option of hosting an assistant for a **long post** or a **short post**. Read on to find out more about these different options and the costs entailed.

Every attempt has been made to make these notes as clear as possible, and all information is correct at time of writing (January 2025), however, please note costs detailed below are subject to change.

Hosting an MLA: Costs Involved

Visa costs and Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS)

All non-UK/non-Irish nationals coming to the UK require a visa for their time as a Modern Language Assistant. MLAs need to apply for a Temporary Worker - Government Authorised Exchange visa. The British Council sponsors the visa, meaning institutions are not required to become a UK Visas and Immigration licence holder.

The overall visa costs depend on how long the language assistant comes to the UK for. MLAs are subject to a **general visa application fee** (currently £298). In addition, those coming to the UK for more than six months are subject to an **Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS)** (currently £1035).

Whose responsibility is it to pay the IHS and visa application fee?

Language assistants are responsible for paying their own visa application fees.

If the host institution requests a French, German, Italian or Spanish-speaking MLA for a long post, or a Mandarin Chinese language assistant, the host institution agrees to reimburse the IHS in full to the language assistant.

What if our institution cannot afford to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge?

If you are still seeking to employ a language assistant but are unable to pay the IHS, please consider hosting a language assistant for a **short post of up to six months**.

We also recommend you look into the option of sharing a language assistant with other institutions, which can reduce costs. **Find out more** about sharing a language assistant.

Long/Short Posts: Periods of Appointment

Language	Period of appointment	Costs involved
French German	Option 1: Short post (November – April)	Salary
Italian Spanish	Option 2: Long post (1 September / October – 31 May)	Salary + Immigration Health Surcharge (£1035)
Irish	1 October – 31 May	Salary
Mandarin Chinese	Mid-September – 30 June or 1 October – 31 May	National Living Wage + Immigration Health Surcharge (£1035)

Periods of Appointment Explained

Long Posts

Costs

If an institution chooses to host a French, German, Spanish or Italian- speaking language assistant for the **long period of appointment**, the host institutions must reimburse their assistant the cost of the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) as well as paying their monthly salary. Full information on the IHS and further costs can be found [on our website](#).

Duration

MLAs on long posts will work from the start of September or October to the end of May. For long posts only, it is possible to extend the assistant's period of appointment, upon mutual agreement between the assistant and their host institution.

Short Posts

Costs

If an institution chooses to host a language assistant for the **short period of appointment**, costs are significantly reduced as the institution does not have to reimburse the cost of the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) to their assistant and is only required to pay the assistant's monthly salary.

Duration

The maximum time working in the UK for language assistants taking up the short posts is limited to 6 months due to visa regulations. It is the responsibility of the host institution or local authority to ensure that the assistant's period of appointment is exactly 6 months or less. Assistants may then apply to enter the UK up to 14 days prior to their work start date and leave the UK up to 14 days after their work end date.

Mandarin Chinese Language Assistants

The official period of appointment for Mandarin Chinese language assistants in the UK is from mid-September to 30 June (41 weeks).

A shorter period of appointment from 01 October 2025 – 31 May 2026 is also available for Mandarin Chinese language assistants.

Funding for the programme means that UK host institutions only pay Mandarin Chinese language assistants the **National Living Wage** (£12.21 from April 2025) for a minimum of 12 hours a week worked, reducing costs dramatically. This wage remains the same regardless of UK region.

The minimum annual cost for hosting a Mandarin Chinese language assistant October - May is £6100.41.

This cost includes the one-off £1035 Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) which should be reimbursed directly to the assistant by the UK host institution(s) involved in the sharing arrangements.

Salary Rates

England (excluding London areas)	Gross monthly salary - £1,013.05 for a standard 12 hours per week
Northern Ireland	Standard fixed hourly rate - £15.26 for additional hours beyond the standard 12-hour period.
Scotland	
Wales	
Inner London	Gross monthly salary - £1,270.45 for a standard 12 hours per week
	Standard fixed hourly rate - £19.21 for additional hours beyond the standard 12-hour period.
Outer London	Gross monthly salary - £1,200.76 for a standard 12 hours per week
	Standard fixed hourly rate - £18.15 for additional hours beyond the standard 12-hour period.
London Fringe	Gross monthly salary - £1,078.72 for a standard 12 hours per week
	Standard fixed hourly rate - £16.31 for additional hours beyond the standard 12-hour period.

You can also read the terms and conditions for participating in the Modern Language Assistants programme [here](#).

For any further queries, do not hesitate to contact our team on LanguageAssistants.UK@britishcouncil.org.