

Information on the MSc Research Project

The research project is a key component of your MSc programme, counting for 60 of the 180 credits. Therefore, it is very important that you spend sufficient time planning your project so that it is as successful and rewarding as possible. The information below addresses the questions commonly asked about the MSc project. If you have any further queries, each programme has a designated member of staff responsible for the organisation of projects. You can find their contact details on our web site on the appropriate programme page.

Where can I do my project?

You can complete your project in Liverpool, either by carrying out experimental work in one of our laboratories or by undertaking a desk-based study (e.g. a literature-based study or analysis of data). Alternatively, you can go overseas to collect your data provided you have additional funds to cover the costs involved (see below) and subject to a satisfactory risk assessment and ethics approval (if applicable). International students may return to their home country to conduct their data collection if they wish. Students typically spend around 8 weeks in the field.

How much does a project cost?

The standard MSc fee covers the cost of a desk-based study conducted in Liverpool.

If you wish to conduct a project overseas, you will be asked to pay a fee of £3500 in addition to the standard fee. Payment of this fee at the beginning of the programme is to assure us that you have the necessary funding to conduct an overseas project before we make commitments with overseas hosts but it will be returned to you in full when you need to make the arrangements for your project. The figure of £3500 is based on the experience of previous students and allows maximum flexibility in choice and design of project. However, costs vary widely depending on the location and the nature of the work and it is usually possible to design a project at a lower cost if your budget is restricted. Typically, students pay £700 - £1000 for their flight, visa and insurance. All students are required to book travel through the LSTM approved travel agent and take out travel insurance through the LSTM approved scheme (current cost is £100). Other expenses to take into account are visas, accommodation, medical costs (vaccinations / anti-malarial drugs), costs of obtaining local ethical clearance and local travel. Clinical or laboratory-based projects may involve purchase of chemicals, whilst projects involving interviews often require the services of a local interpreter / research assistant.

How do I organise my project?

There are a variety of projects depending on which MSc programme you are following and your individual research interests. You are advised to give some thought before arriving in Liverpool as to the type of project you might like to carry out, including approaching potential overseas hosts if appropriate. The School keeps a database of potential projects, some with overseas partners. Shortly after the start of the programme, we hold a Project Fair at which you can find out more about the research interests of the LSTM staff and the potential projects on offer. You can devise your own project provided a suitable LSTM supervisor can be identified.

In Semester 1, you will follow a module in Research Methods, during which you will get help in designing and costing your project, completing your risk assessment and obtaining ethics approval (if necessary). You will also meet with your supervisor to get one-to-one advice.

Can I change my mind about the type of project I want to do?

If you have paid the £3500 project fee but subsequently decide to undertake a project in Liverpool, the project monies will be refunded. Likewise, switching from a project based in Liverpool to one involving overseas data collection is not a problem provided you have the necessary funding and allow sufficient time to make this change and to complete project preparation. However, please note that overseas projects are inevitably more expensive than those based in Liverpool and you will need access to additional funds.

If you are hoping to obtain sponsorship to help with your fees, you should include the full overseas project fee of £3500 in any sponsorship application in order to keep your options open regarding choice of project. Otherwise, you are likely to have difficulty in obtaining additional funding from your sponsor once the programme has started. Please be advised that it is quite the norm for external sponsors to refuse to pay for the overseas project.

Options:

1. You pay your £3,500 up front and develop your overseas project. Monies are refunded to you in April to fund your flights, etc... less insurance cost.
2. You pay your £3,500 over 2 instalments in Sept & Jan so the monies are available to you in April – same as above
3. You decide you have the funds but don't want LSTM to hold these for you – that's acceptable. However, please bear in mind that projects are developed from very early in Semester 1. There are pieces of assessed work based on this project such as a Project Proposal, various ethics processes, etc... Please be advised that if you find yourself in a position where you don't have the funds anymore and need to switch to a desk-based project, that you will need to produce additional pieces of work for the new project and may be subject to delays in ethics by switching projects late. This will not count as mitigating circumstances for additional time.

DISSERTATION PROJECTS FOR MSc TROPICAL AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND MSc TROPICAL PAEDIATRICS

The independent research project is often the highlight of the MSc programme, combining all the skills and knowledge acquired during the course.

Dissertation projects chosen by students studying on the MSc programmes *Tropical and Infectious Diseases* (MTID) and *Tropical Paediatrics* (MTP) can take different forms and be based on fieldwork, laboratory work, an evidence-based review of the literature or a combination of these approaches. The topic of the project can be proposed by a client of LSTM or organised by the student, sometimes in discussion with their employer or funder. Most MTP and MTID students carry out a fieldwork-based project overseas, but we can also accommodate students who wish to conduct a project which does not require travel abroad. Students normally spend an 8-10 week period overseas collecting their data and starting their analysis.

Our experience is that the cost for an overseas field-based research project for MTID or MTP is about £3,500. This is paid in addition to the standard Masters Fee. Costs are variable between projects but this would typically include the following: flights, visas, health and travel insurance, vaccinations, accommodation, local ethics committee costs (if applicable), local travel, research assistant/interpreter stipend costs, and possibly an honorarium to the host institution.

The MTID and MTP tuition fee covers the cost of a desk-based project. Students undertaking a clinical Masters programme who wish to undertake a laboratory-based project (also known as a wet project) at LSTM will be asked to pay an additional fee to cover their bench consumables cost. This can vary depending on the project, but most estimates are between £500-£1000.

Below are examples of previous research projects undertaken by MTID / MTP students.

MTID:

Active case finding among household contacts of sputum smear positive TB patients in Mbeya, Tanzania

The accuracy of two different rapid diagnostic tests for the detection of peripheral and placental malaria in pregnant women in Southwest Sumba, Indonesia

Liposomal Amphotericin B for the treatment of patients with visceral leishmaniasis and HIV co-infection in Northwest Ethiopia

MTP:

A study to describe the measles outbreak and case vaccine efficacy during the 2010/11 measles epidemic in Lusaka, Zambia

Prevalence of chronic suppurative otitis media and its associated hearing impairment in school aged children, Socotra Island, Yemen

Clinical outcome and disability profile at 6-12 months following acute encephalitis in Nepali children

Interferon-gamma- based assays and tuberculin skin test responses of children exposed to adults in Kathmandu, Nepal