

# International Mobility Considerations for LGBTQIA+

Long or short-term work-related international travel can introduce risk and uncertainty for academics and travelling family members with LGBTQIA+ status.

There remain global inconsistencies relating to how queer individuals are treated and acknowledged.

Legal recognition and protection against discrimination does not imply social and cultural acceptance or safety; nor does it highlight the invisible and implicit differences in the social or organisational treatment of LGBTQIA+ communities.

## Practical travel tips

- Carry digital, physical, and paper copies of important documents in separate and secure places and leave copies with a trusted person.
- Know who to contact in an emergency and keep digital and physical records of emergency contact details (perhaps your country's embassy, consular assistance, your employer, local authorities, and your travel insurance provider).
- Travel with a friend or colleague if possible – if you're attending a conference abroad, try to link up with a person that you know and trust who is also attending
- In countries that criminalise LGBT+ people, think about what authorities may find in your belongings and digital devices that could unintentionally identify you as LGBT+.
- Be conscious of how you use social media if you are asked to provide it as part of a visa application, or where communications may be monitored by state authorities. You may want to use a VPN (virtual private network) if you wish to access your accounts during your travels.
- Do not make general assumptions, remembering that countries may support specific LGBTQIA+ identities but not all (eg. acceptance of same-sex relationships but not trans-gender identities).

## Research as a Human Right

A human rights-based approach to science requires freedom of movement, association, expression, and communication for scientists, as well as equitable access to data, information, and other resources for research.

### All Scientists have Rights and Responsibilities:

*The right to freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.*

*The right to oppose unethical or illegal actions, policies, procedures, or other directives that impact the conduct and publication of science, without fear of retaliation.*

*The responsibility to foster a diverse workforce and inclusive environment that allows science and scientific careers to flourish.*

## Institutional and Employer considerations:

- Travelling employees should be fully informed and supported in travel opportunities regardless of status
- Employees reserve the right to decline international opportunities due to their status without career consequence
- Employee data confidentiality and security (legal names and gender markers etc.) must be always maintained.

### .Specific employee-facilitated support:

- Connect employees (and families) with local and national organisations in the target destination.
- Create an LGBTQIA+ mobility policy – or update existing policies – that clarifies the organisation's responsibilities and signposts support.
- Ensure job advertisements include details of international travel associated with the role
- Review your areas of operation, and the locations to which individuals are expected to travel
- Ensure employees feel that their safety, rights and wellbeing are prioritised and taken seriously.

# International Mobility Risk Assessment Checklist

| Critical criteria  | (Yes/No) | Notes |
|--|----------|-------|
| Are LGBT+ people legally protected from workplace and other discrimination?  |          |       |
| Are same-sex activities/people criminalised?   |          |       |
| Are public indecency or similar laws habitually used to criminalise LGBT+ people?  |          |       |
| Is there legal gender recognition for trans people? Does this carry any conditions (such as particular medical interventions)?                             |          |       |
| What laws dictate healthcare access for LGBT+ people?  |          |       |
| What recognition exists for same-sex partnerships and parents?   |          |       |
| Are freedom of expression, association and assembly restricted in relation to LGBT+ people or issues?  |          |       |
| Are there non-legal factors (e.g. societal acceptance, hate crime level, media visibility, community support, intersectional issues) relevant to consider? |          |       |
| Is there support – such as an LGBT+ group or organisation – available in the local area or at a regional or national level?                                |          |       |

# Key Resources for Destination Risk Assessment and Traveller Support



## Organisational support

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|--|--|
| Scholars at Risk   | International bodies involved in information sharing surrounding threats to the freedoms of scientists |
| The Committee for Concerned Scientists                                       |  |
| CFRS   |  |
| The International Human Rights Network of Academics and Scholarly Societies. |  |

## Global context and statistics

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Stonewall UK global workplace briefings | Outlines the legal, socio-cultural and workplace situations for LGBT people around the world and advises employers on how they can create inclusive and equal workplaces. |
| Transrespect.org                        | Provides global context and monitoring for trans-related violence.  |
| Equaldex.com                            | Global context for LGBTQIA+ rights and safety.  |
| Alturi.org                              | Provides LGBTQIA+ news by region  |
| Statistia.com                           | Stats on LGBTQIA+ global status including cultural acceptance and attitudes, equality and support, legal status, tourism etc.   |

## Literature for further reading

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| Hamilton, Frances, & Giles, Cameron. (2022). International academic mobility, agency, and LGBTQ+ rights: a review of policy responses to internationally mobile LGBTQ+ staff/students at UK HE institutions with recommendations for a global audience. Policy Reviews in Higher Education, 6(1), 46–67. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/23322969.2021.1969990">https://doi.org/10.1080/23322969.2021.1969990</a> | A review of policy responses to internationally mobile LGBTQIA+ staff/students (UK based).             |
| Sinton, Matthew C, Baines, Katie Nicoll, Thornalley, Kiri A, Ilangoan, Vinodh, & Kurt, Mehmet. (2021). Increasing the visibility of LGBTQ+ researchers in STEM. The Lancet (British Edition), 397(10269), 77–79. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)32626-X">https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)32626-X</a>   | Summary of institutional interventions to support LGBTQIA+ visibility in STEM.                         |
| RSC Outreach Campaign Report<br><a href="https://www.rsc.org/globalassets/04-campaigning-outreach/campaigning/lgbt-report/lgbt-report_web.pdf">https://www.rsc.org/globalassets/04-campaigning-outreach/campaigning/lgbt-report/lgbt-report_web.pdf</a>  | A report summarising workplace challenges and potential areas of action regarding LGBTQIA+ scientists. |
| Australian Government eSafety Report<br><a href="https://www.esafety.gov.au/diverse-groups/lgbtiq">https://www.esafety.gov.au/diverse-groups/lgbtiq</a>  | Safety resource to assist in safe online activity as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community.               |