



WORKING OVERSEAS GUIDE

Global Partnership Committee (GPC-BAHT)

Supporting education, mentoring and collaboration with therapists working in low- and middle-income countries.

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1. Introduction

The Global Partnership Committee of the British Association of Hand Therapists (GPC-BAHT) supports and promotes education, knowledge and mentoring for overseas therapists working in middle- and low-income countries. This guide has been developed for health professionals, volunteers and educators taking part in BAHT projects or BAHT partner projects.

2. Pre-departure Preparation

- Begin planning your project or visit well ahead of time; this may be 6–12 months prior to travel. This allows time for funding applications, planning and approvals.
- Research the location you will be visiting using online resources, videos or by speaking to previous visitors. GPC-BAHT may be able to connect members with useful contacts.
- Develop an understanding of the local history, culture, etiquette and potential challenges.
- Learning key phrases in the local language can help create positive relationships and improve communication.
- Planning ahead for climate and time zone changes will help you manage jet lag, vaccinations, packing and work schedules.
- Discuss money exchange, local currency and budgeting requirements with your project lead.
- Pre-departure meetings via Teams, Zoom, WhatsApp or face-to-face are recommended to improve communication and manage expectations.
- Establish clear goals and objectives for the project and clarify your role and responsibilities before departure.
- Explore fundraising opportunities including BAHT bursaries, grants, crowdfunding and local fundraising events.
- Before travel, share your next-of-kin details with the project lead and leave a copy of your itinerary, accommodation, and emergency contacts with someone at home.

3. Therapy Grants and Bursaries

Organisation	Support Available
IFSHT – International Federation of Societies for Hand Therapy	IFSHT/IFSSH International Teaching Grants and Dynamometer Programme https://ifsht.org/awards_grants/international-teaching-grants/
BAHT – British Association of Hand Therapists	BAHT bursaries and funding opportunities How to Apply - The British Association of Hand Therapists (hand-therapy.co.uk)
RCOT & CSP	Professional development and overseas practice guidance Eden Travel Award RCOT Annual Awards for learning, development and research RCOT
Emirates Aline Foundation	Non-profit charity which has in the past provided support for flights with projects working with children. https://www.emiratesairlinefoundation.org/english/aboutus/

4. Travel Documents

Passport

Ensure your passport is valid for at least six months from your travel date.

Flights

Flights may be provided by your project or self-funded. Contact your flight provider to confirm any medical equipment, luggage weight allowance and items which are prohibited or restricted.

Discuss combined weight allowances with team members where appropriate.

Visas

In some circumstances a visa may be needed to gain entry to the visiting country. Visa requirements vary depending on the travellers nationally and destination. You may be required to have a visa for a country through which you are travelling to your ultimate destination, even for a short layover.

For further information visit www.gov.uk

You may need a letter of support or invitation to support the visa application. This would be organised and provided by the host of your visit.

Travel Insurance

Obtain comprehensive travel insurance covering medical emergencies, baggage, cancellation and personal liability.

If your project is with the British Association of Hand Surgeons (BSSH) you will be covered for the working period only with a group policy from Banner Insurance. It includes loss of bags, medical treatment costs and evacuation. It will not cover non-working trips or travel. Please contact the secretariat at BSSH for a copy and details of the insurance.

secretariat@bssh.ac.uk

5. Insurance and Indemnity

If carrying out clinical work overseas you may need to obtain professional indemnity insurance. Further information can be found through Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (CSP) and British Association of Occupational Therapists (RCOT)

[Working as a physiotherapist overseas | The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy](#)

[Professional Indemnity Insurance briefing 2023.pdf](#)

You may need a local licence to practice which will vary for each destination. Local registration may require provision of a CV and evidence of qualifications.

Occupational Therapists with Balens can enquire regarding worldwide practice insurance cover.

[Occupational therapist insurance | Balens](#)

6. Health and Safety

- Vaccinations should be completed in line with Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) travel advice.

Website for country specific Travel Advisory Notices (travel restrictions) and entry requirements
[Foreign travel advice - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

- Attend a travel clinic through your GP for vaccinations, malaria prophylaxis and travel advice.
- Keep copies of vaccination records and prescriptions.
- Research local health risks and pack supplies such as insect repellent, sun cream and water purification tablets.

Suggested First Aid Kit Contents:

Antibiotic eye cream • Bandages • Plasters • Tape • Scissors • Safety pins • Tweezers • Tubigrip • Paracetamol • Ibuprofen • Antihistamines • Dioralyte • Imodium • Bite cream • Travel sickness tablets • Antibacterial wipes • Antiseptic cream • Hand sanitizer

7. Accommodation, Communication and Electricity

- Discuss accommodation arrangements and budgets with the project lead or supporting organisation.
- Internet availability varies between destinations but is often accessible in hotels and guest houses.
- Consider local or E SIM cards which can be purchased prior to travel or international roaming to maintain communication.
- Share emergency contact details with family, friends and travel colleagues.
- Electrical supply may be inconsistent in some low- and middle-income countries. Take suitable adaptors and consider using a surge protector.

8. What to Pack

Personal & Health	Clinical & Travel
Regular medications	Scrubs, theatre hats and theatre shoes
Antimalarials	Name badge
Sun cream, hat and sunglasses	A4 notebook and pens
Insect repellent/bite sting relief	Laptop and chargers
First aid kit	Battery pack
Flip flops/sandals	Adaptor plugs and extension lead
Ear plugs	Water bottle/coffee cup/small Tupperware
Wet wipes/Toilet paper/ Anti-bac gel/surface wipes/milton- sterilization tablets	Climate and culturally appropriate clothing
Towel	Swiss army knife/scissors
Handheld fan and Head torch	Laundry detergent

9. Teaching and Educational Resources

When delivering teaching overseas, a valuable starting point is the BAHT Anatomy Resource available on the BAHT website. Further educational and trauma standards resources are also available through BAHT.

[Training & Educational Resources - The British Association of Hand Therapists](#)

This is a general guide only; please carry out your own research into the specific country and project you will be travelling to, as there may be additional requirements you need to consider.