

International Training Fellowship in The UK --- My Experience

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Editors Introduction :

The author completed her postgraduation in Otorhinolaryngology from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, then availed of the UK MTI scheme, through the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh to pursue a training fellowship at a tertiary UK centre.

I was working as a Senior Resident in ENT at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi until August 2020, when I got an opportunity to become an International Training Fellow at the Department of Otorhinolaryngology, The John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford in the UK.

This was a 2-year MTI^[1] (Medical Training Initiative) fellowship under the supervision of the International Post Graduate Deanery^[2] of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.

The application and the interview process were through the NHS jobs website.

In preparation for the appointment, it was necessary that I had full GMC (General Medical Council) registration with license to practice. I sat the IELTS^[3] examination - the prerequisite for registration was an overall band score of 8.5 with a band score of 8 in each of the sub-sections of the examination. I was then issued a certificate of sponsorship by the appointing institution, with which I applied for my work visa. The prerequisites took around six months to complete. However, due to the Covid 19 situation my arrival in the UK was delayed by a year.

I arrived in the UK in September 2020 and was required to self-isolate for two weeks during the pandemic. The pre-employment checks and

occupational health checkup took another two weeks, and after this I could start my work.

I was given a Specialist Registrar level post and was required to perform Registrar on-call shifts with Consultant support, independent clinics and Consultant supervised theatre sessions.

The College nominated one of the Consultants as my educational supervisor (ES) and the Consultants whom I worked with were my clinical supervisors. To begin the post, I had to sign a learning agreement on the ISCP^[4] (Intercollegiate Surgical Curriculum Programme) with my ES. This included setting objectives in terms of knowledge, teaching, research, clinical and operative skills and Continuing Professional Development (CPD). I worked to achieve these objectives and had regular interim reviews with my educational supervisor and assessments by the specialty lead of the College. To make sure I achieved these objectives and recorded them for College assessment I did regular work based assessments with the Consultants on the ISCP portfolio. The College also gave feedback on the aspects that I needed to improve in my portfolio after each interim review.

The initial period was challenging as it was during the pandemic. There was little regular work in the hospital and it was also difficult to

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make friends and maintain relationships. However, overall it was a great learning opportunity and I found that I enjoyed my work in terms of academics, surgery and research as much as I did in AIIMS, New Delhi. Working in a different health care system imparts confidence and helps you learn and practice the best of both systems. Also a demographically different population poses a different disease profile. Several infections or health problems may be more common in a geographically different patient population and this provides an invaluable learning opportunity.

The main challenges I encountered and had to tackle while adjusting to the new health care system were the language barrier (primarily due to the different accent), and understanding the cultural differences. Following the principles of Good Medical Practice^[5] and seeking help from fellow colleagues and Consultants greatly helped me in overcoming these challenges.

The MTI is a good learning opportunity for the above given reasons and it is important to adapt to the local healthcare system to be successful.

References :

1. https://www.entuk.org/professionals/training/medical_training_initiative.aspx
2. <http://www.rcsed.ac.uk/the-college/international-postgraduate-deanery>
3. <https://www.ielts.org>
4. <https://www.iscp.ac.uk>
5. <https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/good-medical-practice>