

# **A Guide to Organising Your Elective Placement**

## **1. Deciding where to go**

Some options to consider:

- Do you want to go to a large, world class teaching hospital?
- Do you want to go to a hospital or facility that specialises in a particular area of medicine?
- Do you want to go to a smaller hospital or into a general practice or other clinical setting?
- Do you want to use the elective to test your interest in and commitment to making a specialty your career?
- Do you want to stay in Australia and in Victoria, or do you want to travel? Do you have a particular destination in mind?
- Do you want to go to an indigenous, rural or remote setting?
- Metropolitan, urban or suburban?
- First world, developing or third world?
- Do you want as much hands on experience or more observational experience?

## **2. Some actions to take**

- Work out what you want to gain: knowledge, clinical experience, skills development, networking, travel and cultural understanding
- Talk to people you know including friends, family, fellow students and lecturers about their experiences and their points of view
- Talk to people who work in the area or organisations you are considering; ask how well a placement there will meet your needs
- Call hospitals and talk to HR about what is offered, support for students, expectations and how to apply.
- Prepare an excellent resume highlighting your interest in the organisation or what it offers and pointing out what you might offer them. Also write a personalised cover letter making it clear what you are asking for. Find a sample letter and a Guide to Electives in Resources on the Deakin University Careers and Employment website.

### 3. Practical questions

- Where can you afford to go?
- What arrangements would have to be made, including accommodation, visa, suspending part time work, immunisations?
- Is it safe and sensible to go where you want?
- Do you speak the language and will this affect your learning and participation?
- Will it be possible to arrange in the time available? How long will it take?

### 4. Finding a place/supervisor

- Be aware that you may have to send out many emails requesting a placement before you succeed. Be patient and start early.
- Can you arrange a placement through a relative, family friend, work colleague?
- Do you have a vague idea of someone you're planning to approach, having heard good reports about the place or to follow a specific interest?
- Make sure you **confirm** your placement, around 4 weeks before the agreed commencement date, **in writing**
- No idea? Well read on!

### 5. Suggestions for placements

Australian Centre for Post traumatic Mental Health

University of Sydney teaching hospitals

Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health

Northern Territory rural undergraduate support and coordination program

### 6. Resources and links

- Deakin Careers and Employment: [www.deakin.edu.au/careers/resources](http://www.deakin.edu.au/careers/resources)
- TEN: The Electives Network (you need to be an Medical Defence Australia (MDA) Member to access this), <http://www.electives.net/>

You can, however get onto their facebook page and get some ideas from there:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Electives-Network/11303384004>

- Medical Elective Books  
*Beyond Borders* by Hamish Graham.  
*The Medic's Guide to Work and Electives Around the World*, 2nd Edition, 2004 by Mark Wilson.

Popular Travel Guides:

*Lonely Planet* website [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com) and guidebooks

## 7. Preparing to go

- Do your homework about where you are going and what you should take, and arrange for a safe and successful time. For example, go to the DFAT Smart Traveller site.
- Take supplies such as anti malarials, hand sanitiser, sunscreen, gastrolyte, electrical charger, camera.

## 8. Making the most of it

- Be clear about your learning objectives and how to achieve them.
- Be flexible and adapt these to the situation
- Learn from the experts who supervise you and keep an open mind
- Take books for reference and on-going study
- Do as much as you can with patients when given the opportunity
- Observe, take notes and ask questions.

**You are limited only by your interests, your imagination, whether you can organise a placement and of course, your wallet!**

The University of Queensland Medical School has a comprehensive Electives database

Visit:

[http://uqms.org/component/option,com\\_wrapper/Itemid,322/](http://uqms.org/component/option,com_wrapper/Itemid,322/)

There you will find opportunities in various countries. Some of these include:

### **Africa**

Egypt, Cairo: Ain Shams University

Ghana, Accra: Unite for Sight

### **South Africa**

Gauteng, Johannesburg: Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital

**Australia**

Broken Hill: Broken Hill Hospital

**Cambodia**

Phnom Penh: National Paediatric Hospital

Siem Reap: Angkor Hospital for Children

**Canada**

Alberta Calgary: University of Calgary Medical School Foothills Hospital

**East Timor**

Dili: Bairo Pite Clinic

**India**

Dehli, New Delhi: St Stephen's Hospital

**Israel**

Haifa: Rambam Medical Centre

**Vietnam**

Hue: Hue Central Hospital

**Samoa**

Upolu Apia: Tupua Tamasese Meole Hospital

**Solomon Islands**

Malaita Island Auki: Kilu'ufi Hospital (Auki) and Auki Town Clinic

**United States**

Colorado Denver: University of Colorado Health Sciences Center