

## EMS overseas

(from the revised [BVA EMS Guide](#))

Carrying out some of your EMS overseas can provide you with an opportunity to explore animal health and welfare, and public health issues abroad and see different approaches to clinical veterinary practice.

If this is something you would like to do, you should discuss it in advance with your university as there may be restrictions on the number of weeks you can spend at a practice or institute abroad that are eligible toward your veterinary degree.

You could ask your EMS co-ordinator about grants that may be available, such as the [BVA Overseas Travel Grants](#) or those from the [RCVS Trust](#).

As an EMS post overseas requires a particularly detailed level of preparation, BVA has produced a **checklist** to assist you in your planning. Advice on different countries and their requirements can be obtained from the relevant embassy or from the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#).

### Checklist

- **Guidance notes on working overseas:** the BVA Overseas Group has produced a series of [guidance notes](#) covering various aspects of working overseas. As well as general advice on both personal and professional preparation (some points are highlighted below), there are sections on personal safety, general health and safety, insurance, equipment, carrying medicines overseas, cat neutering programmes, street dog population control, donkeys and contributing to animal welfare as well as information on working in North Africa, Nepal, India, China and Peru.
- **Ethical approval for projects:** remember to seek guidance and approval from your veterinary school's Ethical Committee and from the overseas institute involved (if appropriate).
- **Insurance:** be sure you are adequately insured for medical or other emergencies. The majority of travel insurance policies will not cover medical or repatriation expenses for incidents arising while carrying out occupational activities. [Lloyd & Whyte](#) can arrange a specifically tailored travel insurance policy for BVA student members, which includes such cover. Please note, however, that the policy does not include professional liability as you would normally be covered by the EMS provider's professional liability insurance. In some countries vets are not legally obliged to hold professional liability insurance so you should check this before you travel. (BVA recommends you contact [Lloyd & Whyte](#) for further information regarding insurance).

- **Health:** check at least eight weeks in advance which vaccinations (or prophylactic medication such as malaria pills) you will need for your trip and be sure to have the full course of immunisation. Check with the relevant organisation (e.g. [Health Protection Agency tropical medicine section](#)) for travel health advice.
- **Rabies vaccination:** the BVA Overseas Group recommends that anyone going to work with animals – or undertaking laboratory or post mortem examination of animals – in countries where rabies is endemic should be immunised.
- **Passport:** check well in advance that your passport is valid for the duration of your stay and bear in mind that some countries require you to have a certain amount of validity left on your passport when you travel. If you need to renew your passport do it at least six weeks before your departure.
- **Visas and other documents:** check the entry requirements of the country you intend to visit well in advance. Obtain the correct visas or other documents that permit you to enter, stay and work in the country of your destination. You may need other permits – for example, from the relevant government department if you intend to work with wildlife.
- **Cultural and religious sensitivities:** remember to check the cultural, social and religious sensitivities of the region, and local laws and customs – and behave and dress appropriately at all times. The BVA Overseas Group's advice on [personal safety](#) is helpful as is the FCO's [travel advice by country](#).
- **Safety and security:** be aware of the political situation, terrorist threats or sectarian violence in the country you are travelling to which can result in a volatile environment. The FCO can provide [up-to date advice](#) on civil unrest as well as natural disasters.
- **Your luggage:** be aware of local restrictions on items you cannot import or export. Contact the relevant [Embassy or High Commission](#) for information before you travel. Be very careful about carrying veterinary medicines or instruments until you are familiar with the requirements or restrictions of any country you are visiting. See also the [BVA Overseas Group's guidance on carrying medicines overseas](#).
- **Contact details:** ensure you leave contact details with appropriate people in the UK. Consider staying in touch with the [BVA Overseas Group](#). On arrival in your host country, contact the [British Embassy or High Commission](#) and register with them: keep them informed of your movements in-country. Register with the [FCO's Locate](#) service.

**If you only take one phone number with you, make it the FCO's Consular Assistance Team on 0044 20 7008 1500 – available 24 hours a day.**