

Academic contributions at LSTM: definition, obtaining approval and assessment of merit.

Introduction.

This paper sets the 'external contributions'¹ that academics may make at LSTM in context. It is meant for the guidance of academic employees, external applicants for appointments at LSTM and internal applicants seeking promotion.

Background: an extract² from our website page '*About LSTM*'.

1. LSTM was the first institution in the world dedicated to research and teaching in the field of tropical medicine. We work across the world to fulfil our mission of reducing the burden of sickness and mortality in disease endemic countries. We do this through the delivery of effective interventions which improve human health and are relevant to the poorest communities.
2. Our worldwide reputation and the caliber of our research outputs has secured funding to lead consortia and product development partnerships aimed at reducing or eliminating the impact of diseases upon the world's poorest people.
3. As a teaching institution, we attract students from a wide variety of countries and work in partnership with health ministries, universities, research institutions and industry worldwide to train the next generation of doctors, scientists, researchers and health professionals.
4. The provision of technical assistance is a major component of LSTM's mission of promoting the improved health of the poor and disadvantaged peoples. LSTM consultancy improves health systems in developing countries whilst helping to inform our teaching and research agendas.

¹ 'External contributions' is a term used by LSTM in its Appointments and Promotions policies. The same concept may be referred to as 'wider contributions' by other organisations.

² This extract has been edited – some sections have been deleted for brevity but no new material has been inserted.

Why is this paper needed?

5. Academics³ (and those seeking new appointments or promotion) have always needed to know what aspects of their work will be approved by LSTM as a proper use of salaried time. Traditionally, this has been done by discussion (between the academic and her/his line manager⁴) often, but not always, in the setting of appraisal⁵.
6. The *San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA)*⁶ has been adopted by the Wellcome Trust which requires that HEIs set out how they will implement DORA's core principles. The present discussion paper is needed as part of that process to allow 'wider contributions' to be given recognition.

What do academics do? Major headings.

7. Academics with R&T contracts⁷ spend proportions of their time on research, teaching⁸ and 'internal' (see below) activities, and aspects of personal training (while academics with T contracts often do no research, some spend time on *pedagogic research*). The split between these headings is agreed by discussion with the Head of Department).
8. **Research** and **teaching** need no further definition and the measurement of academic performance in research have been defined elsewhere (see <https://lstm.sharepoint.com/Departments/HR/Documents/Research%20Performance%20Guidance%20Document%20-%20June%202020.pdf#search=research%20performance>)
9. Most academics are obliged to undertake **personal training**. This may be:
 - a. Training offered by LSTM, which it considers to be mandatory.

³ The word 'academics' refers here to staff with open-ended contracts who are employed on either 'research & teaching' (R&T) or 'teaching only' (T) contracts. It therefore includes Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, Readers and Professors.

⁴ Usually the Head of Department.

⁵ The word 'appraisal' is used here to future-proof this paper against periodic changes in the terminology used by HR.

⁶ See - <https://sfedora.org/>

⁷ Some R&T academics hold 'Honorary Consultant Contracts' in NHS trusts or via the National Institute for Health Protection. These people deliver clinical service obligations (in addition to the roles set out in #7) that have been agreed by LSTM in the form of 'Job Plans'. In addition, some R&T academics without 'Honorary Consultant Contracts' deliver clinical service roles in overseas countries: such roles need agreement with LSTM Line Managers.

⁸ The term 'teaching', as used here, excludes: (i) SIFT-funded teaching of medical students within NHS Trusts. Such teaching activities are recorded in clinical academic Job Plans; and (ii) PhD student supervision, which is considered to be an aspect of research work.

- b. Continuing professional development mandated by external professional bodies.
10. The term '**internal contribution**' usually means 'a role that officers of LSTM have invited the academic to perform'⁹. However, academics may sometimes agree to such internal contributions of her/his own volition¹⁰. It is impossible to provide an exhaustive list, but the main group headings are:
- a. Leadership and management roles within LSTM e.g. director of a research centre.
 - b. Work on LSTM committees and working groups.
 - c. Mentoring of more junior colleagues.
11. '**External contributions**' are usually taken on by academics of her/his own volition but permission is needed from line managers (often the Head of Department) that salaried time may be used for such activities. In deciding whether to grant approval, line managers will consider the proportion of the person's time would be spent on external activities and its impact on their other responsibilities. It is impossible to give an exhaustive list of examples but the term includes service on national and international committees (including those of funders and of the WHO), editorial boards, research networking and technical assistance or consultancy for the benefit of LMICs.
- a. Where relevant to the particular staff member, external contributions might form part of the 10-days' professional development called for under the Vitae Concordat on Researcher Careers.
 - b. If a self-directed activity is recognised and approved by LSTM (usually a decision of the line-manager) then it might be used as a reason to reduce the normal objectives expected in research and/or teaching (this would be a matter for discussion between the academic and her/his line manager).
 - c. Permission from LSTM to use salaried time for external contributions will be subject to periodic review by line-managers who will use their academic judgement to decide on its worth to the organisation (and, therefore, whether the activity may continue). Academics may feel that they should maintain a personal record of their achievements within their external contributions to use as the basis for discussion with their line manager.

⁹ The equity of requests to academics regarding internal roles is not a matter for the present paper. However, line-managers should be mindful of such equity issues when making requests, particularly to staff on part-time contracts and staff with 'carer' responsibilities.

¹⁰ Whether such voluntary internal contributions should continue is usually assessed at Annual Review

12. Some self-directed external activities (which the academic holds to be of value to society) may not be judged (by the line manager) to be a good use of salaried time. These activities may not be undertaken during working hours.
13. Where permission for an activity is refused (or withdrawn after review) by a line-manager academics may appeal the decision to the relevant Dean.