RELOCATE2UAE · HR & MOBILITY GUIDE

Relocating Employees to Dubai

2026/27

The HR guide to moving staff and supporting them through their first 12 months, 2026/27

Work permits and visas · Health insurance and ILOE · Emiratisation
Contracts, leave and gratuity · Housing and schools · A 12-month plan

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This guide is written for HR, people and mobility teams moving an employee to Dubai, or supporting a new hire through their first year on the ground. It covers what the employer must do and when: work permits and residence visas, mainland versus free zone rules including DIFC, health insurance, unemployment insurance, Emiratisation, payroll, leave, housing, schools, family sponsorship and a month-by-month plan for the first 12 months. It covers the emirate of Dubai only. For Abu Dhabi, see our separate HR guide to relocating employees to Abu Dhabi. If you would like introductions to UAE providers for a specific move, go to Section 18.

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Most relocation content is written either for the employee ("what to pack") or by a provider selling one part of the move. HR teams sit in between. They carry the legal obligations, own the timeline and take the call when something stalls. This guide is built around that job, checked against UAE federal and Dubai government sources, and written so a busy HR manager can find the answer to a specific question in under a minute.

The short answer

- **Anyone working in Dubai needs a UAE work permit and a residence visa**, sponsored by a UAE entity: a Dubai mainland company or a free zone company. A visit visa is not a work visa. OFFICIAL
- **Mainland or free zone decides the rulebook.** Mainland employers use MOHRE and the federal Labour Law. DIFC has its own Employment Law and courts. Other Dubai free zones, such as DMCC, JAFZA or Dubai Internet City, issue their own permits but broadly follow the federal Labour Law. LAW OFFICIAL
- **Visas are faster than they used to be.** The Work Bundle combines work permit, residence, medical and Emirates ID steps and was launched to cut processing from about 30 working days to 5, with fewer documents and visits. OFFICIAL REPORTED
- **Dubai health insurance: the employer pays for the employee, the sponsor insures the family.** Unlike Abu Dhabi, Dubai law does not require employers to insure dependants, though most relocation packages do. LAW REPORTED
- **Unemployment insurance (ILOE) is compulsory for most private sector staff**, at AED 5 or AED 10 a month depending on basic salary. Register within four months of the work permit or face an AED 400 fine. OFFICIAL REPORTED
- **Mainland firms with 50 or more staff must grow Emirati headcount by 2% a year**, with a 31 December 2026 deadline for this year's target and a contribution of AED 120,000 a year for each Emirati role not filled. OFFICIAL REPORTED
- **Housing costs more than the rent.** Tenants pay a 5% housing fee through DEWA, register the tenancy on Ejari, and face rent changes at renewal set by the Smart Rental Index with 90 days' notice. OFFICIAL
- **School fees are frozen for 2026-27.** KHDA held approved tuition at current levels for the year that began on 31 August 2026. OFFICIAL REPORTED
- **Plan the first year in seven stages:** documents before arrival, visa and Emirates ID in month one, housing and family in month two, settling in during months three and four, probation by month six, the year-two decision by month nine, and the first full leave entitlement and gratuity eligibility at month twelve. Our 12-month planner builds the dated version for you.

Key figures for 2026, with sources

All figures were checked on 10 November 2026. Each source links to the authority that publishes the figure, and the sections below explain how each one applies.

Figure	Value	Source
Visa processing through the Work Bundle	Around 5 working days for a complete file, down from about 30	MOHRE Work Bundle OFFICIAL
Visa and permit fees per mainland employee	Around AED 4,000 to 7,000 before insurance and service charges	Market range across providers MARKET
Health insurance	Employer pays for the employee; sponsor insures dependants	Dubai Law No. 11 of 2013, Dubai Health Authority LAW
Unemployment insurance (ILOE) premium	AED 5 a month (basic up to AED 16,000) or AED 10 (above)	ILOE scheme OFFICIAL
ILOE late registration fine	AED 400 after four months	ILOE scheme OFFICIAL
Emiratisation contribution, mainland firms with 50+ staff	AED 120,000 a year per unfilled Emirati role; 2026 deadline 31 December	MOHRE, as reported REPORTED
DIFC end-of-service (DEWS) contribution	5.83% of basic salary a month for the first five years, 8.33% after	DIFC Employment Law LAW
Minimum salary to sponsor family	AED 4,000 a month, or AED 3,000 plus accommodation	u.ae OFFICIAL
Housing fee on rent	5% of annual rent, billed through DEWA	DEWA OFFICIAL
Rent increase on renewal	0% to 20%, set by the Smart Rental Index; 90 days' notice	Dubai Land Department LAW
School tuition 2026-27	Frozen at current approved levels	KHDA OFFICIAL
Maximum probation	Six months	Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021 LAW
Annual leave (mainland and most free zones)	30 calendar days after one year	u.ae LAW
Salik road toll	AED 6.30 peak, AED 4.20 off-peak per gate, including VAT	RTA, as reported REPORTED

How to read this guide

Every factual claim carries a source tag so you can see how much weight it will bear.

Tag	What it means
LAW	Set by UAE federal law, Dubai law or free zone regulations. Stable until the law changes.
OFFICIAL	Published by a government body or regulator, such as u.ae, MOHRE, GDRFA Dubai, ICP, the Dubai Health Authority, Dubai Health, KHDA, the Dubai Land Department, DEWA or the RTA.
MARKET	Current market practice or pricing, checked across several providers or listings. Moves with the market.
REPORTED	Reported consistently by reputable news or professional sources but not yet confirmed on a primary government page.
VERIFY	Rules differ between sources or change often. Confirm with the named authority before you act.
ESTIMATE	Our own worked estimate. Useful for planning and budgeting, not a quote.

Important information

This guide is general information for HR and people teams. It is not legal, immigration, employment, tax, insurance or medical advice, and it does not take your organisation's or any employee's circumstances into account. Rules, fees and processing times change often and authorities can apply them differently in practice. Before acting, check the current position with the relevant authority and, where the point matters, take advice from a UAE-licensed lawyer or adviser. Davidson & Co. (a Relocate2UAE partner) advises on UAE immigration and employment law and is one option where this guide flags a point as worth checking. Relocate2UAE accepts no responsibility for any loss arising from reliance on this guide. Please read the full Legal notice at the end.

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At a glance: Dubai employment essentials for HR

Topic	The position in Dubai in 2026	Tag
Who issues work permits	MOHRE for mainland employers; the free zone authority for free zone employers	OFFICIAL
Who issues residence visas	GDRFA Dubai. ICP issues the Emirates ID	OFFICIAL
Main platforms	Work in UAE (Work Bundle), MOHRE, GDRFA and DubaiNow apps; Amer and Tasheel service centres	OFFICIAL
Employment law	Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021 for mainland and most free zones; DIFC Law No. 2 of 2019 in DIFC	LAW
Personal income tax	None. No payroll tax for expatriate employees	OFFICIAL
Social security	Pension contributions apply to UAE and GCC nationals only. Expatriates receive end-of-service gratuity, or DEWS contributions in DIFC	LAW
Health insurance	Mandatory under Dubai Law No. 11 of 2013. Employer pays for the employee; sponsor insures dependants	LAW
Unemployment insurance (ILOE)	Mandatory for most private sector and federal government employees; usually paid by the employee	LAW OFFICIAL
Salary payment	Through the Wage Protection System (WPS) for mainland employers	LAW
Working week	Maximum 8 hours a day and 48 a week; most private employers work Monday to Friday	LAW MARKET
Tenancy registration	Ejari, run by the Dubai Land Department	OFFICIAL
Rent increase rules	Smart Rental Index, with 90 days' written notice of any change	LAW OFFICIAL
Schools regulator	KHDA. Tuition frozen for 2026-27	OFFICIAL
Road tolls	Salik, AED 6.30 peak and AED 4.20 off-peak per gate including VAT, free 1am to 6am	REPORTED
Emergency numbers	999 police, 998 ambulance, 997 fire	OFFICIAL

1. Ten mistakes HR teams make on Dubai moves

1. **Promising dependants' insurance the law does not require, or assuming it does.** In Dubai the employer must insure the employee; the sponsor, usually the employee, insures the family. Decide the policy and write it into the offer. LAW Section 7.
2. **Letting someone "start on a visit visa".** Working on a visit or tourist visa is not permitted. The employee needs a work permit or entry permit issued for employment before they start. OFFICIAL Section 4.
3. **Starting attestation too late.** Unattested degree, marriage and birth certificates are the most common reason work permits and family visas stall. Start at the offer stage, not after arrival. REPORTED Section 5.
4. **Applying federal rules in DIFC.** DIFC has its own Employment Law: different leave, notice and sick pay, and monthly DEWS contributions instead of a lump-sum gratuity. LAW Section 6.
5. **Forgetting ILOE.** Employees who are not registered within four months of their work permit can be fined AED 400, and a lapsed policy restarts the 12-month qualifying clock. OFFICIAL REPORTED Section 8.
6. **Budgeting rent without the extras.** Add the 5% housing fee through DEWA, a DEWA deposit of about AED 2,000 for an apartment or AED 4,000 for a villa, Ejari registration, the security deposit and the agency fee. OFFICIAL MARKET Section 11.
7. **Missing the probation rules.** Probation is capped at six months and either side must give written notice to end it. An employer needs 14 days; an employee moving to another UAE employer needs one month. LAW Section 9.
8. **Building the package on total salary.** End-of-service gratuity, DEWS contributions, ILOE category and some overtime calculations are based on basic salary, so the basic-to-allowance split matters from day one. LAW Section 9.
9. **Leaving school places too late.** Popular Dubai schools and year groups fill early, and the new 31 December age cut-off applies to children registering with KHDA for the first time. OFFICIAL REPORTED Section 12.
10. **Underestimating the summer and Ramadan effect.** Outdoor work stops between 12:30 and 3pm from 15 June to 15 September, private sector hours reduce by two hours a day in Ramadan, and decision-makers, landlords and school offices slow down in July and August. OFFICIAL LAW Section 13.

2. Is your organisation ready to employ someone in Dubai?

Before any individual move, settle three structural questions. Getting these wrong is expensive to unwind.

2.1 Do you have a UAE entity that can sponsor visas?

An employee can only hold a UAE employment residence visa if a UAE-licensed entity employs and sponsors them. OFFICIAL The options are:

Model	How it works	Suits	Things to watch
Dubai mainland company	Licensed by the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism and registered with MOHRE	Organisations serving the UAE market directly, including government clients	Emiratisation applies to firms of qualifying size; WPS payroll; MOHRE quotas OFFICIAL
DIFC entity	Registered with the DIFC Registrar of Companies; visas through DIFC government services and GDRFA	Banks, asset managers, insurers, law firms, family offices and fintechs	DIFC Employment Law, not the federal Labour Law; DEWS contributions; DIFC Courts for disputes LAW OFFICIAL
Other Dubai free zone	For example DMCC, JAFZA, Dubai Airport Freezone, Dubai Internet City and Dubai Media City, Dubai Silicon Oasis or Dubai South	Trading, logistics, tech, media and regional headquarters	Zone authority issues permits; federal Labour Law broadly applies; trading onshore may need extra licensing OFFICIAL VERIFY
Employer of record (EOR)	A licensed UAE provider employs and sponsors the person and charges your organisation	Testing the market, single hires, project roles	You do not control the visa; check the provider's licence, fee basis and how it handles gratuity MARKET

Model	How it works	Suits	Things to watch
Secondment to a UAE affiliate	The employee stays connected to the home contract but is employed and sponsored locally	Long-term assignments of a year or more	Two employment relationships to manage; home-country tax and social security advice needed MARKET VERIFY

Business setup advisers such as Creative Zone (a Relocate2UAE partner) can compare mainland and free zone structures for your activity. Our UAE Business Setup Guide covers the structures in detail.

2.2 Is this a 12-month assignment or a permanent move?

For anyone spending a year on the ground, the practical answer is almost always a full work permit and residence visa. MOHRE offers several shorter permit types, including mission permits for time-bound projects with workers brought in from abroad and temporary permits for people already in the UAE, but they are designed for specific tasks rather than a year-long role with a family. OFFICIAL VERIFY A standard employment residence visa is issued for two years, sometimes three, and can be cancelled when the assignment ends. OFFICIAL REPORTED

2.3 Has the employee's home-country position been checked?

The UAE does not tax salaries, but the employee's home country may. US citizens are taxed on worldwide income wherever they live. Many other countries tax people who keep strong ties or who spend part of the year at home. The UAE has social security arrangements only with other GCC states, so there is no certificate of coverage to keep most expatriates in their home system. LAW REPORTED Arrange home-country tax and social security advice before the move, especially for 12-month assignments where the employee intends to return. Our UAE Taxation Guide explains residency and the Tax Residency Certificate.

3. Dubai is not Abu Dhabi: the systems HR needs to know

Need	Dubai	Abu Dhabi, for comparison
Residence visa	GDRFA Dubai	ICP
Government services	DubaiNow, Amer (GDRFA) and Tasheel (MOHRE) centres	TAMM
Health regulator and insurance rules	Dubai Health Authority (DHA); employer insures the employee, sponsor insures the family	Department of Health Abu Dhabi; employer or sponsor typically covers spouse and up to three children
Medical fitness test	Dubai Health screening centres; residency and occupational tests combined in one visit since 2026	DoH-approved screening centres
Tenancy registration	Ejari (Dubai Land Department)	Tawtheeq (ADREC)
Rent increase rules	Smart Rental Index; 90 days' notice	Increases frozen since 2 June 2026, until further notice
Housing fee on tenants	5% of annual rent through DEWA	Municipality fee of 5% through TAQA Distribution
Electricity and water	DEWA	TAQA Distribution
Schools regulator	KHDA; tuition frozen for 2026-27	ADEK; no freeze
Road tolls	Salik	Darb
Driving licences	RTA	Abu Dhabi Police through TAMM

Need	Dubai	Abu Dhabi, for comparison
Free zone with its own employment law	DIFC	ADGM

Sources: u.ae, GDRFA, DHA, Dubai Health, DLD, DEWA, KHDA, RTA. OFFICIAL

Many relocating employees live in one emirate and work in another. The visa follows the sponsor's emirate and file, but tenancy, school, insurance and toll rules follow where the employee lives and drives. A daily drive from Dubai to Abu Dhabi now passes the Ghantoot Darb gate, which charges AED 4 at any hour. OFFICIAL Etihad Rail passenger services have linked the two cities in about an hour since 30 September 2026, which makes a cross-emirate commute more realistic than it was. REPORTED Our UAE Emirates Comparison Guide covers the wider differences.

4. Work permits and residence visas, step by step

4.1 The standard route for a mainland employee hired from abroad

Step	Who acts	What happens	Typical timing	Tag
1. Offer letter	Employer and employee	The offer is issued on the MOHRE standard form and signed by the employee. Its terms must match the later contract	Day 0	LAW OFFICIAL
2. Work permit and entry permit	Employer	The employer applies through MOHRE, the Work in UAE platform or a Tasheel centre. Emiratisation and quota compliance are checked at this point	A few working days when the file is clean	OFFICIAL REPORTED
3. Arrival or change of status	Employee	The employee enters on the employment entry permit, or changes status inside the UAE	Week 1	OFFICIAL
4. Medical fitness test	Employee	Blood test and chest X-ray at a Dubai Health screening centre. Since 2026 residency and occupational health tests can be done in a single visit	Week 1	OFFICIAL REPORTED
5. Health insurance	Employer	DHA-compliant insurance must be in place for the residence visa to be issued	Before visa issue	LAW REPORTED
6. Emirates ID biometrics	Employee	Fingerprints and photo, if required	Week 1	OFFICIAL
7. Contract and residence	Employer	The employment contract is registered with MOHRE and GDRFA issues the residence visa electronically	Week 1 to 2	OFFICIAL
8. Emirates ID card	ICP	The card is issued and delivered	Week 2 to 3	OFFICIAL REPORTED

The Work Bundle. Dubai was the first emirate to run the federal Work Bundle, since extended to all emirates, which brings work permit, residence, medical and Emirates ID steps onto one platform at workinuae.ae, accessed with UAE PASS. It was designed to cut documents from 16 to 5, visits from 7 to 2 and processing from about 30 working days to 5, and covers onboarding, renewal and cancellation. OFFICIAL REPORTED Five working days is the target for a complete file; attestation and missing documents still cause most delays.

Costs. Government and service fees for a standard two-year employment visa, covering the work permit, entry permit, medical, residence and Emirates ID, are commonly quoted at around AED 4,000 to 7,000 per employee for a mainland hire, before health insurance and any agency or PRO charges. Urgent services cost more. MARKET VERIFY Fees differ by company classification, permit type and free zone.

4.2 Free zone and DIFC employees

Free zone employers apply to their zone authority rather than MOHRE for the permit, and the zone's government services team usually handles the immigration steps with GDRFA. DIFC entities apply through DIFC's own government services. OFFICIAL The employee still takes the Dubai medical test and gives Emirates ID biometrics. Processing times and fees vary by zone. MARKET

4.3 Choosing the right visa for the person

Visa	Who it suits	Headline requirement	Length	Tag
Employment visa	Almost all relocating staff	Employer sponsorship and work permit	Usually 2 years, renewable	OFFICIAL
Golden Visa (skilled professional)	Senior hires who want long-term security	Commonly MOHRE skill level 1 or 2, a bachelor's degree and basic salary of at least AED 30,000 a month	5 or 10 years, self-sponsored, no 180-day absence rule	OFFICIAL VERIFY
Green Visa (skilled employee)	Skilled staff who want independence from the sponsor	Bachelor's degree or equivalent, MOHRE skill level 1 to 3, salary of at least AED 15,000 a month	5 years, self-sponsored	OFFICIAL
Spouse working on a family visa	Accompanying partners who find their own job	A separate work permit sponsored by their employer	Linked to the family visa	OFFICIAL

A Golden or Green Visa holder still needs a work permit from their employer to work, but they are not dependent on the employer for residence. That can make a senior hire easier to retain and simplifies the end of an assignment. OFFICIAL Our UAE Visa Requirements Guide covers every route.

4.4 Grace periods and cancellation

When employment ends, the employer cancels the work permit and visa. The employee then has a grace period to change sponsor or leave. Reported grace periods range from 30 to 180 days depending on visa type and skill level, with skilled professionals and Golden and Green Visa holders at the longer end. REPORTED VERIFY Confirm the exact period with GDRFA before agreeing exit dates, because overstaying fines accrue daily. OFFICIAL

> **For complex cases**
>
> Senior hires with previous UAE visa cancellations, dual nationals, employees with dependants of different nationalities, transfers between free zones and the mainland, and anyone on a Golden Visa joining a new employer can raise questions that standard PRO services are not set up to answer. These are the cases where a UAE immigration lawyer is worth involving early. Davidson & Co. (a Relocate2UAE partner) is one option.

5. Documents and attestation

Most degree, marriage and birth certificates issued abroad must be legalised in the issuing country and then attested by the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs before UAE authorities accept them. OFFICIAL Countries in the Hague Apostille Convention still need the UAE route, because the UAE is not a member. OFFICIAL The process typically runs: notarisation or certified copy, the home country's foreign ministry or equivalent, the UAE embassy or consulate in that country, then MOFA in the UAE. OFFICIAL REPORTED

Document	Why HR needs it	When to start
Highest relevant degree	Work permit for skilled roles, Golden and Green Visas, professional licences for doctors, nurses, teachers and engineers	At offer acceptance
Marriage certificate	Spouse residence visa and insurance enrolment	At offer acceptance

Document	Why HR needs it	When to start
Children's birth certificates	Children's residence visas and school registration	At offer acceptance
Police clearance	Some regulated professions and Golden Visa routes	When the licensing body asks
Professional licence or good standing letters	Healthcare (DHA licensing), education, engineering and finance roles, including DFSA-regulated roles in DIFC	At offer acceptance
School reports and transfer certificates	School admission and grade placement by KHDA	3 to 6 months before the start date

Allow four to eight weeks for attestation abroad, longer for some countries. REPORTED Employers that pay for attestation and use a single agent across the home and UAE stages usually get a faster, more predictable result. MARKET

6. Mainland, DIFC or another free zone: the employment rules that apply

Topic	Dubai mainland and most free zones	DIFC
Governing law	Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021 and its Executive Regulations	DIFC Employment Law, DIFC Law No. 2 of 2019, as amended most recently in 2025
Permits	MOHRE, or the free zone authority	DIFC government services
Disputes	MOHRE, then the Dubai courts	DIFC Courts
Emiratisation quotas	Apply to qualifying mainland firms; generally not free zones	Do not apply
Probation	Up to 6 months	Up to 6 months
Annual leave	30 calendar days a year after one year	20 working days, available after 90 days' employment
Sick leave	Up to 90 days after probation: 15 full pay, 30 half pay, 45 unpaid	Up to 60 working days in 12 months: 10 full pay, 20 half pay, rest unpaid
Maternity leave	60 days: 45 full pay, 15 half pay	65 working days: 33 full pay, 32 half pay, after 12 months' service
Notice after probation	30 to 90 days, as set in the contract	7 days under 3 months' service, 30 days up to 5 years, 90 days after 5 years
End of service	Lump-sum gratuity after one year: 21 days' basic per year for the first five years, 30 days after	Monthly DEWS contributions: 5.83% of basic salary for the first five years, 8.33% after
Claims time limit	Two years from the end of employment	Six months from termination, with exceptions

Sources: MOHRE, DIFC Employment Law consolidated version 2025. LAW REPORTED

In DIFC, employers pay into the DEWS plan or another approved qualifying scheme every month, so the end-of-service cost is a monthly payroll item rather than a liability at exit. UAE and GCC nationals are registered for pension through GPSSA instead. LAW REPORTED If you employ in DIFC, read the Employment Law directly rather than relying on federal summaries.

7. Health insurance in Dubai

Dubai has had compulsory health insurance since Law No. 11 of 2013, regulated by the Dubai Health Authority. LAW OFFICIAL

7.1 What the employer must provide

- **The employee:** the employer must insure every employee and pay the full premium. It cannot deduct the cost from salary. LAW REPORTED
- **The family:** the visa sponsor, usually the employee, is responsible for insuring a spouse, children and any sponsored parents. Dubai law does not oblige the employer to cover them, but family cover is standard in most relocation packages. Say clearly in the offer letter what the employer will pay. LAW REPORTED
- **Minimum plan:** employees earning AED 4,000 a month or less must receive at least the Essential Benefits Plan. Others are usually covered under enhanced group plans. OFFICIAL REPORTED
- **Visa link:** a residence visa is not issued without valid DHA-compliant cover for the person being sponsored, and a lapse can block renewals and attract fines, widely reported at AED 500 per uninsured person per month. OFFICIAL REPORTED VERIFY

7.2 What good employers add

Statutory cover is a floor. For relocating professionals and their families, check:

Feature	Why it matters
Family cover	Not required by Dubai law, but expected by most relocating staff with families
Network	Whether the hospitals and clinics near the employee's home and the children's school are included
Outpatient co-pay and limits	Sets the real day-to-day cost for a family
Maternity	Waiting periods and limits differ widely; relocating couples often need this
Pre-existing conditions	Cover from day one is essential for employees with ongoing treatment
Dental and optical	Often excluded from basic group plans
Cover outside the UAE	Home-country treatment on leave is an optional extra on international plans
Mental health	Increasingly included; check session limits

Group cover is usually much cheaper per person than individual policies, which is one reason employers often extend the group plan to dependants even when the law does not require it. MARKET Pacific Prime (a Relocate2UAE partner) is one broker that compares local and international group plans. NMC Healthcare (a Relocate2UAE partner) runs hospitals and clinics across Dubai and the wider UAE; confirm any provider is in your insurer's network. Our UAE Healthcare Guide explains the system for employees.

Medicines

Some medicines that are routine elsewhere are controlled or prohibited in the UAE, including some ADHD stimulants and medicines containing codeine or tramadol. Employees on regular medication should check before they travel and, where needed, apply for a personal import permit. OFFICIAL VERIFY Include this in your pre-departure briefing; it is not something a new joiner should discover at the airport.

8. Unemployment insurance, Emiratisation and other compliance

8.1 Involuntary Loss of Employment insurance (ILOE)

Point	Position	Tag
Who must join	Most private sector and federal government employees, including free zone staff. Exempt groups include investors who own their business, domestic workers, temporary contract workers, under-18s and retirees who return to work	LAW REPORTED
Category A	Basic salary up to AED 16,000 a month: AED 5 a month	OFFICIAL REPORTED
Category B	Basic salary above AED 16,000 a month: AED 10 a month	OFFICIAL REPORTED
Benefit	60% of average basic salary over the last six months, for up to three months, capped at AED 10,000 a month (A) or AED 20,000 (B)	OFFICIAL REPORTED
Qualifying period	12 continuous months of subscription before job loss	OFFICIAL REPORTED
Late registration fine	AED 400 if not registered within four months of the work permit	OFFICIAL REPORTED
Unpaid premiums	AED 200 fine after three months unpaid; the policy can be cancelled and the 12-month clock restarts	REPORTED

The premium is the employee's legal obligation, but many employers register staff and pay it as part of onboarding because the cost is small and the fines are not. MARKET Whether DIFC employees fall within the scheme has been treated differently by different sources, so DIFC employers should confirm the position. VERIFY

8.2 Emiratisation

Emiratisation targets apply to private sector companies registered with MOHRE, so they cover Dubai mainland employers but generally not free zone entities, including DIFC. OFFICIAL REPORTED

- **Companies with 50 or more employees** must increase the share of Emiratis in skilled roles by 2% a year, split into 1% in each half of the year. The deadline for this year's full target is **31 December 2026**. OFFICIAL REPORTED
- **The 2026 contribution** for each Emirati role not filled is AED 10,000 a month, or AED 120,000 a year, up from AED 72,000 a year when the policy began in 2022. REPORTED
- **Selected companies with 20 to 49 employees** in specified sectors must also employ Emiratis under a separate requirement, notified by MOHRE. OFFICIAL VERIFY
- **Fake Emiratisation**, such as hiring Emiratis into roles that do not exist, attracts heavy fines and downgrading of the company's MOHRE classification. OFFICIAL REPORTED

Why this matters for relocation: MOHRE can hold up new work permits for non-compliant firms, and a relocation timetable built in December can be derailed by a target missed in the same month. Check your compliance position before you file. REPORTED VERIFY

8.3 Payroll and the Wage Protection System

- Mainland employers must pay salaries through the WPS, in dirhams, through an approved bank or exchange house. LAW
- Pay is due at least monthly, and MOHRE treats salaries as late from the day after the due date. Repeated late payment can lead to suspended permits and fines. LAW REPORTED
- The new joiner needs a UAE bank account, or a WPS card from an exchange house, for their first payroll run. Banks usually need the Emirates ID or residence visa and a salary certificate to open a full account. REPORTED

HSBC UAE (a Relocate2UAE partner) is one bank that works with employers on staff account opening; compare several, as minimum salary and balance requirements differ. Our UAE Banking Guide covers the options.

9. Contracts, probation, leave and gratuity

This section summarises the federal Labour Law as it applies to Dubai mainland and most free zone employers. DIFC employers should use Section 6 and the DIFC Employment Law. For the full picture see our UAE Employment Guide.

9.1 Contract and package structure

- **Fixed term.** UAE employment contracts are fixed-term and renewable. The MOHRE contract must reflect the signed offer letter. LAW
- **Basic salary and allowances.** Packages are usually split into basic salary plus housing, transport and other allowances. Gratuity, ILOE category and overtime are calculated on basic pay, so the split affects what the employer owes. LAW
- **Common relocation benefits.** Housing allowance or provided housing, school fees, annual flight home, relocation allowance, temporary accommodation, dependants' insurance and a car or transport allowance. MARKET Our UAE Salary Guide gives current benchmarks.
- **Non-compete clauses** are allowed for up to two years after employment ends and must be reasonable in scope, place and time. LAW

9.2 Probation and notice

Situation	Rule	Tag
Probation length	Up to six months, not extendable	LAW
Employer ends employment during probation	At least 14 days' written notice	LAW
Employee moves to another UAE employer during probation	At least one month's written notice; the new employer may have to compensate the old one for recruitment costs unless agreed otherwise	LAW
Employee leaves the UAE during probation	At least 14 days' written notice	LAW
Notice after probation	Between 30 and 90 days, as set in the contract	LAW

9.3 Working hours, overtime and holidays

- **Hours:** a maximum of 8 hours a day and 48 hours a week. Overtime is limited to 2 hours a day except in specified cases. LAW
- **Overtime pay:** at least 25% above basic hourly pay, and 50% between 10pm and 4am. LAW
- **Ramadan:** private sector working hours are reduced by two hours a day. LAW
- **Public holidays:** paid, with time off in lieu or extra pay if staff must work. LAW
- **Summer midday break:** outdoor work under direct sun is banned from 12:30 to 3pm each day between 15 June and 15 September, with fines of AED 5,000 per worker up to AED 50,000. OFFICIAL

9.4 Leave entitlements

Leave	Entitlement	Tag
Annual leave	30 calendar days after one year; 2 days a month between six months and one year	LAW OFFICIAL
Sick leave	Up to 90 days a year after probation: 15 at full pay, 30 at half pay, 45 unpaid	LAW OFFICIAL
Maternity leave	60 days: 45 at full pay and 15 at half pay	LAW OFFICIAL

Leave	Entitlement	Tag
Parental leave	5 working days for either parent, within six months of the birth	LAW OFFICIAL
Bereavement leave	5 days for a spouse; 3 days for a parent, child, sibling, grandparent or grandchild	LAW OFFICIAL
Study leave	10 working days a year after two years' service, for exams at an accredited UAE institution	LAW OFFICIAL
Hajj	Up to 30 days unpaid, once during employment	OFFICIAL

Source: u.ae, types of leave in the private sector, checked 10 November 2026.

9.5 End-of-service gratuity

Expatriate employees with at least one year's continuous service are entitled to gratuity when employment ends: 21 days' basic salary for each of the first five years and 30 days for each year after, capped at two years' total pay. LAW Allowances are excluded. A 12-month assignee therefore becomes eligible at their first anniversary.

Employers can instead join an approved alternative end-of-service savings scheme, which invests contributions during employment. Participation is voluntary for mainland and free zone employers outside DIFC. LAW VERIFY

Worked example: a 12-month assignment

Basic salary AED 25,000 a month, total package AED 45,000 a month. ESTIMATE

- **Mainland or free zone:** daily basic rate AED 25,000 × 12 ÷ 365 = about AED 822. Gratuity after exactly 12 months: 21 × AED 822 = about **AED 17,260**. Nothing is due if the employee leaves at month 11.
- **DIFC:** DEWS contributions of 5.83% × AED 25,000 = about **AED 1,458 a month**, or about **AED 17,490** over 12 months, paid monthly rather than at exit.
- **ILOE category:** B (basic above AED 16,000), AED 10 a month.

Gratuity is based on the last basic salary, and calculation conventions differ in practice, so check your payroll provider's method. Use our planner to try your own figures.

9.6 Disputes and complaints

Employees of mainland and most free zone employers can file complaints with MOHRE, which since 2024 can issue binding decisions in claims of up to AED 50,000. Larger disputes go to the labour courts. Claims must be brought within two years of the end of employment. LAW REPORTED DIFC claims go to the DIFC Courts, generally within six months of termination. LAW REPORTED

10. Bringing the family

10.1 Sponsorship

- **Income:** the employee must earn at least AED 4,000 a month, or AED 3,000 plus accommodation, according to u.ae. OFFICIAL
- **Who:** a spouse and children; parents can also be sponsored on a one-year renewable visa. OFFICIAL
- **Timing:** once dependants enter on an entry permit, the sponsor has 60 days to apply for their residence visas. OFFICIAL
- **Medicals:** dependants aged 18 and over take the medical fitness test. OFFICIAL
- **Housing evidence:** a registered Ejari tenancy or a title deed is normally required for family residence in Dubai, so the tenancy usually has to be signed first. OFFICIAL REPORTED

- **Insurance:** each dependant needs DHA-compliant cover arranged by the sponsor before their visa can be issued. LAW
- **Documents:** attested marriage and birth certificates (Section 5).
- **Work rights:** a dependant visa does not include the right to work. A spouse needs their own work permit from their employer. OFFICIAL

Unmarried partners cannot usually be sponsored on a family visa and need their own route, such as employment or a Green Visa. REPORTED VERIFY

10.2 The accompanying partner

The most common reason international assignments end early is that the family is not settled, and the accompanying partner is usually the person with the hardest move. REPORTED Practical support that costs little: an introduction to partner networks and community groups, help with the spouse's own attestation if they intend to work, a session on job search and work permits, and clear information about what the employer covers. Our Expat Networking guide lists current groups, and our UAE Job Opportunities page explains how partners can search for work. Our Moving to Dubai With a Family guide is a good one to send to the employee.

11. Housing in Dubai

11.1 How renting works

- **Ejari registration** with the Dubai Land Department is compulsory for Dubai tenancies, usually done by the tenant. It costs AED 177.75 in the Dubai REST app or about AED 220 at a Real Estate Trustee Centre. DEWA, family visas and many other services need the Ejari number. OFFICIAL
- **Rent increases:** at renewal, increases are capped by reference to the Smart Rental Index. There is no increase if the rent is within 10% of the index average, with steps of up to 5%, 10%, 15% or 20% as the gap widens. Landlords must give at least 90 days' written notice before expiry. LAW OFFICIAL
- **Housing fee:** tenants pay 5% of annual rent, billed monthly through DEWA. OFFICIAL
- **DEWA deposit:** a refundable deposit, widely reported as AED 2,000 for an apartment and AED 4,000 for a villa, plus a small activation fee. The DEWA account can only be opened after Ejari registration. OFFICIAL REPORTED
- **Payment:** rent is often paid by post-dated cheques, commonly one to four a year, so a large share of the year's rent is due upfront. More cheques can mean a higher price. MARKET
- **Other upfront costs:** a security deposit, commonly 5% of annual rent unfurnished and 10% furnished, and an agency fee, commonly 5% of annual rent plus VAT. MARKET
- **Cooling:** many towers use district cooling billed separately from DEWA. Ask whether it is included in the rent. MARKET
- **Disputes:** rental disputes go to the Rental Dispute Settlement Centre. OFFICIAL

11.2 Where relocating employees typically live

Average annual asking rents from Bayut's H1 2026 Dubai report. These are advertised prices, not transaction prices or valuations, and they move quickly. MARKET

Area	Typical profile	1-bed apartment	2-bed apartment	3-bed apartment or villa
Downtown Dubai	Senior hires working in DIFC or Downtown	AED 133,000	AED 223,000	AED 362,000 (apartment)
Dubai Marina	Singles and couples, waterfront, Media City and Internet City commutes	AED 103,000	AED 157,000	AED 249,000 (apartment)

Area	Typical profile	1-bed apartment	2-bed apartment	3-bed apartment or villa
Business Bay	Close to DIFC and Downtown at lower rents	AED 104,000	AED 148,000	n/a
Jumeirah Village Circle	Value, newer buildings, longer commute	AED 79,000	AED 113,000	n/a
Mirdif	Families near the airport and Dubai Airport Freezone	n/a	n/a	3-bed villa AED 142,000; 4-bed AED 166,000
DAMAC Hills 2	Value villas further out	n/a	n/a	3-bed villa AED 112,000
Dubai Hills Estate	Families wanting schools, parks and central access	n/a	n/a	4-bed villa AED 359,000
Arabian Ranches	Established family villa community	n/a	n/a	4-bed villa AED 404,000

Commute, school and office location should drive the choice more than price. Salik gates and peak traffic can add real time and cost to a cheaper address. Our Dubai Area Guide & Map compares the communities, our Dubai Tenant Guide walks through renting step by step, and our UAE Housing Guide explains contracts and deposits. Altura Property (a Relocate2UAE partner) is one adviser covering Dubai; check any agent holds a valid RERA broker card. OFFICIAL

11.3 Temporary accommodation

Most employers provide two to six weeks of serviced or hotel accommodation, because tenancy, utilities and family visas depend on the Emirates ID and the employee wants to view homes in person. MARKET Thirty days is a practical minimum for a family move. Furnished short-term rental specialists such as Maison Privée (a Relocate2UAE partner) are an alternative to hotels for longer stays.

11.4 Utilities and setting up the home

After Ejari registration the tenant opens a DEWA account through the Move-In service, arranges district cooling where applicable, and orders internet from e& or du. OFFICIAL REPORTED Our UAE Utilities Guide walks through the sequence.

12. Schools and childcare

- **Regulator:** private schools in Dubai are licensed, inspected and rated by KHDA, which also approves fees. OFFICIAL
- **Fees:** KHDA froze tuition fees for the 2026-27 academic year at current approved levels. Registration, transport and other charges are not necessarily covered by the freeze. OFFICIAL REPORTED
- **Typical tuition:** from around AED 30,000 a year at value schools to more than AED 100,000 at premium senior schools. Registration, deposits, transport and uniforms come on top. MARKET
- **Admission age:** for September-start schools, children registering with KHDA for the first time must reach the required age by 31 December, for example 6 for Grade 1 or Year 2. Children already enrolled or transferring within Dubai are not affected. OFFICIAL REPORTED
- **School year:** the 2026-27 year started on 31 August 2026, with winter break from 14 December 2026 to 3 January 2027. The calendar has been fixed for three years. OFFICIAL REPORTED
- **Inspections:** KHDA is moving to a two-tier model of full inspections and shorter monitoring visits, so check the date of a school's most recent rating. REPORTED
- **Mid-year moves:** places in popular schools and year groups fill early. Apply as soon as the move is confirmed, ideally to two or three schools, and ask about waiting lists. MARKET

School fees are usually the largest cost in a family package after housing. Decide early whether the allowance is per child, capped, and whether it covers registration and deposits. Our Dubai International Schools Guide, UAE School Holiday Calendar 2026-27 and Education Support page cover the detail.

13. Calendar effects: Ramadan, summer and public holidays

Period	Expected dates	What it means for HR	Tag
UAE National Day (Eid Al Etihad)	2 and 3 December 2026	Public holiday. Government services pause	OFFICIAL
Winter school break	14 December 2026 to 3 January 2027	Peak travel; schools slow on admissions	OFFICIAL REPORTED
New Year's Day	1 January 2027	Public holiday	OFFICIAL
Ramadan	Expected to begin around 8 February 2027	Private sector hours reduce by two hours a day; schedule onboarding and training around shorter days	LAW REPORTED
Eid Al Fitr	Expected from 9 March 2027, three days, possibly four	Public holiday; plan visa and medical appointments around it	OFFICIAL VERIFY
Arafat Day and Eid Al Adha	Expected around 15 to 18 May 2027	Public holidays; a long break is likely	OFFICIAL VERIFY
Islamic New Year	Expected around 6 June 2027	Public holiday	OFFICIAL VERIFY
Midday outdoor work ban	15 June to 15 September	Outdoor work stops 12:30 to 3pm	OFFICIAL
Summer slowdown	July and August	Many decision-makers, landlords and school staff away; build slack into deadlines	MARKET
Prophet Mohammed's birthday	Expected around 14 August 2027	Public holiday	OFFICIAL VERIFY

Islamic holiday dates depend on moon sighting and are confirmed close to the date. OFFICIAL Our UAE School Holiday Calendar lists school breaks in full.

14. Getting around: driving, Salik and public transport

- **Driving licences:** residents must hold a UAE licence. Holders of licences from countries on the RTA's exchange list can usually swap after an eye test, without lessons or a road test, for about AED 1,050 in total. Others go through a driving institute. OFFICIAL
- **Visitors and new arrivals** can usually drive a rental car on their home licence, sometimes with an International Driving Permit, until they become resident. Driving on a foreign licence after the residence visa is issued is an offence and can void insurance. REPORTED VERIFY
- **Salik tolls:** AED 6.30 per gate at peak (6am to 10am and 4pm to 8pm, Monday to Saturday) and AED 4.20 off-peak, including VAT since 1 June 2026, and free from 1am to 6am. There is no daily cap. REPORTED
- **Parking:** Parkin runs public parking, with peak pricing in many zones and 5% VAT since 1 June 2026. Meters no longer take cash. REPORTED
- **Company cars:** decide whether the employer registers and pays Salik and parking, and how traffic fines are handled, before the first car is issued. MARKET
- **Public transport:** the Dubai Metro, tram and buses run on the nol card, and taxis and ride-hailing are widely used. Many relocating staff in Downtown, Business Bay, Dubai Marina and JLT commute by Metro. OFFICIAL

See our UAE Driving and Vehicle Guide and UAE Public Transport Guide.

15. Duty of care and the 2026 regional situation

This is a question many relocating employees and their families now ask, so HR should be ready to answer it factually.

What happened. In early 2026, conflict involving Iran, the United States and Israel led to missile and drone attacks on targets in the Gulf, including the UAE. A ceasefire was reported on 8 April 2026, and in June the US and Iran announced a memorandum of understanding. REPORTED

Where advisories stand. On 18 June 2026 the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office removed its advice against all but essential travel to the UAE, while saying the situation remained unpredictable. REPORTED The US State Department kept the UAE at Level 3, Reconsider Travel, in its update of 23 October 2026. OFFICIAL Other governments set their own levels. Daily life in Dubai has continued, and the UAE remains one of the lowest-crime places to live. REPORTED

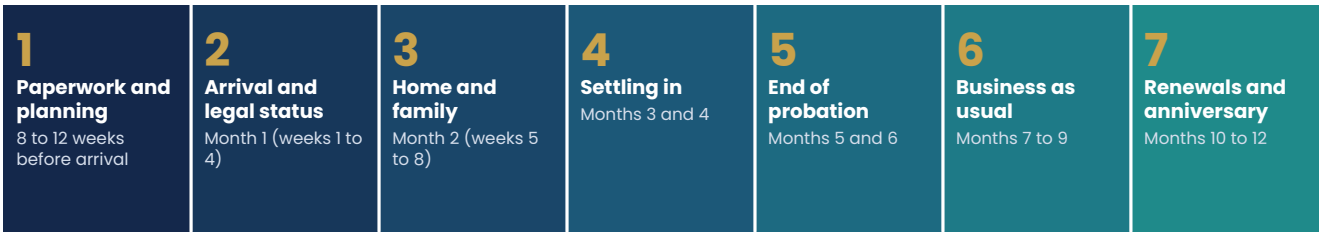
Five steps for HR before and after the move

1. Check each employee's own government advisory at the point of offer and again before travel, and record that you have done so.
2. Ask employees to register with their embassy's citizen registration service, for example STEP for US citizens.
3. Review whether your health, travel and life insurance excludes war, terrorism or countries under a particular advisory level, and whether staff have emergency evacuation cover. MARKET
4. Keep an up-to-date list of staff and dependants in the UAE, with addresses and emergency contacts, and a tested communication plan.
5. Follow UAE authorities' instructions and official alerts during any incident.

This section reflects the position on 9 November 2026, the date we last checked these advisories. It is not a safety assessment. Always rely on current government advisories.

16. Your 12-month plan

The first year breaks into seven stages, from the offer letter to the first anniversary. Every month of the year belongs to one stage, so nothing falls between them. The planner in Section 17 turns these stages into dated tasks for a specific employee, and the downloadable checklist in Section 18 puts every task on paper with an owner and a date.



The first 12 months in seven stages. Every month belongs to one stage.

Stage	When	Focus	What closes the stage
1	8 to 12 weeks before arrival	Paperwork and planning	Work permit approved and certificates attested
2	Month 1 (weeks 1 to 4)	Arrival and legal status	Residence visa and Emirates ID issued; ILOE registered
3	Month 2 (weeks 5 to 8)	Home and family	Ejari tenancy registered, dependants' visas filed, school start confirmed

Stage	When	Focus	What closes the stage
4	Months 3 and 4	Settling in	Settling-in check-in and mid-probation review done
5	Months 5 and 6	End of probation	Probation confirmed in writing
6	Months 7 to 9	Business as usual	Decision on year two made
7	Months 10 to 12	Renewals and anniversary	Leave and gratuity entitlement reached; renewals done

Stage 1: Before arrival, 8 to 12 weeks out

- Confirm the employing entity, job title and MOHRE skill level, and that Emiratisation and quota compliance will not block the permit (Sections 2 and 8).
- Issue the MOHRE offer letter, or the DIFC or free zone equivalent, and agree the basic-to-allowance split (Section 9).
- Start attestation of degrees and marriage and birth certificates (Section 5).
- Brief the employee on medicines, the medical test and what to bring (Section 7).
- Decide and confirm in writing who pays for dependants' health insurance, then arrange enrolment (Section 7).
- Book temporary accommodation for at least 30 days for families (Section 11).
- Submit school applications and request transfer certificates, checking the 31 December age cut-off (Section 12).
- Check home-country tax and social security, and the employee's own government advisory (Sections 2 and 15).
- If pets are moving, start the import permit and vaccination timeline. See our UAE Pet Relocation Guide.

Stage 2: Month 1 (weeks 1 to 4), arrival and legal status

- Employee arrives on the employment entry permit, or changes status inside the UAE.
- Medical fitness test at a Dubai Health centre and Emirates ID biometrics in week one.
- Residence visa issued by GDRFA and MOHRE contract registered, often within the first two weeks.
- Local SIM card from e& or du; UAE PASS set up once the Emirates ID number is available. See our UAE Digital Services & Apps Guide.
- Bank account opened or WPS card issued in time for first payroll.
- ILOE registration, well inside the four-month deadline. In DIFC, start DEWS contributions in line with the Employment Law.

Stage 3: Month 2 (weeks 5 to 8), home and family

- Tenancy signed and registered on Ejari; DEWA account, housing fee and cooling set up.
- Dependants' residence visas filed within 60 days of their entry, with their DHA-compliant insurance in place.
- School start confirmed and transport arranged.
- Driving licence exchanged through the RTA and car registered with a Salik tag.
- Orientation: workplace culture, Ramadan etiquette, local law and the employee's support contacts. See our UAE Culture and Customs Guide.

Stage 4: Months 3 and 4, settling in

- A structured settling-in conversation with the employee, and if possible their partner, around week 12.
- Mid-probation review with clear feedback.
- Check that every document, insurance card and payroll detail is correct before the first leave request. DIFC employees can take annual leave from day 90. LAW
- Confirm the ILOE policy is active and premiums are being paid, so the 12-month qualifying clock keeps running. OFFICIAL

Stage 5: Months 5 and 6, end of probation

- Probation ends at six months at the latest. Confirm in writing. LAW
- For mainland and most free zone staff, paid sick leave entitlement begins and annual leave accrues at 2 days a month until the first anniversary. LAW
- If the employee started in the second half of the year, plan for Ramadan and the summer slowdown (Section 13).

Stage 6: Months 7 to 9, business as usual and the year-two decision

- A second check-in with the employee and their partner. An unsettled family is the most common reason assignments end early (Section 10.2).
- Plan the first annual leave and the flight allowance, especially if month 12 falls in the summer. MARKET
- Review how the health insurance has worked in practice, including the network and claims, ahead of renewal.
- By the end of month 9, confirm whether the assignment extends, converts to local employment or ends, so that notice, tenancy and school decisions can follow.

Stage 7: Months 10 to 12, renewals and the first anniversary

- Watch for the landlord's renewal notice, which must arrive at least 90 days before the lease ends, and check any increase against the Smart Rental Index. LAW OFFICIAL
- Re-enrol children for the next school year.
- At month 12, 30 days' annual leave entitlement applies from the first full year, and end-of-service gratuity eligibility starts for mainland and free zone staff. DIFC contributions simply continue. LAW
- Renew health insurance and review the plan; renew the tenancy and its Ejari registration.
- Package and performance review, including any housing or school allowance adjustments.
- If the assignment ends: cancel the work permit and visa in the right order, settle final pay, leave and gratuity, close the ILOE policy and agree the grace period (Section 4.4).

For senior hires, a structured leadership onboarding in the first year speeds up integration into a new market. Tralis (a Relocate2UAE partner) works on leadership development in the UAE.

17. Relocation planner and budget

Our interactive **Dubai Relocation Planner for HR** turns a start date and a few package details into a dated 12-month compliance timeline, organised in the same seven stages as Section 16, and a year-one checklist with key numbers: ILOE category and premium, upfront housing cash including Ejari, the DEWA deposit and the 5% housing fee, annual leave accrual, and gratuity or DEWS contributions. It runs in your browser and does not store or send any data.

Interactive tool. The Dubai Relocation Planner for HR is available on the online version of this guide at relocate2uae.com/dubai-employee-relocation-guide. It builds a dated timeline you can download to your calendar.

17.1 Indicative year-one employer costs per relocating employee

Item	Indicative amount	Tag
Visa and permit: permit, entry, medical, residence, Emirates ID	Around AED 4,000 to 7,000 per employee for a mainland hire, before insurance and service fees	MARKET
Attestation of documents	Varies by country and number of documents	MARKET
Health insurance	From the Essential Benefits Plan to several tens of thousands of dirhams a year for comprehensive family cover	MARKET
Temporary accommodation	Two to six weeks, depending on family size and area	MARKET
Housing	See Section 11.2 for current rents; add 5% housing fee, Ejari, DEWA deposit, security deposit and agency fee	MARKET OFFICIAL
School fees	From around AED 30,000 to over AED 100,000 per child per year, frozen for 2026-27	MARKET OFFICIAL
Flights and shipping	Depends on origin and household size. See our Moving & Logistics Guide	MARKET
End of service	Mainland: 21 days' basic salary per year, payable after one year. DIFC: 5.83% of basic salary every month	LAW

Our UAE Cost of Living Guide 2026 helps employees plan their own budget.

18. Relocating employees to Dubai? Let us help you find the right support

Relocating employees to Dubai involves much more than securing a visa. Employers also need to think about accommodation, healthcare, schools, banking, transport and a range of other services, so that the move works for the employee and their family from the first week.

Relocate2UAE connects employers and their employees with established UAE service providers across the relocation journey. Whether you are relocating one senior executive or an entire team, the platform gives you a central starting point to identify the services, businesses and support you need.

Discuss your company's relocation requirements

Tell us how many people are moving, when, and what support they need. We will reply by email with relevant guides and introductions to providers that match your requirements. We share your details with a provider only with your consent.

Discuss your company's relocation requirements ›

18.1 How Relocate2UAE supports employers and employees

Relocate2UAE is the front door to the UAE: an information platform and marketplace for individuals and businesses. For an employer, that means three things.

1. **Reliable relocation information.** Guides like this one, checked against government sources, dated and kept under review.
2. **Access to established UAE businesses.** Introductions to providers across property, education, healthcare, insurance, banking, legal services, immigration and business setup.
3. **One place to start.** A single platform where an HR team, and the employees it is moving, can find the services each move needs.

What a move typically needs	Where to start on Relocate2UAE
Immigration and employment law advice	Davidson & Co. (a Relocate2UAE partner); UAE Visa Requirements Guide
Group health insurance	Pacific Prime (a Relocate2UAE partner); UAE Healthcare Guide
Hospitals and clinics	NMC Healthcare (a Relocate2UAE partner)
Bank accounts for new staff	HSBC UAE (a Relocate2UAE partner); UAE Banking Guide
Housing	Altura Property (a Relocate2UAE partner); Dubai Area Guide & Map
Temporary furnished accommodation	Maison Privée (a Relocate2UAE partner)
Schools	Dubai International Schools Guide
A UAE entity to employ staff	Creative Zone (a Relocate2UAE partner); UAE Business Setup Guide
Leadership onboarding for senior hires	Tralis (a Relocate2UAE partner)
Moving household goods	Moving & Logistics Guide

18.2 What we do, and what we do not do

- We publish information and make introductions. The services themselves are provided by the businesses you choose, under their own terms and licences.
- We are not an immigration consultancy, relocation agency, PRO service or law firm, and we do not deliver, guarantee or manage services provided by third parties.
- Some providers pay Relocate2UAE for listings, marketing exposure or referrals. Every partner is labelled where it appears, and you are free to use any provider.
- We share your enquiry details with a provider only with your consent.

18.3 Free downloads for HR teams

- **Dubai Employee Relocation Checklist**, as a PDF and an editable Word file. Every task in the seven-stage plan, with columns for owner, due date and done, plus the key figures and official links on one page.
- **This guide as a PDF**, in print-ready form, to share with colleagues and decision-makers.

19. Frequently asked questions

Can an employee start work in Dubai on a visit visa?

No. Working in the UAE requires a work permit and an employment entry permit or residence visa sponsored by a UAE employer. A visit visa lets someone attend meetings or view homes and schools, not work. OFFICIAL

How long does it take to get a work visa for Dubai?

With the Work Bundle, a complete file can be processed in around five working days, down from about 30. Attestation of certificates abroad is often the longest part of the move and can take four to eight weeks before the visa process starts. OFFICIAL REPORTED

How much does a Dubai employment visa cost the employer?

Government and service fees for a standard two-year mainland employment visa are commonly quoted at around AED 4,000 to 7,000 per employee, before health insurance. Free zone, urgent and dependants' visa fees differ. MARKET

Who issues residence visas in Dubai?

GDRFA Dubai, the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs, issues residence visas in Dubai, and ICP issues the Emirates ID. In Abu Dhabi, ICP handles both. OFFICIAL

Do Dubai employers have to provide health insurance for family members?

No. Dubai law requires employers to insure their employees and pay the full premium, but the visa sponsor, usually the employee, must insure dependants. Most relocation packages include family cover as a benefit. Abu Dhabi's rules are different. LAW REPORTED

Can a Dubai employer deduct health insurance from salary?

Not for the employee's own cover. The employer must pay the employee's premium in full. If the employer contributes to dependants' cover, set the terms out in the offer letter. LAW REPORTED

Is unemployment insurance mandatory for employees in Dubai?

Yes, for most private sector and free zone employees. The premium is AED 5 a month for basic salaries up to AED 16,000 and AED 10 a month above that. Employees must register within four months of their work permit or face an AED 400 fine. OFFICIAL REPORTED

Does Emiratisation apply to free zone companies in Dubai?

Generally no. Emiratisation targets apply to private companies registered with MOHRE, which means Dubai mainland employers. Free zone entities, including DIFC companies, are generally outside the targets. OFFICIAL REPORTED

What is the Emiratisation target for 2026?

Companies with 50 or more employees must increase Emiratis in skilled roles by 2% during 2026, split 1% per half year, with a final deadline of 31 December 2026. The contribution for each unfilled role is AED 10,000 a month, or AED 120,000 a year. OFFICIAL REPORTED

How is DIFC employment law different from the UAE Labour Law?

DIFC has its own Employment Law and courts. Annual leave is 20 working days, notice depends on length of service, sick pay and maternity rules differ, and employers pay monthly DEWS contributions of 5.83% of basic salary for the first five years instead of a lump-sum gratuity. LAW REPORTED

How long is probation in the UAE?

Up to six months. An employer must give at least 14 days' written notice to end employment in probation. An employee moving to another UAE employer must give one month's notice, and 14 days if leaving the UAE. LAW

How much annual leave does an employee get in their first year?

Under the federal Labour Law, none in the first six months, then 2 days a month until the first anniversary, and 30 calendar days a year from then on. In DIFC, 20 working days a year can be taken after 90 days. LAW OFFICIAL

Is gratuity payable on a 12-month assignment in Dubai?

For mainland and most free zone staff, yes, once the employee completes one full year of continuous service. It is 21 days' basic salary for each of the first five years. Nothing is due under the statutory formula if they leave before 12 months. In DIFC, DEWS contributions are paid monthly instead. LAW

What is the Dubai housing fee?

Tenants pay a housing fee of 5% of the annual rent, billed monthly through their DEWA account. It is separate from rent, DEWA consumption charges and district cooling. OFFICIAL

How much can a Dubai landlord increase rent?

It depends on the Smart Rental Index. There is no increase if the current rent is within 10% of the index average, and the cap rises in steps to 20% as the gap widens. The landlord must give at least 90 days' written notice before the contract ends. LAW OFFICIAL

Are Dubai school fees going up in 2026-27?

No. KHDA froze tuition fees for the 2026-27 academic year at current approved levels. Other charges, such as registration and transport, are not necessarily covered. OFFICIAL REPORTED

What salary does an employee need to sponsor their family in Dubai?

At least AED 4,000 a month, or AED 3,000 plus accommodation. The sponsor also needs a registered Ejari tenancy, attested certificates and DHA-compliant health insurance for each dependant. OFFICIAL

Is Dubai safe for relocating employees in 2026?

Daily-life crime is very low, but the region saw conflict in early 2026. The UK lifted its advice against non-essential travel in June 2026 and the US rated the UAE Level 3 in October. Check each employee's government advisory and your insurance before the move. OFFICIAL REPORTED

Can Relocate2UAE help my company relocate employees to Dubai?

Yes, as a starting point. Relocate2UAE is an information platform and marketplace that connects employers and employees with established UAE service providers across immigration, housing, healthcare, insurance, schools, banking and business setup. The providers deliver the services, not Relocate2UAE. Use the corporate enquiry form in Section 18 to describe your requirements.

Is Relocate2UAE a relocation agency or immigration consultant?

No. Relocate2UAE publishes independent relocation information and introduces individuals and businesses to UAE providers. It does not deliver, guarantee or manage third-party services. Some partners pay for listings, marketing exposure or referrals, and this is disclosed wherever they appear.

20. Related guides

- Moving to Dubai hub
- Relocating Employees to Abu Dhabi: the HR guide
- Before You Arrive Checklist
- UAE First 30 Days Guide
- UAE Government Services Guide
- Dubai vs Abu Dhabi Property Guide
- Moving From the UK to the UAE
- Moving From the USA to the UAE
- Moving From Australia to the UAE

21. Official resources and sources

These are the primary sources behind this guide. Where a rule matters to a decision, check the current position here before acting.

Authority	Use it for	Link
UAE Government portal	Residence visas, family sponsorship, Green and Golden Visas, private sector leave	u.ae
Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MOHRE)	Work permits, the Work Bundle, Emiratisation targets, Wage Protection System, labour complaints	mohre.gov.ae
GDRFA Dubai	Residence visas and grace periods in Dubai	gdrfad.gov.ae
ICP	Emirates ID	icp.gov.ae
Dubai Health Authority (DHA)	Health insurance rules and the Essential Benefits Plan	dha.gov.ae
ILOE scheme	Unemployment insurance categories, premiums and fines	iloe.ae
DIFC Courts	DIFC Employment Law guidance and employment claims	difccourts.ae
Dubai Land Department	Ejari and the Smart Rental Index	dubailand.gov.ae
DEWA	Electricity, water, Move-In and the housing fee	dewa.gov.ae
Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA)	School ratings, fees, admissions and calendar	khda.gov.ae
Roads and Transport Authority (RTA)	Licence exchange, Salik, parking and public transport	rta.ae
UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office	Travel advice for the UAE	gov.uk
US Department of State	Travel advisory for the UAE	travel.state.gov

Laws referred to: Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021 on the Regulation of Labour Relations, as amended by Federal Decree-Law No. 9 of 2024; Dubai Law No. 11 of 2013 on health insurance; DIFC Law No. 2 of 2019

(Employment Law), consolidated in 2025; Dubai Law No. 26 of 2007 and Decree No. 43 of 2013 on rents. Rents in Section 11.2 come from Bayut's H1 2026 Dubai rental report.

We also reviewed news reports from WAM, Gulf News, Khaleej Times and The National, Bayut's H1 2026 Dubai rental report, and guides from law firms, HR software providers, insurers, PRO agencies and business setup companies. We treated commercial guides as leads, not sources, and checked their claims against the primary sources above. Visa cost figures in particular vary widely between agencies, so we give a range and label it as market pricing. Where sources disagree, we say so in the text.

About this guide

Written and verified by the Relocate2UAE editorial team. Relocate2UAE was founded in Abu Dhabi by a family who relocated to the UAE themselves and found the information scattered and hard to trust. It is now an information platform and marketplace: independent guides like this one, and connections to established UAE service providers for the individuals and businesses who need them. Partners are labelled wherever they appear.

Last updated 10 November 2026. Facts verified 9 and 10 November 2026. Next review 1 February 2027, or sooner if Emiratisation targets, KHDA fee rules or travel advisories change. If you spot something out of date, tell us at info@relocate2uae.com and we will check it.

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