



**UAE Relocation Guide
2023**

**ONE
SEARCH**



General Information

One Search

Since 2006 One Search has been supporting our clients on their journey to transform the world's Energy and Infrastructure. We are the leading specialist firm in our field working across all experience levels with 42% of the top 100 funds in EMEA and the US. Our practice teams in New York, London and Abu Dhabi drive talent insight relevant to areas such as Energy Transition, Digital Infrastructure and Transport, as well as carrying functional specialisms across Investor Relations, ESG and Portfolio C-Suite hires. We operate as a collaborative team with a shared goal - helping our clients grow to rebuild the global Energy & Infrastructure landscape.

We have been operating across the Middle Eastern market for several years now, but felt the time was right to further strengthen our investment and coverage in the region by establishing our Abu Dhabi office, led by Jack Atkins. This is in no small part due to the ambitious growth targets set within the sectors we know so well, and by utilising our deep-rooted, specialist international talent network we're able to add a great deal of value to firms on the ground - forming long lasting and meaningful partnerships and growing with those we assist. The Middle East is a region in growth mode, and arguably there's no better time to make the move with countless opportunities on offer.

Diversity, Inclusion & Equality

Like the other geographies we cover, equal opportunities are at the forefront of conversation, and in the UAE this is no different. This of course pertains to all forms of discriminatory categories including gender, ethnicity, sexual preference or any other protected characteristics. Firms are increasingly looking for ways to ameliorate the diversity within their teams, and are proactively engaging in meaningful discussions on the best ways to do this.

Why move to the UAE?

Since the establishment of the UAE over 50 years ago, there's no denying the eye-watering growth evident across the country- increasingly able to offer more to those who have decided, like many before them, to make it their home. Naturally, the climate has a part to play here- there's plenty of opportunity to live a prosperous and active lifestyle in a climate offering Vitamin D all year round. There are activities and options to suit everyone, no matter your age, personal situation or budget - whether you seek the thrills of late-night social entertainment, world renowned sporting and music events, world-class shopping or perhaps something more family orientated.

Abundant investment has already been poured into Infrastructure activity, and the region has more than USD 3 trillion of projects in the pipeline, concentrated in construction, power, transportation, and the oil and gas industry. So far, this has contributed to a more seamless way of life for all who reside here - boasting arguably the most efficient 'E-Government' globally,

world leading healthcare facilities, schools, buildings and accommodation. Not to mention the well designed and maintained road system which ensures getting from A to B is a breeze, and with a Hyperloop project on the Horizon, soon it may well be possible to travel from Dubai to Abu Dhabi in just 15 minutes!

Oil is and has been the primary wealth generator in the UAE, yet much action is being taken to diversify the economy further into technology, real estate, tourism and many other areas. Great importance is being placed on investment into decarbonisation agendas and projects, particularly relating to Green Hydrogen & Ammonia, with ambitious targets in place for reductions in carbon emissions backed by serious capital and policy alike.

Those looking to relocate here will enjoy a high quality of life driven by tax-free income, international connectivity and a forward-thinking culture bound by tolerance, respect and innovation.





Working in the UAE

Work culture in the UAE is not too dissimilar to that in the broader international community within the opportunities we service, yet arguably you will experience being part of a much broader cultural talent pool of over 120 different nationalities that live and work here. International talent is welcomed and, in the majority of cases, highly sought after, especially concerning more sector and technically specific ability and knowledge. Office hours are now the same as in Europe/North America, operating Monday-Friday typically from 8:00-18:00 - which differs from other parts of the gulf. This is particularly the case across the Real Assets, Infrastructure and Energy Transition space, and we're seeing an increasing demand for talent across all levels.

Regional Opportunities

Many choose the UAE as a convenient location to base themselves in the Middle East due to its connectivity and travel links to both the wider region and the rest of the world. There are numerous opportunities available in the ever-growing job market in the UAE itself, with firms continuing to bolster their headcount across both Dubai and Abu Dhabi, as well as boundless opportunities to explore in locations such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait and Egypt to name but a few.

Visa

Obtaining a residence visa for the UAE is a straightforward process, especially given that c. 90% of the population is expatriate. Your new company will assist you in ensuring a smooth and efficient process throughout onboarding and will also cover the cost incurred, and this can typically be done within 2 weeks of you arriving in the country. A work permit can typically last for around 2-3 years, and can then be renewed. You can also sponsor your spouse and any dependents, sometimes these costs will also be covered but this can vary.

Salary

Depending on which company you decide to join, your salary will most likely either be paid in the local currency of Dirhams (AED), or alternatively in US Dollars. AED is pegged to the USD at a rate of ~3.67, and is readily transferable into other currencies. If paid in AED, you are also quite likely to be quoted a cash compensation package as per a monthly rate. In the past, firms offered a fixed salary amount, with additional benefits on top - including things like 'Housing Allowance', 'Educational Allowance' and 'Travel Allowance'. Increasingly now, these allowances tend to be rolled into the overall cash package offered to make things simpler. It is also worth noting that the pension system differs in the UAE, in the respect that you are entitled to an 'End of Service' payment when you terminate your employment. Put simply, this is calculated as a certain amount of salaried days worked per year - paid as a lump sum, depending on your length of service.

Living in the UAE

Cost of Living & Accommodation

Cost of living in the UAE is certainly attractive when considering relocation and comparing to other international cities. Referencing Numbeo, the overall cost of living in Abu Dhabi comes in at 49% lower than NY, 20% less than London and 10% less than Paris. Dubai comes in slightly higher, tracking typically 5% more expensive than Abu Dhabi when considering all-in cost of living calculation, predominantly driven by higher property/rental prices. With the amount of development taking place including residential accommodation, it's predicted that cost of living will continue to decline. This combined with a tax-free income equates, typically, to a more comfortable way of life for individuals when compared to their current place of residence.

Like any established City, there are homes to suit everyone - whether you're on the hunt for a modern apartment in the centre or a larger villa/townhouse in the surrounding suburbs and islands. In terms of renting, landlords will typically look to take payment in 1, 2 or 4 instalments over a 12-month period. Your employer may include a housing allowance as part of your remuneration to cover a portion, if not all of this cost - or some offer a loan facility to make this easier. Another commonality experienced here, unlike many places in Europe and the West is the additional household support available in the UAE. If you're in the market for a cleaner, nanny or housemaid, there are many readily available agencies and options at little expense. Abu Dhabi was also voted the safest city in the world for 2023, for the 6th year in a row.

Education & Transport

If you are looking to educate your children in the UAE, the country boasts some of the best schools internationally. All education is provided privately, and there is an abundance of choice in respect of international curriculums. It is also worth checking with your prospective employer whether they have some form of Educational Allowance which is an additional benefit enjoyed by some.

In terms of getting around, driving is the most common and favourable option for the majority of expats residing here. Much like other markets, you can rent, lease or purchase vehicles very easily and at competitive prices, given the low VAT rate of 5%. Cost of running a car is also low due to favourable gas/electricity pricing. Taxis are also a very convenient

way of navigating, at much more favourable prices coming in at ~60% cheaper than London and New York. There are also some public transport options should you need them, but these are used less frequently.

Food, Healthcare and Dress Code

The UAE can also offer a whole host of international and local cuisine options both at restaurants and bars, and also whilst perusing the local supermarkets. For those inclined, alcohol can be freely purchased from licenced venues including Hotels, Bars and Restaurants, and there are also services now delivering to your door without the need for a licence.



All healthcare in the UAE, like education, is provided on a private basis - and the country has already begun to make a name for itself as a major global hub for medical knowledge and standards. All companies are legally obliged to supply medical insurance, and there are of course also options to extend this to members of your immediate family.

When considering a move to the Middle East, many ask about Dress Code and what's acceptable. In the UAE, this is similar to most international cities these days, welcoming international styles and fashion alongside traditional dress. It is a common misconception that females are expected to be fully covered. Of course, respect for local culture and sensitivities should be in mind, and exceptions to this are when visiting religious areas and government buildings.

Practice Coverage



Relocation Perspective - Insight from a client

"Relocating to the UAE has afforded me and my family a fantastic opportunity to build the next chapter of our lives in a safe, inclusive environment. The high quality of life, combined with the career opportunities at A.P. Moller Capital, have opened new horizons. The UAE provides a strategic location that positions us conveniently between Europe and our target markets across MENA and APAC-offering global connectivity"

Jens Thomassen
Partner, A.P. Moller Capital



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