



BMJ careers fair
Oct 8-9th 2010
West Midlands

Working abroad

INTRODUCTION:

- There are lots of different ways and different times to work abroad.
- The main thing to remember is to try to use time abroad to increase your competitiveness in the jobs market rather than decrease it.

Disclaimer: The talk was given by a surgeon who made it fairly clear that he thought taking time out just to travel or to work in Australia was akin to career suicide. He focussed more on ways working abroad can enhance your employability.

WAYS TO WORK ABROAD:

1. **Training posts**
Substitute for UK training years but can do them in approved hospitals abroad.
2. **Educational Fellowships**
Experience gained from working in specialist units in order to acquire specific skills.
3. **Research Fellowships**
Research work aiming towards gaining a higher degree.
Not usually working clinically, more often lab based.
4. **Clinical Experience**
Working in isolated or developing countries in order to gain valuable experience you would not get in the UK.
E.g. Particularly valuable in training to do infectious diseases as some presentations that are not common in the UK may be endemic elsewhere.
5. **Specialist contribution to local healthcare abroad**
A way of working abroad when you get to a more senior level.
Includes volunteering for relief agencies such as Medicines Sans Frontiers.
Volunteering to assist in humanitarian relief operations or national development programmes.
6. **Travelling and working**
Living and working somewhere like Australia for a year.

WHEN TO GO ABROAD:

During foundation training?

Not really any provision to do FY1 abroad.

Can apply to defer FY2 if offered a research post abroad, however need to apply many months in advance and need to have the approval of your foundation programme director.

There are actually options to do FY2 abroad if you apply well in advance (within first 4-6 months of FY1).

- This is possible if you are offered an approved training post at an approved institution (approved posts available in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Singapore).
- You must still demonstrate that you have met all the required FY2 competencies/assessments and your original foundation programme director will still be responsible for signing you off.
- However, the UK foundation programme does not keep an updated list of approved posts.
- Best people to enquire to are your foundation programme administrator or director.

Between foundation training and speciality training?

Very common time for junior docs to take time out to travel and work.

In some cases, such as GP training, you can defer the offer of a training post for a year. However you need to be able to demonstrate a valid educational reason such as:

- Increasing your clinical experience by working in a specific post while abroad.
- Research opportunity.
- Needs approval from the head of the specialist school.
- Deferment of a job offer will not be encouraged if simply for travelling.

If you plan to take time out to travel and delay applying for ST training then you need to be aware:

- That you may have to apply for ST posts while you are still abroad.
- If you are still abroad at the time of job interviews then you need to fly back to attend the interview.
- The year abroad may affect your competitive standing either negatively or positively depending on what you did during the year.

E.g. if you plan to apply for core surgical training and have spent the year working in A&E in Sydney and learning to surf in your spare time then interviewers may not be impressed. However if you have worked in a specialist unit, become involved in audit or research or even just assisted in theatre in your spare time then this will all add to your portfolio and might even make you a more attractive candidate than someone just out of FY2.

During speciality training?

During this time working abroad opportunities tend to be for the purpose of career development.

Research Fellowships:

Are looked upon favourably when applying for consultant posts.

May be abroad at specialist centres.

Should lead to an approved higher degree.

Usually 1-2 years, salary paid by institution at which you are doing research.

Need to consider whether you may have family by this point and if so whether to bring them abroad.

Posts usually taken up after ST2.

Specialist Training Fellowships:

Common in surgical specialities.

Usually one year.

Taken at the end of training prior to becoming a consultant.

Consist of a post where you gain specific experience working in a specialist field.

Out of programme experience:

For trainees in later ST years.

Working in developing countries – can be valuable experience in paediatrics, obstetrics, infectious diseases etc.

Won't count towards training and are usually poorly paid.

Need permission from head of school and will have to be discussed by local training committee.

Out of programme training:

See separate review of out of programme training.

Counts toward training.

Voluntary services overseas (VSO) have paed and obs and gynae training posts available so taking a year in one of these posts will not hold back your career.

Again, requires permission from head of school.

During GP/Consultant years?

Again, good opportunities to have periods of study and clinical work in specialised units in order to gain skills.

Also volunteer abroad opportunities with VSO or MSF.

The trust or practice you work for would need to agree and you salary would be used to fund a locum therefore you would not be paid your regular wage.

CONTACT DETAILS OF AGENCIES THAT RECRUIT DOCTORS ABROAD:

- Balance! Healthcare – recruits GPs in Australia – www.balancehealthclinic.com.au
- New South Wales Health – work in Australia – www.liveandwork-nswhealth.com.au
- Medrecruit – recruitment in Australia and New Zealand – www.medrecruit.com
- Terrigal Medical Centre – near Sydney – www.terrigalmedicalcentre.com.au
- Queensland Health – www.health.qld.gov.au/workforus
- New Zealand Doctors – recruitment in New Zealand – www.healthcareers.org.nz
- Western Australia – recruitment – www.overseasdoctors.health.wa.gov.au
- Alberta Canada – GPs – www.AlbertaCanada.com
- Africa Health Placements – www.ahp.org.za

GENERAL ADVICE:

- If planning to go abroad make sure you start preparation and organisation well in advance.
- Get any agreement from head of school or foundation programme director in writing.
- Don't forget to continue to work on your portfolio if possible.

Review by:

Emma Johnstone, FY2, Wigan Infirmary

Details of working abroad recruitment agencies collated by:

Geraldine Murphy, FY2, North Manchester Hospital, Pennine acute trust.