

MAHIDOL-OXFORD TROPICAL MEDICINE
RESEARCH UNIT

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Dear Colleague,

Please read the following information carefully as it may influence your decision to request a research placement with SMRU in Mae Sot.

- The research period is a minimum of 6 continuous weeks. To ensure that your project can be completed, holidays should not be taken during your placement unless your stay is at least 6 months or longer. If you are a clinical researcher, you will need to consider that help with clinical work may be requested if your stay is 6 months or longer. In this situation, weekend and holiday coverage will be discussed among all clinical staff.
- Working hours for all visitors (including those not funded by SMRU) are Monday to Friday: approximately 8am to 5pm. Saturday is considered a working day, although weekend hours will depend on your scope of work. Minimum working hours will be discussed with your supervisor or mentor at the start of your stay. For clinical visitors, coverage by phone on weekends and nights is expected (where applicable). If unable to work for any reason you must notify your supervisor or mentor. Following SMRU working hours allows you to show respect to the local staff who give their valuable time to orient, guide, and help you during your stay.
- Volunteers with limited experience, i.e. medical students or doctors with limited training, will work with a supervisor. Please be aware that direct medical care is usually provided by the local health care staff and the opportunities to practice procedures are rare.
- The availability of projects and clinical work is variable. Please be flexible in regards to the availability of projects and location and scope of work. Something you may not have been interested in initially may prove to be a valuable learning experience. Projects decided upon beforehand are subject to change.
- Stipends are generally not available and you are encouraged to seek outside funding if necessary.
- SMRU can help answer general visa questions but we are unable to provide visa support services. Contact us if you have visa questions.
- Although there is no formal dress code, modesty is expected for all work and work related activities. This includes covering shoulders and wearing dresses, skirts or shorts that are near knee length. Generally, dress is very casual, even at the clinic sites. If working in the laboratory, appropriate footwear must be worn (i.e. close toed shoes). However, at the clinic sites, flip flops or shoes that can be easily taken on and off are the most practical.
- Vaccinations (new or booster) should be completed at least one month BEFORE arrival. This ensures that you will be immune to pathogens. You will be asked to sign a confirmation of vaccine status.
- Malaria prophylaxis is not necessary if you will be living in Mae Sot and visiting the clinics during the day.

- SMRU local staff have considerable work experience (and life experience) in comparison to their educational level or English ability. They may have more knowledge on specialised topics (ie. premature neonates, tropical disease management). Visitors should understand and respect the opinions and decisions of local staff. You will also need to have the patience to speak slowly and use simple consistent English words to communicate. (example: difficult, tough, hard are used interchangeably to describe a situation. Using one word “difficult” consistently to describe anything “not easy to do” requires patience and presence of mind).
- “Giving back” is highly encouraged. It is easy for visitors to leave SMRU with more knowledge, exposure, experience and items to put on your curriculum vitae; all of which are based on decades of hard work from local and long term staff. Try to find ways to give back to patients, staff and team (ie. daily ward rounds with bedside teaching, lectures, hands on training, making educational materials, bringing needed medical equipment, taking responsibility in areas that might not be your primary interest). All ideas are welcome. Before bringing medical supplies, please discuss with your mentor or supervisor.

Best of luck,
The SMRU team