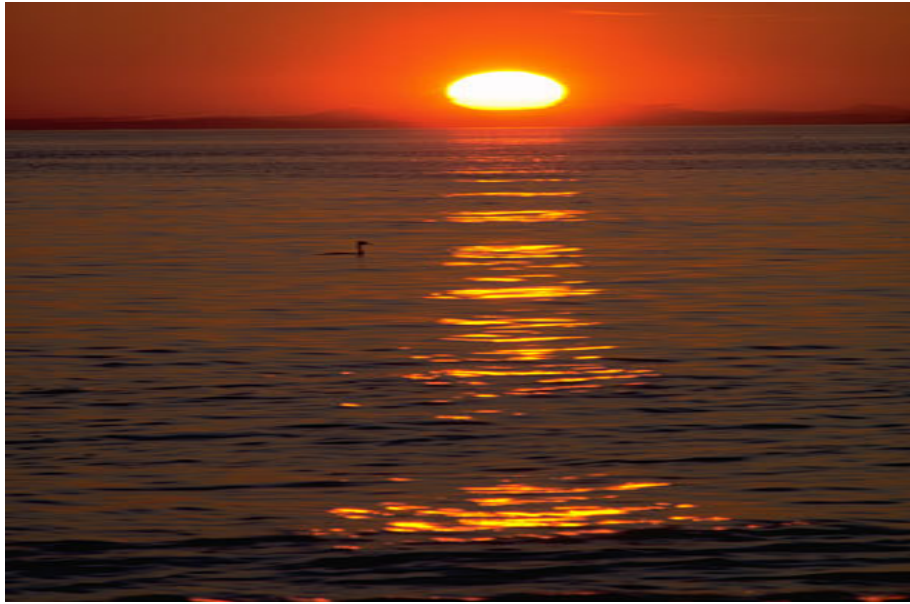
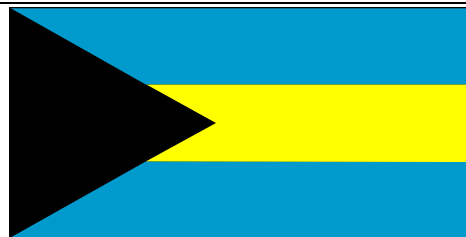


Life In The Bahamas



Information for
Teachers coming to work at
Queen's College
From abroad



August 2006

LIFE IN THE BAHAMAS

The Bahamas is a leading tourist resort with a reputation for sophisticated living and endless sunshine. It offers a profusion of gloriously white beaches and 'technicolor' blue seas, which surpass any holiday brochure photographs.

IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS:

Expatriates working in Queen's College are issued with a **Work Permit**. You will be sent a list of documents required so that your **Work Permit** can be issued. Anyone coming into The Bahamas must be in possession of a valid passport. Please note that Immigration stipulations are being strictly enforced.

VISAS:

Nationals of the Commonwealth do not require visas for The Bahamas. Although British Citizens do not require a visa for the **U.S.** it is advisable to obtain one before departure from Britain. Your local travel agent may be able to give you the necessary forms, otherwise write to the **U.S.** Embassy in London or Edinburgh. Apply for a multiple entry visa application form stating the reasons you require it, (you will probably make many visits to the **U.S.** during your stay in The Bahamas).

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS:

There are no compulsory vaccinations. The Bahamas Medical Association (B.M.A.) advises you to have a joint typhoid and polio vaccination. Start arrangements for vaccinations at least three (3) months prior to your departure. If, like most expatriates, you intend doing a lot of travelling in poorly developed areas such as Central and South America, you are advised to have the full range of vaccinations and to obtain an international vaccination certificate.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION:

Jobs offered by Queen's College to successful candidates would be conditional on obtaining a satisfactory medical examination. You are required to submit a medical form outlining your suitability to work in a tropical climate and any illness or conditions that would preclude you from completing your contractual duties. This must be completed prior to your arrival, and should be included in your documentation for work permit.

HEALTH:

The Bahamas is a healthy group of islands, and expatriates who take normal sub-tropical precautions have few health problems. A thorough medical, optical and dental check-up is, of course, advisable before departure and

whilst there is no problem in obtaining replacement glasses, false teeth, etc. locally, it is generally cheaper to bring spares with you. Health facilities in The Bahamas have more in common with developing countries, thus transfer to America is only necessary if highly complicated or unusual treatment is required.

MEDICAL TREATMENT:

Medical Treatment can be obtained in the Emergency Department of the Princess Margaret Hospital or Doctor's Hospital or at one of the many walk in clinics on the island.

A visit to a private doctor or walk in clinic will cost about \$30 - \$50 after the initial visit. Depending on your insurance plan coverage, you may be only required to pay a co-payment, which ranges from \$20 – \$100, depending on the nature of the visit.

Prescription costs are variable.

All members of staff are required to be covered on a medical insurance scheme. Teachers have the opportunity to join the group medical insurance plan offered through BahamaHealth. (www.bahamahealth.com) Teachers opting not to join this plan must also provide annual documentary evidence that medical expenses are covered in The Bahamas.

INSURANCE:

House contents insurance that gives \$8,000.00 cover for approximately \$100.00 per annum can be obtained from several insurance agencies on the island. If you plan to bring expensive items with you, it is advisable that you insure against theft and so on.

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT:

Mains electricity, supplied to domestic consumers at 110/220 volts 60 cycles AC, is available throughout New Providence. The supply is generally reliable but there are occasional cuts without warning.

Plugs are **U.S.A.** pattern two (2) or three (3) pin flat prong, lamps mainly screw fitting.

240v to 110v transformers are available in Nassau but it is advisable to bring transformers with you. If bringing out cassette recorders etc., batteries of all kinds are available here. (Note: Video/DVD machines are a different format.)

Typical prices for electrical goods (in the Bahamas) are: -

Cassette/CD Recorders	\$150.00 and up
Colour T.V 13"	\$130.00 and up
Colour T.V 19"	\$300.00 and up
Hairdryer	\$ 50.00 and up
Steam Iron	\$ 20.00 and up

CLOTHING:

Plenty of lightweight washable clothing is the base requirement. Cotton and cotton/synthetic materials are cooler. If possible avoid nylon, especially for underwear. A few warmer items are needed for the occasional cool days in winter. Professional attire for male staff varies from slacks, shirt and tie to lightweight suits. Professional attire for female staff varies from light cotton dresses or pantsuits for women. Lounge suits for men and women are sufficient for most formal occasions. A good range of imported clothing is stocked in Nassau, so while it's worth taking out any lightweight clothing already owned, there is no problem completing your wardrobe locally. **Teachers are expected to present themselves professionally at all times.**

COST OF LIVING IN NASSAU

ACCOMMODATION:

It is very difficult for expatriates to buy a house in The Bahamas. Most people usually rent furnished accommodation.

<u>Size of Apartment</u>	<u>Rent per month</u>
1 bedroom	\$ 500.00 - \$ 850.00
2 bedroom	\$ 700.00 - \$1,200.00
3 bedroom	\$1,000.00 - Beyond

What you pay for rent depends on the area in which you reside. When renting, a security deposit is required depending on where you live.

This security deposit is refunded provided that the premises rented have been kept to satisfactory conditions and no damages were caused. Some utilities are often included in the rent.

Most/all landlords require a rent deposit of first and last month's rent. Deposits are required on all utilities and are in the region of \$200-\$300 for ex-pats. Some places require leases, which are given on a yearly basis. So make sure you get the right place first time!

Electricity & Water Charges:

Electricity and Water Charges are billed monthly or quarterly for residential accounts. Bills usually range from \$150.00 upwards for electricity and \$75.00 upwards for water. Gas comes in cylinders which cost \$120.00 for a new gas tank filled with gas and lasts up to four (4) to five (5) months and \$60.00 for refilling of cylinder.

Telephone:

Rental is \$19.95 per month, depending on the features you sign up for. All calls on the island are free. Calls to England are up to \$4.00 per minute. Calls from England are 50p per minute. If your apartment does not have a telephone you will be able to get one installed. Please note that this can take some time to happen. Telephone cards can also be purchased. Cellular (mobile) phones are available.

Television:

The Bahamas only has one terrestrial channel ZNS TV13, but cable TV is available throughout Nassau for a monthly charge of \$30-\$80 depending on the package chosen. This will give you from 60-80 channels mainly from the USA. BBC World and BBC America are available as well as the popular US movie channels.

Internet Service Providers:

There are a number of very reliable ISPs available in Nassau both via Dial-up and Cable. Prices and benefits do vary and so it is best to shop around. There are also a couple of Internet cafés available, two of which are very near to the school.

SUPERMARKET PRICES:

The Bahamas has to import nearly all commodities and this is reflected in the prices; a selection of which is listed below.

FOOD

1 lb. Butter	\$.82
½ gal milk	\$3.19
1 doz. Large eggs	\$1.35
1 loaf sliced bread	\$2.39
4.4 lbs. Sugar	\$1.54
5 lbs. Flour	\$2.39
5.oz bar soap	\$1.65
1 lb. Bacon	\$4.49
1 lb. T-bone steak	\$8.99
1 lb. Ground beef	\$1.69
8 oz. Instant coffee	\$6.29
1 lb. Regular ground coffee	\$3.89
100 tea bags	\$7.89
15 oz. Can green beans	\$1.73
32 oz. Mayonnaise	\$3.99
6 pack soda	\$3.39
1 head lettuce	\$1.59
3 lbs. Onions	\$2.29
1 lb. Tomatoes	\$1.39

OTHER ITEMS & SERVICES

1 pack filter cigarettes	\$ 4.50
New York Times	\$ 3.50
Shampoo & Set	\$25.00
Manicure	\$20.00
Men's haircut	\$10.00
1 gal. Gasoline	\$ 2.91
Dry Cleaning: Dress	\$ 5.00
Men's Suit	\$ 7.95

These prices are subject to change and fluctuate depending on the seasonality of some items.

IMPORTING GOODS:

Goods/Anything being imported has an average of 42% customs duty charged on it. Each time a resident returns to The Bahamas he or she is expected to declare all goods brought abroad. You are allowed goods up to three hundred dollars (\$300.00) duty free. This allowance (\$300.00 Duty Free) is awarded twice a year to residents.

Please note that all gifts/packages sent via the mail must also be opened for custom inspection and duty paid. (This is not covered by any exemptions)

PRIVATE CARS:

In New Providence, a car is a virtual necessity. Some expatriates recommend purchasing a car in Florida and shipping it to The Bahamas. A good range of cars are available in Nassau (both new and used).

New car prices range from \$15,000.00 - \$40,00.00

Second-hand prices for cars, about seven years old, include: -

Nissan Sunny	\$5,000.00
Toyota Corolla	\$7,000.00

Cars age very fast in the hot, humid atmosphere of the Bahamas. The salt in the air does not help. Anything much older than eight years will not be a good investment. Car parts and labour are expensive.

TRAVEL:

The Bahamas is a good centre for travel to the U.S., Caribbean, North, Central and South America. Typical round trip fares are as follows: -

Miami	\$ 200.00
Freeport	\$ 145.00
Mexico	\$ 474.00 (Delta Airlines).
Haiti	\$ 443.00
Peru	\$ 478.00 (Lima)
Brazil	\$1,079.00 (Rio)
Britain	(Peak)\$1,100.00)

Inter Island travel is a great way to see the country. Bahamas Ferries goes to Andros, Eleuthera and Abaco. Airplane travel is also available to the rest of The Bahamas. Visit www.bahamasair.com for information on local rates and times.

BOOKS:

A limited supply of textbooks may be available in Nassau. Bring your favourite ones with you. Travel books are available but are very expensive. If you plan to visit other countries, collect travel books before you leave Britain.

SOCIAL LIFE:

There are numerous sporting clubs to join - Rugby, Dive, Netball, Football, Hockey, Squash, Cricket, Badminton and Darts.

There are also a number of restaurants in The Bahamas both attached to Hotels and family-run establishments from Native dishes to American, Indian, Chinese, Italian and British. You will also find the usual fast food restaurants and Pizza delivery places.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES:

Nassau has one main drama theatre, the Dundas Centre for the Performing Arts, which is patronized by several amateur theatre groups including The Nassau Operatic Society who periodically have productions at the Dundas - which are usually excellent. There is always a need for backstage helpers, dressmakers, lighting and props crews, etc. A number of QC teachers are members.

RENAISSANCE SINGERS:

A highly professional group of amateur and professional musicians, which meets regularly and puts on several productions in the year. A number of other choirs exist with varying degrees of professionalism.

PROFESSIONAL SHOWS:

A few of the major hotels stage cabaret shows. There is little professional theatre. However, there are an increasing amount of musical concerts throughout the year, with local and international performers.

CINEMA:

There are several air-conditioned movie theatres in Nassau. They show all of the latest films released simultaneously in the **U.S.A.**

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES:

Imperial weights and measures are in general use. Petroleum products are, however, retailed by **U.S.** measures, and some imported items are packaged in **U.S.** measures.

LOCAL TIME:

Local time is the same as Eastern Standard Time (i.e. 5 hours behind G.M.T.). The Bahamas has Daylight Saving Time in the summer, as does the U.K., although the dates are usually a week apart.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:

There are ten (10) official public holidays: New Year's, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Whit Monday, Labour Day, Independence Day (10th July), August Monday, Hero's Day (12th October), Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

HURRICANE PREPARATION

As you maybe aware, The Bahamas is located within a Hurricane Zone. Hurricane season begins June 01 and ends November 30. Should a Hurricane occur, information will be given on radio and television and through the school. As long as necessary precautions are taken, persons are safe. There have been few deaths associated with Hurricanes in the Bahamas. A separate Hurricane Preparedness booklet is distributed to new teachers.

PETS:

No animals may be imported into The Bahamas without a permit issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, P. O. Box N-3028, Nassau.

WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU:

Most airlines allow two (2) large suitcases. Check ticket for baggage weight allowance. Check with your airline in case there has been a change of regulations. Travel arrangements will be conveyed to you at a later date.

Apart from your clothes, it has been found useful to have the following:-

- swimming gear
- transformer or batteries
- spare spectacles
- good sunglasses
- A few kitchen utensils
- any medical prescription/s

You should use your discretion when packing.

DOCUMENTS TO BRING WITH YOU:

- Passport (with U.S. visa)
- Contract with Q.C.
- Letter of appointment
- Your Drivers License applicable to your country
- International Drivers License
- International vaccination certificates (if available)

U.S. dollars and/or travellers' cheques (U.S./Bah. Dollars are used interchangeably) Travel Insurance.

It is recommended that you do not bring originals of Degree Certificates, birth certificates – any-irreplaceable documents – Photostat certified copies will suffice.

TRANSPORTING TRUNKS:

You may decide to send a trunk in advance. Shipping takes approximately three months. If you are sending a trunk in advance, put a list with the approximate value of contents inside the trunk (keep copy for yourself).

Customs duty is charged on the value listed. **Please note that customs duty can vary on certain items and staff members will be responsible for all customs, delivery, freight, forwarding charges and any other charges related to your luggage.**

Queries about any particular effects should be addressed to The Comptroller of Customs, H.M. Customs, P.O. Box N155, Nassau, Bahamas.

The school provides a baggage allowance of up to two hundred (\$200.00) per person or family.

FOR YOUR ARRIVAL IN NASSAU:

Dress very coolly. You will be met at the airport by members of the school's Administration.

FOR THE FLIGHT:

Pack an overnight bag – and **do not** put it with the rest of your luggage. This is in the event of lost/delayed luggage. If this happens, report any loss immediately before leaving the airport.

HOTELS:

The school will arrange and pay for temporary accommodation for you for a period of up to two weeks. This is usually sufficient time for you to arrange accommodation and transportation.

WHAT TO DO UP TO THREE (3) MONTHS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE: IF APPLICABLE

1. Get visas and medical examination.
2. If you have not yet passed your driving test, then arrange to sit it. If you do not drive it is possible to get around on foot during the day and by using public transportation. You will be dependent on other people for lifts (a ride) at night. People are generally very helpful with lifts. No public transport other than taxis is available at night. Driving lessons cost approximately \$20.00. A driving test in The Bahamas tends to be much easier than in the U.K., but there is a long waiting list.
3. Contact your Tax Office and get tax rebate if applicable.
4. Contact National Insurance agents and arrange to pay this in your absence.
5. If you are leaving money in bank deposit accounts or building societies, you can now have interest paid gross. It may pay to shop around as some gross interest accounts are more generous than others.

6. You may wish to keep your bank accounts in Britain open. Contact your bank manager and inform him or her of your plans.
7. Go to the dentist and the optician and get any corrective work required done.
8. Get documents together for **Work Permit** application.
9. Arrange travel insurance and get **U.S.** dollars.

INITIAL COST OF SETTING UP IN NASSAU:

You may need up to \$4,000.00 – \$5,500.00 when you arrive to cover utility deposits, rent, buying new things, etc. The school offers an interest-free loan to new staff of up to eighteen hundred dollars (\$1,800.00) repayable over a maximum of six months. You will be able to open a bank account shortly after arrival. The school will provide a letter of introduction to the local bank of your choice. It is recommended, however, that you use Royal Bank, as salaries are deposited to this bank, via direct deposit monthly.

Research:

Take the time to find information on The Bahamas, either on-line or through travel or historical books. Remember that The Bahamas is classed as a developing country. Knowing about The Bahamas and its rich and varied culture before arriving will make your initial time here an enjoyable experience.

May we take this opportunity of welcoming you to the
Staff of Queen's College.

We look forward to meeting you in August.

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