**RULES REGARDING THE USE OF ZERO RATING CERTIFICATES FOR PURCHASING MEDICAL EQUIPMENT**

There are certain VAT reliefs available to Universities purchasing equipment (not consumables or services) to be used in medical and veterinary research.

The source of the funding is not important so long as the equipment is paid through a Budget Centre account – normally a research account.

The relief cannot be used for equipment purchased for, or being used by, another organisation.

**Use of VAT Certificates in Oracle**

If you wish to select an item as eligible for VAT zero-rating under these conditions, you must select “Intended Use – Medical Research” in the appropriate drop down box in the Cart in Oracle.

Once selected, currently you must complete the University VAT Zero-Rate Certificate (linked in Purchasing News), save it and attach it to your requisition. This will then be attached to the Purchase Order which gets sent to your supplier in order to indicate that no VAT must be charged.

The certificate must also be attached for all purchases from both EU and non EU suppliers where you consider that the item is eligible for relief. This will ensure that no Reverse Charge VAT is added to the cost of your item at the point of payment.

**Qualifying uses**

The equipment **must** be put to a qualifying use, which means that there must be a substantial, real and continuing use in medical or veterinary research; and that at the time of purchase it must be known for what specific purpose the equipment will be used for.

The relief can **never** be used for any purchases going into Stores or Stocks, or where a qualifying use is not known or planned at the time of purchase, or where the qualifying use is less than that required by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

**Definition of Research**

HMRC define medical or veterinary research as being:

*Original systematic investigations undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding of the treatment or palliation of a physical or mental abnormality in humans or animals.*

*It also includes the use of existing knowledge and experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes including design and construction.*

HMRC specifically **exclude** routine testing and analysis of materials, components and processes (eg. for the maintenance of national standards) as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques.

HMRC do **not** accept that undergraduates engage in research, or that equipment purchased for general use but used by postgraduate students or other staff, is eligible for the relief.

**Equipment Eligible for the Relief**

Relevant goods in the Certificate means **Equipment** and **not** consumables, under the following categories:

* **Medical equipment** – items designed for use in diagnosis or treatment
* **Scientific equipment** – which performs a scientific function, but **not**  equipment that operates on a scientific principle
* **Computer equipment** – servers, screens, keyboards, discs and off the shelf software
* **Video equipment** – recording and playback equipment
* **Sterilising equipment** – includes autoclaves but **not** microwaves nor other cooking appliances
* **Laboratory equipment** – includes test tubes, glassware, Bunsen burners, fume cupboards, laboratory benches and specialised sinks
* **Refrigeration equipment** – includes all cooling and freezing equipment

The relief also extends to the hiring, servicing or repair and maintenance of the above equipment.

Under no circumstances can other services be considered eligible (ie. the conversion or alteration of a building to house the equipment).

Computer software only qualifies for the relief if it is used **solely** for medical research. No other use whatsoever is allowed.

Where the purchase price of a piece of equipment **includes** a connection to a network, or installation and testing, then these services are treated in the same way as the equipment. The relief is not allowed if these services are invoiced separately.

The relief can **never** be used to purchase the following:

* Air conditioners
* Catering equipment
* Chemical reagents (but these may be eligible under the Medicinal Products relief, see below)
* Cleaning equipment
* Closed circuit TV equipment
* Computer and printer stationery
* Consumables
* Fuel
* Gloves (other than surgical gloves)
* Inks
* Liquids
* Lockers
* Oils
* Other bulk materials
* Paper
* Pellets
* Powders
* Screens
* Security alarms
* Sheets
* Smoke alarms
* Stationery
* Still cameras
* Tape recorders
* Television sets
* Uniforms
* Waste disposal bags and sacks
* Waste disposal equipment

**Medical and Veterinary Training**

The relief can also be used for the training of doctors, nurses, surgeons, dental surgeons, veterinary surgeons, and other professionals involved in medical or veterinary treatment.

The overall programme of training should include the physical application by the students of theoretical knowledge. The teaching of subjects like biology and zoology, where the trainees have no practical medical or veterinary involvement with patients, is not medical or veterinary training for the purposes of this relief.

**Medicinal Products Relief**

There is a similar relief, using the same certificate, which allows Budget Centres to obtain vat relief on the purchase of the following:

1. **Medicinal products** used **solely** in the care, treatment or research on human beings and animals.
2. **Substances** used **directly** for synthesis or testing in the course of medical or veterinary research.

The relief under Category 1, medicinal products, has very strict criteria and it is highly unlikely that any Budget Centre would be able to use it. The terms are defined as follows:

*Medicinal product means any substance or article administered to one or more human beings for a medicinal purpose, or as an ingredient in the preparation of a substance or article which is to be administered to one or more human beings or animals for a medicinal purpose.*

(Medicinal purpose and administer as defined by the Medicines Act 1968).

A ‘substance’ can be natural or artificial, and can be in solid or liquid form or in the form of a gas or vapour. If the substance is bought in the form of gas the zero rating will also apply to the cylinder rental.

**Other Information**

It is important to recognise the seriousness that HMRC attaches to the fraudulent or incorrect claiming of Zero-Rating under these conditions therefore, you should be confident of the eligibility of your purchase before selecting “Intended Use – Medical Research”.

If in doubt or you require further clarification, please contact the following for further advice;

MDS Team:

Carol Benham, Technical Manager (IMI, ICVS, IMSR)

c.a.benham@bham.ac.uk

0121 414 6917

Dave Lloyd, Technical Manager (ICGS)

d.r.lloyd@bham.ac.uk

0121 414 4000

Dee McLoughlin, Technical Manager (IIA, ICS)

d.e.mcloughlin@bham.ac.uk

0121 414 6821

Andy Thewles, Technical Manager (III)

a.thewles@bham.ac.uk

0121 414 8716

Pete Nobbs, College Procurement Advisor

p.k.g.nobbs@bham.ac.uk

0121 414 4524

VAT Team:

Georgina Romano

g.j.romano@bham.ac.uk

x46100

Heather Williams

h.r.williams@bham.ac.uk

x46003

VAThelpdesk@contacts.bham.ac.uk