

Saba Syed AAGBI Elective Report

I always knew I wanted to do my elective in Anaesthetics. After choosing it as my special study module in fourth year and gaining further experience in final year, I really did enjoy it and felt it could be a career option for me, so I wanted to learn more. I went on to do a six week medical elective in two locations; London and Dublin.

University College London Hospital, London UK

I spent my first four weeks at UCLH. I was able to experience a variety of theatre specialties including; ENT, T&O, Paediatrics, Obs &Gynae, Dentistry, Upper GI and General Surgery. My days started early in the morning to help with pre-operative assessments. This involved taking patients' histories, assessing their airway, explaining what would happen in the anaesthetic room, and possible post-op complications. I then had to create an anaesthetic plan and present back to my consultant. I had never done this before, but it was great to be given the responsibility to do so. In theatres, I was able to perform WHO checklists, place cannulas (lots!), set up IVI lines, draw up medications, perform bag and mask ventilation with airway management, place LMAs and perform intubations. I definitely felt part of the team. I was also able to witness a variety of nerve blocks, spinals and epidurals as well as line insertions such as arterial, femoral and central lines. No day was ever the same!

My days on call were particularly interesting. I got to witness a variety of scenarios ranging from prolonged GTC seizures to cardiac arrests. I was able to practice my A-E assessment whilst also refreshing my knowledge on resuscitation and management of emergencies. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at UCLH. The staff were very friendly and helpful, and in terms of anaesthetic experience I could not have asked for more.

The Mater Misericordiae Hospital and The Mater Private Hospital, Dublin Ireland

I spent my final two weeks at The Mater. Unfortunately, it was not until I arrived that I found out my first week in anaesthetics could not happen as the lead was on annual leave. I therefore spent my first week in oncology. I was initially disappointed, however in hind sight, I am pleased I was able to learn more about a specialty I had not a lot of experience in whilst also spending time on a ward.

The following week I was back in anaesthetics and the experience was very similar to UCLH – a wide variety of theatres, got to perform airway management and insert LMAs. I was able to attend grand rounds which was very interesting. I managed to speak to anaesthetists about their training in Ireland and how it differs to the UK, including the importance of fellowships abroad. I also learnt more about the Irish healthcare system. It made me realise how fortunate we are to have the NHS (but I also realised its drawbacks too). It was good to discuss the pros and cons of working in both the UK and Ireland. Dublin is a great city and The Mater was a fantastic hospital to work in. The doctors were welcoming and I gained a lot of experience not only in anaesthetics and oncology, but also their healthcare system.

In Summary

I felt I had the perfect balance by doing my elective in both London and Dublin and am pleased I was able to achieve what I had set out to do. I have met some wonderful people and have gained some great experiences. I especially would like to thank the AAGBI Foundation for their funding and making this elective possible.