

# Pagoda Projects\_Vietnam\_China and Mexico

## #Pagoda\_001

**School/ Directorate**  
School of Life Sciences

**Person Responsible**  
Stephen Land

**Created**  
2nd September, 2019

**Last Review**  
2nd September, 2019

**Status**  
Complete

**Next Review**  
1st September, 2020

## Screening Data

What is the name/title of the policy/activity?

International Internships offered through Pagoda Projects in Vietnam, China, Mexico and the UK

Describe the aim, objective and intended consequences of the policy/activity.

Dundee University School of Life Sciences wishes to employ the provider (Pagoda Projects Ltd) to provide internship opportunities in Vietnam, China and Mexico. Internships offered in these countries are of 8 weeks duration. The same company provides opportunities for reciprocal internships in the UK of 8-12 weeks duration which are available to foreign nationals only. The contract document refers to a database of enquirers (taken to be student notes of interest) which is maintained on their website and there is a separate clause which guarantees adherence to GDPR. The contract document does not define the meaning, terms or typical location of internship.

Who is responsible for the policy/activity and who implements it?

The International Office and School of Life Sciences, University of Dundee.

Who is effected by this policy?

Undergraduate students who will normally be entering years 2, 3 or 4 of undergraduate study in the Life Sciences. This proposal will have a positive impact on international learning and cultural exchange by progressing a relationship between Dundee University, the Provider and host internship institutions. It will also benefit staff and researchers in participating institutions, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate students, through the sharing of knowledge in the field of life science.

Is there any indication that this policy is relevant to equality and the protected characteristics or that those with any of the protected characteristics will have a different experience in relation to the intended outcomes of the policy?

- Yes

The proposal will have implications in terms of the protected characteristic of race. This is likely to show through the different cultures of the countries involved in the agreement. There may be wider impact in relation to how that culture views different gender groups, disability and sexual orientation.

## Recommend this EA for Full Analysis?

Yes

## Comments

The EA impact for this proposal is considered to be low. Home Office advice identifies the following issues which may have implications for EA for each country as follows:

Vietnam: Majority Buddhist culture with progressive attitudes towards all protected characteristics, including race, gender, homosexuality, gender-reassignment and religion. EA impact for this destination is low.

China: Communist country with reputation for state-level scrutiny of behaviours which may be accepted in the UK and which could be linked to protected characteristics of, for example, religious freedom or sexual orientation. Identity checks are not infrequent and so it is recommended that students carry a legally recognised form of identification on their person at all times. The Chinese authorities maintain controls on internet access and so information relating to protected characteristics may be difficult to find once visiting China. Students should be informed before leaving the UK. There are restrictions on certain religious activities, including preaching and distributing religious materials. The Falun Gong movement is banned in China. Although homosexuality is not prohibited by law, public attitudes are less tolerant than in the UK and public displays of affection may attract negative attention. There's no provision under Chinese legislation guaranteeing freedom from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Mexico: Majority Catholic culture which shares many values with similarly orientated European nations. Although civil unions between same-sex partners are now legal in Mexico City and the state of Coahuila, homosexuality in Mexico is generally tolerated, rather than accepted. Public displays of affection between same sex couples may be frowned upon. Risk to other protected characteristics is low. Current high levels of migration through Mexico have led to an increase in identity checks and so it is recommended that students carry a legally recognised form of identification on their person at all times.

Classification of prescription drug may vary considerably from the UK and penalties for possession of illegal drugs can be severe. Students should seek advice from the Home Office before travel.

## Rate this EA

Low

## Impact Assessment Data

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Age?

- No

Vietnam, China and Mexico are not known to discriminate against the 18-24 year old (student) age group which is the likely age range of participants in the internship programme.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Disability?

- No

The standard of disabled facilities may vary in relation to the UK but there is no indication that disabled students will be excluded from the internship programme.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Gender Reassignment?

- Yes

Home Office advice indicates that Vietnam and Mexico have progressive attitudes towards gender re-assignment though this may be tolerated more by the former compared to the latter. In China, the state focus on the accuracy of identity documents could lead to confusion that may have legal consequences. Students undergoing, or who have completed, gender re-assignment should check current Home Office advice before travel.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Marriage and Civil Partnership?

- No

Vietnam, Mexico and China recognise the legal and social implications of marriage and civil partnership.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Pregnancy and Maternity?

- No

Vietnam, Mexico and China recognise the legal and social implications of pregnancy and maternity.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Race?

- No

Vietnam, Mexico and China are not known to discriminate individuals on the characteristic of Race.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Religion and Belief?

- Yes

In China, there are restrictions on certain religious activities, including preaching and distributing religious materials. The Falun Gong movement is banned.

There are no restrictions on religious activity or belief in Vietnam or Mexico.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Sex?

- No

Vietnam, Mexico and China are not known to discriminate individuals on the characteristic of sex.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Sexual Orientation?

- No

Homosexuality is legal in Vietnam, Mexico and China though local tolerance to public displays of affection may vary widely.

Taking account of the findings so far, is there a possibility that the implementation of this policy would result in a different experience or a detriment for those with protected characteristics?

- No

Although cultural differences exist which may have low-level impact some for protected characteristics, on balance, implementation of this agreement would not result in a substantially different or detrimental experience for those with protected characteristics.

Based on your findings so far, what recommendations or changes (if any) would you make in relation to the policy and how it is implemented?

No recommendations or changes are necessary. An induction session should be held for students undertaking an internship in each of the listed countries. Attitudes towards the protected characteristics should be explained so that students are fully informed before travel. The UK Home Office Website is an essential source of information and is continually updated to reflect current events.

As above

Where you have recommended actions/changes to the policy, what are the timescales for completion of these

01-10-2019

What monitoring arrangements do you have in place to identify changes in any impact or relevance?

Feedback from returning students.

## Comments

The EA impact of this agreement is considered low. Students should be informed of cultural differences as

they relate to protected characteristics before travel through an induction programme in Dundee and also through reference to the UK Home Office website. The agreement should be reviewed annually by taking account of the returning student experience.

## Organisation Sign-off Data

Having read the EIA, do you approve its findings and recommendations?

- Yes

What are your reasons for approving/not approving the EIA?

EA impact assessment is low for each of the countries mentioned in the agreement.

If you have approved the EIA, do you agree with the monitoring arrangements in place?

- Yes

Annual monitoring by de-brief of returning students is adequate.

Where you have not approved the monitoring process, what other steps do you require to be taken?

N/A

## Comments

Impact is low based on current information from UK Home Office. For these reasons, the agreement is approved as low risk.

## Next Review Date

2020-09-01

## Outstanding Actions

No outstanding actions