

Name: Shi Sum Poon

University: Liverpool

Placement Dates: September - October 2015 (3 weeks)

Organisation	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Teaching	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Surgical Exposure	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Hands on Experience	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Hospitality	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Accommodation	★ ★ ★ ★
Overall Experience	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

'From saphenous vein harvests to median sternotomy and thoracotomy, this placement far exceeded my initial expectation of hands on experience at the cardiothoracic unit centre at James Cook University Hospital.

Immediately after my return from a surgical elective in the USA, I spent nearly 3 weeks at the cardiothoracic department in James Cook University Hospital under the supervision of Mr Jonathan Ferguson. The undergraduate department was very efficient for the arrangement of the placement and I was able to settle down at ease at the resident accommodation the day before the placement, which is only 5-10 minutes away from the hospital. My aim for this placement is to enhance my surgical experience, exposure and technical skills in cardiothoracic surgery as a student and I was able to start straightway on the first day with warm regards from the staffs in the operating room. With the arrangement from Mr Ferguson, I rotated between 3 operating theatres on a daily basis and was free to assist/observe any cases from the list as part of the team. There are plenty of learning opportunities in the theatre for cardiac/thoracic cases and typically I was able to perform basics of cardiothoracic surgery such as saphenous vein closures under the supervision of surgical care practitioners. Do not worry if you are like a left-hander (like myself), you will get the chance to use left-handed instruments and learn left-handed surgical techniques too, a unique opportunity at James Cook Hospital!

Apart from the hands on experience, the placement was well organised and the teaching was excellent. Under the tutelage of doctors at James Cook, I was able to enhance my interpretation skills for coronary angiography, CT chest and X-ray for cardiac and thoracic cases during the pre-operative assessment and the clinically-oriented anatomy and physiology of the heart and lungs intraoperatively. Mr Ferguson was incredibly supportive throughout the placement and I was able to maintain a good network of connection at the end of the placement. So far this is one of the best experience I've had at a cardiothoracic surgery unit and I would strongly recommend all prospective students who are interested to learn more about cardiothoracic surgery to give it a go!