



UK Particle Physics Long Term Attachments (LTA) Overseas

Pre LTA Guide

June 2010

Pre-LTA Guide

When planning a Long Term Attachment (LTA) the most important thing to remember is to allow plenty of time, as there are lots of things that you need to sort out prior to your departure and some of them can take a long time.

Below is a list of the main things that will need to be arranged prior to departure, once your visit has been approved by the relevant parties:-

1. LTA Application Form – Officially known as the ‘Application for Overseas Visit’. This form can be downloaded from the RAL, PPD Website [http://www.particlephysics.ac.uk/Research/Administration/Applicationfor Overseas visit forms](http://www.particlephysics.ac.uk/Research/Administration/Applicationfor%20Overseas%20visit%20forms). Once completed, the form needs to be approved by the relevant Budget Holder and sent to the PA PPD Director at RAL. It is especially important that this form is completed as early as possible if the LTA is going to be in the United States of America, as RAL may be asked to supply funding support letters to accompany Visa applications and these can only be prepared once we have the approved application form. Once approved by the relevant Budget Holder for the project or experiment on which you will be working, the form will be passed to the LTA Administration Office at RAL, who will then make contact with you.

Once details of your LTA have been discussed and agreed by both your Institute and the relevant project or running experiment you will be sent a formal LTA letter by the LTA Administrator. In addition to confirming details of your LTA (eg duration, allowances) the letter will also provide further information on all aspects of the LTA. You are advised to read this document carefully and return the signed undertaking to confirm your understanding and acceptance of the conditions.

2. CERN- You should contact the Liaison Office at CERN.

The Liaison Office can offer advice and assistance with visa applications (where applicable), accommodation and Health Insurance. As well as helping you through the registration process at the laboratory, they can provide a wealth of information about living and working in the local area and can help you with any other practical difficulties.

Further information is available at <http://uklo.web.cern.ch/uklo/>

3. Passport – Ensure that your passport is valid for the duration of your visit. You require a machine-readable passport both to enter the US, and to apply for a visa to enter the US. Your passport must also be valid for at least six months after your planned return from your LTA.

It will be compulsory for all travellers flying to the United States under the Visa Waiver Programme (VWP) to apply for an Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) no later than 72 hours prior to departure. This online form will replace the green visa waiver form (I94W) which is currently completed whilst en-route to the US.

4. Visas – To stay in the US for more than 90 days you require a visa. Full

information on the Visa process can be found at: www.usembassy.org.uk. Further information on the application process at FNAL and SLAC can be found at:

<http://www.slac.stanford.edu/BFROOT/www/Organization/Institutions/BaBarUK/LTA.html#visas>

and

<http://www.fnal.gov/pub/forphysicists/users/newcomers/index.html>

5. Work Permit Holders – Please inform the LTA Administrator who will ask for details and the required documentation from your local HR representative,

6. Health - You should make plans to help you stay healthy while you are away. Check what vaccinations you need with your GP at least six weeks before you travel and ask if any extra health precautions are needed for the country you are visiting. Useful advice can be found at <http://www.dh.gov.uk/travellers>. You should also speak to your GP about any medication you may be taking (eg for a pre-existing condition) to ensure you have the necessary documentation to take with you. If taking medication with you, you should normally take the prescription and a GP's letter. You are also advised strongly to visit your Dentist before leaving for a thorough check-up and to have any remedial work completed before you travel.

7. Medical Insurance – You must ensure that you (and any accompanying dependants) have adequate medical cover before you go on LTA. The provision of adequate medical cover is now a pre-requisite for working at each of the main overseas laboratories (ie CERN, Japan, SLAC and FNAL). Please note that STFC is unable to provide any sort of medical insurance for University Staff while they are on Long Term Attachments (LTAs) and will not be responsible for University Staff who fail to arrange adequate emergency medical insurance.

For ALL travellers (and any accompanying dependants) going to a country in the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland - you must obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), which should entitle you to reduced-cost (or sometimes free) healthcare in the host country. The card is only valid for treatment offered under the state healthcare schemes operating in these countries; it gives you access to treatment under the same terms as people that live in the country that you are visiting. The quickest and easiest way to get an EHIC is to apply online. For more information and details, go to <http://www.dh.gov.uk/travellers>. Further information, including a full list of countries covered along with details of their 'health systems' can also be found in the booklet "Health Advice for Travellers" which is available from the Post Office and on line at www.dh.gov.uk/travellers. You are strongly advised to take this booklet with you when you travel, as it also tells you what to do if treatment does become necessary during your trip. **However, you are advised to take out additional medical insurance to cover the things that the EHIC does not cover – some guidance on arrangements for this is provided below.**

NB. If you are a national from a country outside the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland, these reciprocal healthcare arrangements will not be

available to you. You are therefore advised to take out a higher level of medical cover. This can normally, for example, be purchased using the additional net salary received in lieu of National Insurance (NI) deductions.

For ALL travellers (and any accompanying dependants) going to the USA, the reciprocal arrangements in place for EEA countries and Switzerland do not apply. This means that you must have access to or take out additional medical insurance cover (see following paragraphs below). Please note that all visitors to SLAC & FNAL are required to have suitable medical insurance arranged before travel. Proof of insurance is required in order to obtain a visa to enter the USA. If you stay under J-1 visa status you must make sure the insurance you purchase meets the J-1 visa insurance requirements.

Arrangements for providing additional medical insurance cover will vary depending on your employer (i.e. STFC or University)

STFC Staff only – You (and any accompanying dependants) will be covered by the Council's LTA travel insurance policy that has been placed with ACE Insurance.

Please note that the SFTC policy does not cover staff (and any accompanying dependants) for holidays taken whilst on long-term attachments.

University Staff only - Similar insurance cover is generally provided by Universities for their own employees. You should contact your University to see what, if any cover they will provide for you (and any accompanying dependants) whilst you are on LTA. If your University does not provide cover for you, you will need to purchase your own private medical insurance. You can do this by buying your own insurance package in your home country with international coverage, or by buying your own insurance package in the U.S. Please note that the cost of this will not be reimbursed by STFC. Before doing so, we recommend you contact the relevant UK Liaison Officer as it may be possible to join the in-house scheme at the host laboratory (i.e. at FNAL); alternatively they will be able to assist you in identifying local insurance providers. A popular option for insurance is "Isis Incoming Insurance". You can enrol online or print an application form for Isis insurance at <http://www.isis-travelinsurance.com>.

ALL. If you want to go on holiday, go skiing, or participate in any other high risk sport, make sure you extend your own personal insurance cover as the Council's own cover – or most probably that of your University - is not sufficient for this.

Pregnancy. STFC staff should note that the STFC's insurance policy does not cover pregnancy. Staff should discuss the business need to travel with their managers and are advised to take out additional medical insurance. University staff are advised to check with their University if pregnancy is covered under their policy or purchase insurance privately.

Once you have arranged your medical insurance, you must send a copy of the policy/cover to the LTA Administrator Office, at RAL. This will help to avoid any unnecessary delays.

8. National Insurance – Working abroad can affect your NI contributions, which in turn affects your entitlement to maternity allowance, jobseekers allowance, incapacity benefit, bereavement benefit and basic state pension. It may also affect other non-contributory benefits. Therefore, prior to your departure, you are strongly advised to contact the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for further advice.

If you are in the UK, you can phone or fax the Centre for Non-Residents (Newcastle) Helpline on:

Tel: 0845 915 4811

Fax: 0845 915 0067

From outside the UK:

Tel: 00 44 191 225 4811

Fax: 00 44 191 225 0067

You can also get more information and contact the Inland Revenue via their website <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk>

Inland Revenue Leaflet NI 38 – Social Security Abroad also provides useful details on paying National Insurance abroad.

9. Income Tax - You should notify the Inland Revenue that you are leaving the UK by completing Form P85 which can be found on the HM Revenue & Customs website at <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/>

Overseas allowances are assessed on the basis that UK income tax will continue to be payable on salary. Should your liability to pay UK income tax cease you should notify us immediately as your entitlement to overseas allowances will be abated by an amount approximating to the income tax that you would pay in the UK. This abated amount is known as notional tax. **You can get further guidance from the LTA Advisor at RAL.**

10. Removal Costs – STFC will reimburse reasonable costs, including insurance, of transporting personal baggage and household effects by the least expensive means (usually land/sea) to and from the overseas place of duty up to a maximum allowance of 1,100 kg packed so as not to exceed 6 cubic metres in volume. When family accompanies personnel, an additional 300-kg packed so as not to exceed 2 cubic metres in volume, may be allowed. Individuals must submit three competitive quotes to the LTA Administrator (ppdltadmin@sftc.ac.uk) and payment will normally be restricted to the lowest quote.

For LTAs of less than one year's duration, STFC will provide support to move the named individual only together with their personal baggage and effects but not their family.

11. Flights & Other Travel Costs – Your project/experiment will pay the economy class return airfare for you and any accompanying dependants through the RAL systems **for LTA's that have a duration of 12 months and over**. Where an individual chooses to drive to the overseas station, the equivalent of the least expensive method of transport will be reimbursed, e.g. the costs of an economy class return airfare. In order to claim reimbursement of various expenses, you will need to complete and submit a 'Claim for Expenses' form which can be obtained from <http://www.particlephysics.ac.uk/research/administrative/travel-and-claim-forms.html>. You will need to ensure receipts are included with your claim to support the travel and any hotel costs incurred when you first arrive.

12. Overseas Allowances – Under the terms of a standard LTA, you will be entitled to receive Nightly Subsistence Allowance (NSA) and in some cases, an Overseas LTA Allowance. The rate of NSA is dependent on location and marital status and full details of amounts and how and when to submit claims will be included in your official LTA Offer Letter.

We have received guidance from the Inland Revenue that claims may be liable to Income Tax and National Insurance deductions dependent on your LTA status. If a claim is not liable for tax deductions, it will be paid by the Claims section at RAL. If a claim is liable, payment will be made through your employer's payroll section.

13. SLAC or FNAL, if you have to pay a Security Deposit and the first month's rent in advance on your accommodation please submit a claim form. This claim will be repayable to STFC at the end of your LTA.

13. Further Information – You may also wish to check out the following web links as they also contain a lot of useful information concerning various LTA matters:

CERN

<http://ph-dep.web.cern.ch/ph-dep/UsersOffice/>

Finally, if you have any further queries about Long Term Attachments, please contact the LTA Administrator at RAL, on 01235 778349 or email ppdltaadmin@stfc.ac.uk

CHECKLIST: WHAT TO DO WHEN STARTING AN LTA

6 months before departure.

Get yourself organised as soon as possible – there is a lot to do!

Sort out exact dates for the assignment, get the LTA formally approved and submit forms to RAL.

Get in touch with your UK Liaison Officer at the laboratory where you will be working they can help! Also visit the laboratory's UK Liaison website.

If you are renting your home, start planning the necessary arrangements eg. finding a letting agency

- Start organising your personal affairs and effects, eg.
- Start sorting items for storage, shipping and/or leaving behind.
- Review personal affairs / paperwork to sort out what needs to be done before you go.

3 months before departure.

If going to the US, get your visa application underway – typical timescales 120 days.

- Book an appointment at the US Embassy.
- Contact LTA Administrator at RAL.
- Obtain proof of medical insurance.

Check your passport(s) are up to date (nb. need to be valid for a minimum of 6 months after end of your posting).

Make Travel Arrangements - book your flight(s), sort out accommodation for arrival. Investigate housing/accommodation options. Contact your UK Liaison Officer for information on finding accommodation, the allowances available etc.

6 weeks before departure.

Contact Inland Revenue and/or Department of Work& Pensions to sort out your Tax and NI position <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk>

Make plans to stay healthy while away (see <http://www.dh.gov.uk/travellers>). In particular:

- Contact your employer (eg university) to arrange medical cover.
- Check what vaccinations you need with your GP.
- If travelling in the EEA, get an EHIC.
- Visit Dentist and sort out any special medication needs (eg for preexisting conditions).

3 weeks before departure.

Make arrangements for removals – storage and/or shipping.

Contact LTA Administrator for advice on procedure. Note it can take 6 weeks for your possessions to get to/from the US!
Check with your UK Liaison Officer to ensure everything is ready for your arrival (eg accommodation, visas).

Check that your personal/domestic arrangements are all in order.
- Finalise personal paperwork eg. close/transfer bank accounts, write to utilities/service companies, notify change of address.
Place important documents/information in safe-keeping (eg with family or friends) and take any copies required.

1 week before departure.

Finish your packing and get items ready for shipping and/or storage.
Check your travel tickets and currency.
On arrival, report to the UK Liaison Officer.