

NHS Global Fellowships

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



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General Fellowship FAQs

Pre-Fellowship

What is an NHS Global Fellowship?

NHS Global Fellowships offer volunteer reciprocal leadership development opportunities for clinical and non-clinical staff to experience health systems across the globe. Fellows focus on either quality improvement, research, or clinical projects, co-developed with local and/or national partners to enhance the patient experience, improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities. Returning Fellows demonstrate new skills, and improved motivation and resilience, contributing to career progression and retention within the health sector.

Safeguarding

The NHS Global Fellowships Programme is committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults within the contexts it operates. Fellows will be required to undergo a DBS and reference check as part of our recruitment process. If successful, appointed Fellows will be required to undertake mandatory safeguarding training, as well as ensuring they are 100% compliant with the mandatory safeguarding requirements in their substantive organisation. During their Fellowship, Fellows will be required to adhere to relevant safeguarding policy and procedure. In addition, those who have a professional registration are required to evidence this and should be aware of the requirements relating to code of conduct and reporting of incidents outlined by their regulatory body.

Who can apply for an NHS Global Fellowship?

Applicants must be NHS employees in England and can be from both clinical and non-clinical backgrounds (some programmes have more specific applicant requirements, which are outlined in the programme sections below and the Essential criteria in the job advert). Applicants must specify in their application for which subset of the Quality Improvement Fellowship they wish to apply for. You can apply for multiple subsets of the Quality Improvement Fellowship (in-country and virtual) as well as the Research Fellowship and you will be asked to prioritise your choices as you may not get your first choice.

Doctors and dentists must have completed Foundation Year 2 as a minimum by the time they start their fellowship. For all other staff groups, applicants must have a minimum of two years' experience working in the NHS. Applications are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Locum healthcare workers can apply providing they are working in an NHS setting in England.

For Fellowships based in India (Kerala) and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, we only accept applications from Trusts within West Yorkshire Integrated Care System.

What will an NHS Global Fellowship cost me?

Please also see “Are my flights and transport paid for?” listed later in this document. You will receive a basic cost of living allowance whilst abroad, which may be paid to you in arrears. This means that you may spend some weeks in country ahead of your cost-of-living allowance being paid. During these early days/weeks, in most cases you will be required to pay subsistence and/or accommodation costs (in some cases a deposit upfront) and/or for car hire (where deemed a requirement), plus any other relevant costs. Your cost-of-living allowance will reimburse you for these costs incurred.

How can I apply?

Our recruitment opens in November (for August cohorts) and in April (for February cohorts). We are in the process of updating our recruitment processes, but a link to our application form will be provided to our mailing list. To be added to our mailing list, please send a request to england.global.fellowships@nhs.net.

Please note, you will need to have the agreement from and support of your line manager to apply and participate in the programme and it is the responsibility of the Fellow to agree the terms of their leave/break from work with their employer. **Please ensure you have discussed this with your employer before you apply.**

I have not worked overseas before; can I still apply?

Yes. Support will be given to you both pre-departure and in-country to make the best use of your skills, and previous experience of working in another country is not a requirement of any Fellowship. We encourage you to reference your experiences of working/travelling abroad (or how you would apply your skills and behaviours if you did travel or work abroad), and/or working with those from different backgrounds and cultures, in your application and interview. These are outlined as criteria in the job description for the role.

What country could my Fellowship be in, and can I choose where I am placed?

NHS England benefits from global health partnerships with several countries. Your Fellowship site is dependent on the type of Fellowship you apply for. Please review the programme sections below for more information. Please be aware that your Fellowship may be with any of our relevant overseas partners and is based on their needs rather than personal preferences. As such, when applying, please be prepared to accept an offer in any of the countries where a Fellowship you are eligible to apply to is offered.

Some of our sites have specific Fellowships:-

- 2 Diaspora Quality Improvement Fellowships are available for First or second-generation Ugandan (parent or grandparent) heritage applicants are at Gombe Hospital in Uganda.
- A Diagnostic Imaging Quality Improvement Fellowship is available at Gulu Regional Referral Hospital, Uganda (plus General Quality Improvement

Fellowships). Applicants for this Fellowship should have expertise in diagnostic imaging either in a clinical or a managerial capacity.

- A Fellowship with a focus on Planetary Health is available at George Hospital South Africa (plus General Quality Improvement Fellowships)

In a small number of cases, there may be reasons why someone may not feel able to travel to a country due to its laws and practices in relation to their personal circumstances or protected characteristics (e.g., LGBTQIA+). Whilst we cannot guarantee the outcome of any requests, if you feel there is a country that you could not travel to due to the above reasons, please inform our recruitment lead. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

What support will be available to me before and during the Fellowship?

Outlined below is the support for each Fellow before, during and immediately after their Fellowship:



What contact will I have with my Leadership Development Partner?

You will have at least one meeting, either in person or virtually, with your Leadership Development Partner prior to departure as part of your pre-fellowship induction. This meeting is to discuss expectations regarding your personal and leadership development.

You will agree a means for making regular contact whilst on fellowship with your Leadership Development Partner, we suggest fortnightly. On return from your fellowship, you will have a session with your Leadership Development Partner, either face to face or virtually, to reflect on your experience and review your personal and leadership development.

Can I take my family with me on an overseas Fellowship?

No, it is not possible for Fellows to be accompanied by other family members when undertaking an overseas fellowship. The reason for this is that you are placed with

another Fellow, and it would be unfair to the other Fellow as you are there to support each other. See also 'Can I have visitors whilst on my Fellowship?' below.

What date will my Fellowship start?

For our six-month Fellowships (both virtual and in-person), these start anytime from 1st February or 1st August. All Fellows must be available from 1st February/1st August but should be aware that travel to the Fellowship site may not take place specifically on 1st of either month. The reason for this is that Fellows must travel together.

For our 12-month Fellowships, these start anytime from 1st February. All Fellows must be available from 1st February but should be aware that like our six-month Fellowships, travel to the Fellowship site may not take place specifically on 1st February. The reason for this is that Fellows must travel together.

The Fellowship team will work with the Fellows to agree a mutually convenient date for travel, as Fellows will travel to their sites together. The Fellowship team will consider the needs of the country partner, as well as costs/value for money, with liaising on dates with Fellows.

Fellows are requested to be flexible and collaborative in their approach to agreeing dates. If there is any reason why being available from 1st February/August is not possible (for example, a professional training commitment) please make the Fellowships team aware of this as soon as possible. The Fellowships team will review any considerations of this nature on a case-by-case basis.

Can I travel earlier/return later for personal reasons or to undertake personal leisure activities before or after my Fellowship?

No, your outbound and return flight will be booked by the NHS Global Fellowships team and will align with the dates of arrival and departure agreed with Fellows and the in-country partner. Leisure activities cannot be considered when organising the scheduling of any flights. NHS England's Business Insurance is only valid during the agreed dates of the Fellowship. NHS England will not alter your flights to accommodate any travel you wish to undertake at the start or end of your Fellowship, or during your Fellowship. The return flight booked for you by NHS England can only be used to return to the UK at the end of your Fellowship on the dates agreed. It should be noted that NHS England's insurance for Fellows is invalidated if Fellows do not have a return flight to their permanent country of residence. In the case of a "no show" at the airport, flights can be automatically cancelled by travel operators, so Fellows are strongly encouraged to use the flights booked for them by NHS England.

What is my pre-fellowship time commitment?

Before departure, you will be required to participate in a mandatory induction over two days, and a two-day Leadership Development Centre course. This will provide you with an insight into leadership skills, focusing on the leadership behaviour domains within the [NHS Healthcare Leadership Model](#), as well as team working. There are additional leadership development requirements outlined below.

What leadership development training can I expect prior to starting my Fellowship?

Prior to the Fellowship, you are required to complete online NHS Leadership Academy's [Edward Jenner Programme](#); Course 0: "An introduction to personal development" and Course 1: "Exploring what leadership means to me". You are asked to have made a start on this by the time you attend the Induction Programme, and to have completed it by the start of your overseas Fellowship. You must send your certificate of completion to your Global Partnership Manager. If you wish to undertake more of the programme, you are of course free to do so.

In addition, we ask you to complete an online [Introduction to Project Management](#) course through [e-learning for healthcare](#) to support your planning and implementing your project.

Other leadership development is part of the induction programme, which includes some interactive practical sessions focusing on the leadership behaviour domains within the NHS Healthcare Leadership Model.

Are my flights and transport paid for?

Your return economy class flights and airport tax will be paid for. In-country transport costs to and from the airport, such as taxis, will be covered by NHS England, however, you will need to pay for the costs of these and then reclaim the money back by submitting an invoice. You are expected to cover UK transport costs such as transport to the airport. Flights to your Fellowship country are not permitted to be booked by anyone other than NHS England, as flights purchased by Fellows cannot be reimbursed by the Fellowship programme. It is the Fellows responsibility to ensure they are fit to fly ahead of any flights being booked on their behalf.

What is my luggage allowance?

This depends on the airline you travel with and will be their normal economy-class allowance. If you need more than the airline allows, you will need to cover any additional cost yourself.

How do I get the correct visa?

Please refer to the [UK Government Foreign Travel Advice website](#) for up-to-date guidance on the country you are travelling to. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct visa, and that the application is submitted far enough in advance to ensure entry to the country. Your Global Partnership Manager can support you with this.

What does the NHS Global Fellowship Programme provide to fellows?

For a 6-month overseas Fellowship, we provide:

- A fixed monthly cost of living allowance to cover your in-country living costs and the basic expenses associated with your fellowship, such as:
 - Accommodation costs
 - Utility bills
 - Food
 - Internet/mobile phone

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- One return flight to the country and back to the UK
 - Any required entry visas and/or work permits or equivalent
 - Local transport essential for project work
 - Personal accident and business travel insurance
 - Any recommended immunisations and/or anti-malarials.

For our Thailand Fellowships (12 months), our Overseas Partner provides:

- A fixed monthly cost of living allowance and accommodation is provided by our Country Partner will cover your in-country living costs, such as:
 - Accommodation costs
 - Utility bills
 - Food
 - Internet/mobile phone
 - Local transport essential for project work

For our Thailand Fellowships (12 months), we provide:

- One return flight to the country and back to the UK
- Any required entry visas and/or work permits
- Personal accident and business travel insurance
- Any recommended immunisations and/or anti-malarials.

What you may need to cover or consider:

- Pre-departure medical examination and dental check up
- Additional insurances for high value personal items and/or additional insurance for leisure activities and travel
- National insurance and pensions contributions (if applicable)
- Any professional memberships and registrations

Will I need Indemnity Insurance whilst an NHS Global Fellow?

If relevant, you should contact your professional organisation/body to advise on this. This should include reference to 'good Samaritan' acts.

Do Fellowships count as NHS employment, and will I be entitled to incremental pay rises?

Fellows should check with their employer's HR department regarding anything to do with their employment.

Is this a secondment?

No – this the Fellowship is a voluntary role and therefore this is not considered a secondment. It is your responsibility to make this clear to your employer when you discuss taking time out of the workplace. Please take HR advice as above.

Is my licence to practice valid whilst working overseas?

Fellows who hold a licence to practice must consider their options with regards to their licence to practice whilst they are overseas and check with their regulatory body any necessary requirements for revalidation or licence to practice. Please note: The Research and Quality Improvement Fellowships are non-clinical.

What are the risks of participating in an NHS Global Fellowship?

NHS England and our overseas partner organisations take your security and safety seriously. Before placing anybody as a Fellow, we make an independent judgement that security risks are at acceptable levels. Avoiding unacceptable risk and minimising acceptable risk once you are deployed is a duty and responsibility shared by you, NHS England and our overseas partners.

By choosing to work in a different country and culture, you accept a potential increase in personal security risk posed by a new and unfamiliar environment. You are responsible for briefing yourself on security and safety and ensuring you are satisfied with the information you receive before you go. For up-to-date travel advice we advise all Fellows to regularly familiarise themselves with the latest information on the [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office travel advice website, signing up to email updates to stay up to date.](#)

Where can I get up-to-date information about day-to-day life in my Fellowship site?

There is a Fellowship site handbook for each partner site and contains useful information for you whilst living in the partner country. We ask that each cohort of Fellows contributes to the handbook before the end of their Fellowship, to ensure it is relevant to the next cohort and up to date. This will be shared with you once your Fellowship site has been confirmed. For new sites, the Fellowship team will provide information if there is no handbook available.

In the months prior to your Fellowship, your NHS England Global Partnership Manager will connect you with former Fellows who were placed at the same site. They can advise you about the living cost and practicalities of life at your Fellowship site.

Important

Financial

Information

Please note that the Fellowship does not cover your salary or provide funding for personal living expenses such as mortgage payments, rent, utility bills, or other household costs for your UK property. Applicants are encouraged to ensure they have adequate financial arrangements in place to cover these obligations for the duration of the fellowship.

During Fellowship

How much will I pay for accommodation?

Accommodation in all our partner sites is funded via the monthly cost of living allowance.

Should I take my own laptop?

Yes, you will need to take your own laptop and are responsible for the data on it throughout the Fellowship. If you do not have a laptop, you can take overseas, please make the Fellowship Programme team aware of this as soon as possible.

How do I withdraw money in-country?

All Fellowship sites have ATMs in the main towns. You may want to check that you will not be charged exchange rates and cash advance charges to use your card overseas. Inform your bank that you will be using it overseas so that your account is not 'frozen' to protect you from card fraud. Please review the Fellow's Handbook for more information on this.

What should I do if I need emergency care whilst on the Fellowship?

You are required to note the 24-hour emergency number for NHS England's insurance provider and other key numbers provided by your Global Partnership Manager, always keeping them on you. These will be detailed in your handbook. In the event of an emergency, in the first instance please contact the insurer. Then, notify the overseas partner, followed by your Global Partnership Manager. Information about the process is included in detail in the handbook and as mentioned above, will be discussed at induction. A copy of the insurance documentation will be emailed to you before your Fellowship which you must familiarise yourself with. The Fellowship team cannot advise on individual circumstances with respect to insurance, and it is the responsibility of the Fellow to operate within the parameters under which the NHS England insurance is valid. For any personal leisure travel, activities or accommodation, personal insurance must be taken out by the individual Fellow at their own cost.

Is there a Code of Conduct for volunteers and Fellows whilst overseas?

Yes, you are expected to abide by our Code of Conduct, informed by our Values and Behaviours, which are in our Fellow handbook.

What is the dress code for Fellows whilst in-country?

The general rule for all Fellows is to dress modestly and respectfully, whether you are in the office, in health facilities or in the community – you may receive advice regarding this from the in-country partner on your arrival. If you are unclear, please ask. You might find it useful to refer to the 'Local laws and customs' section on the [UK Government Foreign Travel Advice website](#).

Can I socialise with local staff?

The programme is funded by the NHS so although you are not employed whilst on your Fellowship, you are acting as an ambassador to the NHS. You are encouraged to socialise with work colleagues but in a responsible and professional manner, including out of work time.

Can I have a local boyfriend or girlfriend?

Developing or seeking to develop a sexual relationship with a [primary actor](#) of any age is not acceptable and will not be tolerated since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics.

Can I have visitors whilst on my Fellowship?

Yes, for short visits, following discussion and agreement with others with whom you are living. This might appear obvious but unfortunately, there have been incidents where this common courtesy has been ignored. Please also notify the overseas partner if you plan to have visitors. All visitors will be expected to act in accordance with the code of conduct under which Fellows operate.

Are there any occasions when my Fellowship would be shorter than planned?

Your status as a Fellow will be reviewed in line with the obligations set out in your Letter of Commitment and the Code of Conduct, as well as any other circumstances where it is felt wise or prudent to return home, such as becoming ill, political or civil unrest in-country, or a pandemic.

Post-Fellowship

What are my commitments post-Fellowship?

On return to the UK, you will be expected to complete any outstanding assignments as detailed in the NHS Global Fellowship 'Fellow's Handbook', meet with your Leadership Development Partner, and make a short presentation which describes your work and personal learning to future Fellows and others allied to the NHS Global Fellowship programme. These events are usually held during an evening.

Can I submit my project or experience for publication?

We support and encourage both formal and informal publication/comms; however, you are required to seek approval from your Global Partnership Manager and overseas partner before publishing any material connected with your Fellowship. We encourage you to co-develop publications with your project supervisor or other colleagues you worked with during your project, and to apply a decolonising global health lens to any communications you develop.

Current Fellowships

The NHS Global Fellowships team offer three types of Fellowship: quality improvement (QI), research and clinical.

Please note, our clinical Fellowships are recruited for and delivered by NHS England - East of England on behalf of the NHS Global Fellowships Programme. For information about clinical Fellowships and how to apply, please visit <https://heeo.ee.hee.nhs.uk/recruitment/global-health-fellowships>, or we'd be happy to signpost you via our england.global.fellowships@nhs.net mailbox.

Quality Improvement Fellowships

These are currently delivered in several countries. Please note, some of these have specific eligibility criteria.

Who can apply for a Quality Improvement Fellowship?

Applicants must be employed by the NHS in England and have two years' NHS work experience or (for doctors) have completed FY2. In addition to any specific applicant requirements (outlined below for GDIP and Diaspora Fellowships), applications are encouraged from those working for the NHS in England with an interest in and/or experience of quality improvement and developing their leadership skills in a challenging and unfamiliar resource-poor environment.

How long are the Quality Improvement Fellowships?

All our Quality Improvement themed Fellowships listed above are six months' long and the majority are spent living and working in the country to which you are allocated.

Am I entitled to time out of programme whilst deployed on any of the Quality Improvement Fellowships?

You are entitled to 15 days of time out of programme during your 6-month Quality Improvement Fellowship (see section on our Thailand research Fellowships for more detail regarding those). These dates must be agreed with the overseas partner. The in-country public holidays should be considered and taken as part of your time out of programme allowance, because of the high number of public holidays at most Fellowship sites.

Which countries are the Quality Improvement Fellowships based in?

We currently run our Quality Improvement Fellowships at the following sites. Please note, these are subject to change and confirmation can be provided by the NHS Global Fellowship team in the event of any changes:

- East London, Eastern Cape, South Africa (*General Quality Improvement*)
- George, Western Cape, South Africa (*General Quality Improvement*)
- Gombe, Uganda (*Diaspora Fellowship Quality Improvement*)
- Gulu, Uganda (*General Quality Improvement*)
- Kerala, India* (*General Quality Improvement*)
- Kingstown, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines* (*General Quality Improvement*)
- Lusaka, Zambia (*General Quality Improvement*)
- Livingstone, Zambia (*General Quality Improvement*)
- Mapoteng, Lesotho (*General Quality Improvement*)

Currently, we also run a small number of virtual Quality Improvement Fellowships of the same duration which is completed by Fellows based in the UK for the duration of the Fellowship. This Fellowship is completed in collaboration with partners in Myanmar and RCGP.

*Ringfenced for certain applicants only – please see section below for more detail.

Quality Improvement Fellowship Thematic Overview

General Quality Improvement (Quality Improvement) Projects

These were formerly known as ‘Improving Global Health through Leadership Development – “IGH” Fellowships. Our General Quality Improvement Fellowships cover a range of project topics which are defined by overseas partners and local health system needs, all with a quality improvement lens.

NHS employees across England, both clinical and non-clinical, are eligible to apply for a General Quality Improvement Fellowship – however, please note the specific eligibility criteria outlined in the paragraph below for some of our sites. It is desirable for applicants to have knowledge and experience in Quality Improvement methodology. The NHS Global Fellowship programme is committed to equality of opportunity, to being fair and inclusive, and to delivering a programme where all belong. We therefore encourage applications from candidates who are likely to be underrepresented in NHS leadership development programmes. These include people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, people living with disability, LGBTQI+ people, and women.

Given the global nature of our programme, we particularly encourage applications from individuals who have heritage in the countries we partner with, including: Uganda, India, Zambia, South Africa, Lesotho, Myanmar and Saint Vincent & the Grenadines.

We currently deliver General Quality Improvement Fellowships in South Africa, Uganda, Lesotho, Zambia, Myanmar (virtual) and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (ring fenced for colleagues employed by Leeds Teaching Hospital Trusts). We have two new Quality Improvement Fellowship sites, with first cohorts starting in August 2024, which are: Kerala, India (ring fenced for employees of organisations that are part of the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership).

Applicants must state how they meet the eligibility criteria for the Fellowships in general, as well as any criteria in terms of ringfenced opportunities. If they do not, their application may not be considered:

Successful candidates will be allocated to sites in any of the following countries for General Quality Improvement Fellowships

- General Quality Improvement Fellowship – South Africa, Lesotho, Zambia, Uganda
- General Quality Improvement Fellowship – Virtual (Myanmar)
- General Quality Improvement Fellowship – Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and India (Kerala) are ringfenced for colleagues from the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership
- Diaspora Fellowship – Applicants must have a Ugandan heritage, (Gombe Uganda)

Diaspora Fellowship

This 'Diaspora' Quality Improvement Fellowship is open only to those from the Ugandan diaspora community.

What is the background and aims of the Diaspora Fellowship?

In August 2021, the Global Health Partnership formally known as Tropical Health and Education Trust (THET) published the [Experts in Our Midst](#) report, describing the contribution of diaspora NHS staff on both the NHS and global health. The Diaspora Fellowship project was set up in response to Global Health Partnerships' findings, to address some of the gaps outlined.

The aim of the Diaspora Fellowship is to provide Fellows with personal and professional leadership development within their countries of heritage. The Fellowship will help to strengthen the connection between NHS employees from diasporan communities and their country of heritage. This will support the creation of a small group of leaders who are part of the diaspora community, who can make a real difference to the NHS on their return to the UK and share their experience and expertise with other NHS employees.

Who can apply for a Diaspora Fellowship?

The Ugandan Diaspora Fellowship is currently open only to those from Ugandan heritage. This is due to the existing strong partnership between the NHS and Ugandan partners.

A new Diaspora Fellowship for NHS colleagues in England with Filipino heritage is being developed with the first cohort to go out to Manila in February 2026.

Applicants must be employed by the NHS in England and have two years' NHS work experience or (for doctors) have completed FY2. Applications are encouraged from those working for the NHS in England with an interest in and/or experience of quality improvement and developing their leadership skills in a challenging and unfamiliar resource-poor environment.

What projects will I be working on as part of the Diaspora Fellowship?

You will be working on system-strengthening and quality improvement projects, supported by the Ministry of Health. Projects will vary and will be decided by the partners in Uganda and the Philippines based on local need.

Where will I be working on the Diaspora Fellowship?

For the Ugandan Diaspora Fellowship, you will be based at Gombe Hospital which is a 100-bed rural General Public Hospital situated 70 km west of Kampala, Butambala district in Uganda. Some travel to Kampala to meet with the Ministry of Health maybe required.

For the Filipino Diaspora Fellowship, you will be based in Pasig City, Manila. Some travel to other regions may be required.

Research Fellowships

The NHS Global Fellowships team offers one research Fellowship, called the Thailand Global Health Research Fellowship (TGHR).

How long is the Thailand Global Health Research Fellowship?

The Thailand Global Health Research Fellowship is a 12-month Fellowship spent overseas in Thailand*.

Who can apply for the Thailand Global Health Research Fellowship?

NHS doctors, who are employed by the NHS in England, with an interest and enthusiasm for developing their research experience in global health, together with leadership skills in an unfamiliar environment. Applications are considered on a case-by-case basis. Please note, doctors must have completed FY2 as a minimum by the time they go on placement. Applicants are usually early to mid-career.

What kind of work will I be doing as part of the Thailand Global Health Research Fellowship?

Thailand Global Health Research Fellows work in partnership with local teams, participating in existing research projects. You will join an existing research team, which is dependent on the research taking place at the time of departure. There is a variety of research available to choose from. You will not provide direct clinical care. You will be allocated an identified in-country research supervisor to support you with your research work.

You are required to submit project plans and reports during your Fellowship, and more detail on this will be provided by the programme team on induction. The Fellowship Programme team will support you in your development and submission of these documents.

Am I entitled to annual leave whilst deployed on the Thailand Global Health Research Programme?

Fellows on the Thailand Global Health Research Programme will be entitled to 10 days of time away from project, plus approximately 22 public holidays.

*Fellows must return within 365 days of their outbound flight booked by NHS England. The policy of the NHS Global Fellowships team is to ensure Fellows are back in the UK after 365 days, and therefore will work with Fellows to book flights to ensure this.