

# Template for Elective Formal Report

Please use this template when writing up your formal elective report. Please refer to page 4 and 5 in your elective log book for what to include in your report. Reports submitted that are not based on this template will be returned to the student for amendment. Please upload your completed report to the drop-box on moodle under CP3 and the A14TTP.

## Personal Information:

Student Name: James Bunce

Dates of Elective Placement: From 20/04/15 To 10/06/15

## Host contact information

Name of Supervisor: Dr Lynn Dowds

Supervisor contact details: drldowds@gmail.com

Official Name of Hospital: David Gordon Memorial Hospital

Address of Hospital: David Gordon Memorial hospital, Livingstonia, Malawi

Medical Speciality: General adult, paediatrics, obstetrics

Title of elective report: A medical elective at DGMH, Livingstonia

**Specify the personal learning outcomes for your elective as set out on your elective risk form. Relate each learning outcome to relevant Outcomes for Graduates as specified in the GMC document Tomorrow's Doctors (2009).**

- 1. Invest my time and energy into a hospital that is under constant pressure due to limited funding and resources**
- 2. Grow in knowledge and confidence in the clinical setting, in preparation for our first year as a foundation doctor in August 2015**
- 3. Appreciate the difference between our healthcare structure in England, compared to that available in Malawi**
- 4. Experience a completely different culture and become fully involved in the community, particularly in the local church**

## Keywords (to assist future students with their elective searches):

David Gordon memorial hospital  
Livingstonia  
Malawi  
Mission hospital

**Refective Elective report** - your elective report should be between 750-1000 words long and should include the following points:

- Details about the organisation of your elective
- Practical organisational tips, resources, advice, lessons learn't, information about the country you have visited to help future students
- Comments specifically aimed at the academic staff with regards to the organisational process and any issues that may have arised during your elective

The elective planning process began by selecting a country and after a short Internet search a hospital. DGMH contacts were found online and I drafted and sent a quick email to enquire about spending an elective with them. My initial contact was very quick to reply and before long I had an informal, and then formal place to spend my elective. Initially all that was required was registration with the Malawi medical council, and for me to bring a white coat with me, I later found that registration with the medical council was unnecessary so from the hospitals point of view there was little I needed to do, it was up to me to make any travel arrangements to arrive at the hospital, when I liked. The initial contact then left to study medicine so we were put in touch with the doctor and new director. Frustratingly she was less prompt or helpful with her replies so we went elsewhere for information and help. The Raven trust were very helpful with information, and others who had been before were able to help.

Once we arrived in Malawi I managed to arrange a lift up to Livingstonia from Mzuzu, the nearest town. Livingstonia is perched 1000m above the lake up a very steep and rough track, 4x4 is necessary. The hospital and village is very remote so any money needs to be drawn from Mzuzu before you make the journey. Accommodation is not self catering but any other non perishable food supplies should also be got from Mzuzu as Livingstonia has few poorly stocked local shops. Fruit is in abundance but little else is.

Each day in DGMH starts with staff devotional time for 30 minutes, followed by a nursing handover. A warm welcome and initiation into the team is guaranteed and I was made to feel very at home. Ward rounds are on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and are done by either the doctor or clinical officers, once comfortable I was given a ward and did my own ward rounds, managing within capability. Tuesday's and Thursday's were for elective procedures which usually were basic things like hernia repairs, but also included the odd surprise like a large teratoma.

Generally the hospital was very quiet, there is plenty of time to visit the local coffee shop and get to know staff, don't expect to be busy every day. However there were several incidences of critically sick patients whom I found myself managing and escalating care - typically I had no idea what I would be doing at the start of each day, some days very little happened, others were slightly more dramatic. I quickly learnt that you have to go looking for things to do other wise it would be easy to sit back and twiddle thumbs. Once I had gained the trust of the director though I was rarely bored.

Other days were spent on remote clinic visits, some by boat, others by car. Much of these days were traveling but they were great experiences none the less.

The hospital are planning to build accommodation which will be self catering for students and visiting staff, until then the lodges are the only option. These were surprisingly expensive and little could be done about the cost, it was approximately £20 per night and meals were a couple of pounds on top.

Other things to consider; there are a lot of dogs around and some are less friendly than others - rabies jab is a must. Women are expected to wear a long dress or skirt in the hospital, trousers aren't really acceptable. It's very remote and potentially lonely - evenings could be long as the sun sets early and there are no lights so you need to be indoors after dark - I imagine 6 weeks there on my own would have got quite lonely at times.

Overall I would highly recommend an elective at DGMH, it is very welcoming, an excellent learning experience and a potentially life changing time for anyone willing to throw them selves in. There was no 'coordinator' or anyone to help with arrangements but if you don't let that put you off you can get fully immersed in African village life which is why you would go to somewhere like Livingstonia.