Global Working

Guidance Note for staff and students at London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine working overseas

The work of the School may bring us into contact with regimes who do not hold the same values as we do in the School and in the UK in general. There have been many examples of this in the past such as our work in South Africa under the apartheid regime. When considering whether we should concern ourselves with these differences we should focus on the intended outcome of our work in the country concerned. Our mission is

_to improve health and health equity in the UK and worldwide; working in partnership to achieve excellence in public and global health research, education and translation of knowledge into policy and practice_

and provided our staff or students can do so safely, we should be willing undertake work wherever the opportunity arises to achieve that mission. We should, and of course apply different criteria to the acceptance of funding and we will continue to exercise care in that situation, but the delivery of health-related research and teaching is long-lasting and the fact that we may disagree with a government's policies should not prevent us from working in that country to improve health worldwide.

Change in the attitude of governments in particular will inevitably lead to some individuals having difficulty carrying out their work on a case by case basis and the School will look to provide advice and support on potential difficulties and take a sympathetic stance when they arise.

1. School’s commitment to Equality and Diversity

The School embraces and values the diversity of its staff and student population and visitors, and seeks to promote equality as an essential element in enhancing the School’s contribution to the improvement of health worldwide. The School is committed to promoting equality and opposes discrimination and harassment, including gender-based violence. All staff, students and visitors are required to abide by the following School policies and in the case of staff and students this applies irrespective of location:

   a. Equality and Diversity Strategy
      (www.lshtm.ac.uk/humanresources/equalityanddiversity/equality_and_diversity_strategy.pdf), and
   b. Dignity at Work and Study policy
      (www.lshtm.ac.uk/humanresources/equalityanddiversity/dignity_at_work_and_study.pdf)

2. Before going to work abroad

The safety of all staff and students is of paramount importance to the School and therefore risk assessments are undertaken before travelling. All staff and students should make themselves aware of the School’s equality policies (see above) and familiar with the laws and customs in the country/ies where they will be working.

Managers/supervisors are expected to have discussions with staff/students before they go to work overseas about risks and issues of concern such as how best to ensure safety, what support will be available during the time based overseas and who will provide this. If this is not organised, the staff member or student planning to work overseas can request such a discussion. Being able to speak to
someone who is currently in the relevant country or just returned can be helpful, so ask the Safety Office for relevant contacts.

Staff and students should keep in regular contact with colleagues, based on an agreed plan and arrangement, using telephone and/or Skype to provide support and safety checks and to avoid the feeling of isolation.

It is important that the School knows where you are and how you can be contacted in case of needing to get an urgent message to you. Staff and students should check what facilities will be available and whether mobile phones are provided if there is a need to travel within a country.

Staff and students working overseas are required to update their next of kin data regularly and it is best practice to ensure this is updated prior to departure, in case of an emergency. Staff may do this using MyView.

3. Sexual orientation and gender alignment

The School recognises that many countries in which it works remain unsafe or unfriendly for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.

Although laws give an indication of the situation faced particularly, though not exclusively, by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, it is often more complex and even where laws do exist LGBT staff can face discrimination or harassment.

It is an individual’s choice as to whether they are open about their sexual orientation and all staff and students should be careful not to inadvertently disclose this or jeopardise someone’s decision about how open they wish to be with personal information. For example, asking about a partner in front of other people could put a colleague at risk.

Each member of staff and student should review publicly available information about their personal life (on social media or elsewhere) and consider whether this may cause them problems in the country/ies where they plan to work.

4. Religion

The School welcomes staff, students and visitors of all religions and none and upholds the right of staff, students and visitors to be treated respectfully whatever their faith or beliefs.

When working overseas staff and students should be aware of religious laws and practices in the country/ies where they are based. It is particularly important that they should not be perceived to be attempting to recruit on behalf of any religion. In some countries where there is a state religion, recruitment for a different religion is illegal and can carry heavy penalties.

5. Disability and long term health conditions

The School has been granted the use of the two ticks Positive about Disabled People Symbol and is committed to supporting disabled staff, students and visitors.

If disabled staff and students need adaptations to the workplace when based overseas, they should discuss their requirements with their manager/supervisor early in the planning stage.

Consideration should be given to whether a disability or long term health condition may restrict travel. For example, some countries prohibit entry to HIV+ individuals or require reporting of status.
6. What to do if something goes wrong
If something goes wrong in this context when working overseas, contact your manager/supervisor immediately. In the case of emergency, use the following number:

   
   Emergency Telephone No +44 (0)1273 552 922
   Insurance company name: AIG
   The policy is in the name of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
   The School's Policy No is 0010005152

7. Useful web links

- Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) – this site provides information on local laws and customs and safety and security as well as travel advice: [https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)
- International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) – this site provides information on wider topics than the law such as the mood in the country, recent law changes and attitudes. [http://ilga.org/](http://ilga.org/)