

Options available for medical experience abroad

Consider your options carefully — all of them have their advantages and disadvantages, and there may be restrictions on what you're able to do.

Depending on your circumstances, it may be possible to:

- take time out **between** training programmes (eg between foundation and specialty training)
- take time out **during** a training programme
- arrange a placement abroad that would **count towards** your accredited training
- complete some of your training abroad

GP checking patients ear

Where to go

Find out more about where to go by visiting our webpage on [medical experience elsewhere in the EEA](#) ^[1] and [medical experience outside the EEA](#) ^[2]. Further guidance on opportunities to volunteer in developing countries, including the UK International Trauma and Register (UKIETR) can be found by accessing our [volunteering abroad for doctors](#) ^[3] page.

You must make sure you adequately plan your return to the UK after training abroad. [Find out more information about doctors planning their return to the UK.](#) ^[4]

When to go

Everyone is different and therefore the ideal time for studying and working abroad will differ from individual to individual. Make sure you consider all your options, depending on your circumstances and where you are up to with your career and training. The information below should help you decide.

After medical school

As long as you abide by any regulations in force from the [GMC](#) ^[5] or the [UK Foundation Programme Office \(UKFPO\)](#) ^[6] regarding maximum time gaps between graduating from medical school and starting your foundation programme, it is possible to take time out between the two. You can use the time to undertake a variety of activities, such as travelling or gaining some experience of different medical environments either in the UK or overseas to enhance your knowledge and future career development. It is advisable to let your medical school know if you are planning to take a gap before foundation to facilitate the transfer of information between it and the foundation school at a later date.

During foundation

If you want to go abroad during the foundation programme or between F1 and F2, then you are encouraged to talk your foundation school director or foundation school programme director. This is so you can arrange time away from the programme and check what possibilities there'll be for you to return to an F2 post later. There'll usually be a process for time out and one for F2 abroad and you can check the foundation school's website for local details. Generally it is not encouraged for doctors to go abroad during foundation.

After foundation

It's usually best to complete both the F1 and F2 years of your [foundation training](#) ^[7] before working or travelling abroad. This ensures that, should you want to return to the UK for specialty training, you'll already have the required competencies signed off so you should be eligible to apply right away.

Taking time out between foundation and specialty training is often considered to be the best option. However, this does depend on your own circumstances, and whether this would be the right time for you.

- read the real-life stories written by F2 doctors who either studied abroad or took a year out of their studies at the end of foundation
- listen to what specialty doctors say about taking time out between foundation and specialty training

During specialty training

You could get a placement abroad during specialty training which would count towards your accredited training, though training abroad is harder and harder to obtain in certain areas. This is because of the difficulty of filling in gaps with locums. If this is something that interests you, it's important to research your options and discuss the matter with your training programme director, the Local Education and Training Board (LETB), the relevant Royal College, and the

GMC.

You should also read the Gold Guide (2020) [8] for advice on the guidelines surrounding 'Out of Programme' opportunities (OOPs). It is possible for you to apply for OOPs after one year in a specialty training programme, provided that you've made satisfactory progress and that the LETB agrees.

After specialty training

It is possible to obtain employment abroad after you've completed your training. This option gives you additional experience at a senior level and can be a valuable addition to your CV when you're applying for senior posts in the UK.

Doing all your specialty training abroad

Finally, it's possible to do all your specialty training abroad. However, it's imperative that you check you'll be eligible to practise in the UK when you return.

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/career-opportunities-doctors/medical-experience-abroad/options-available-medical-experience-abroad>

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/working-health/information-doctors/medical-experience-abroad/options-available-2> [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/working-health/information-doctors/medical-experience-abroad/options-available-1> [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/working-health/information-doctors/medical-experience-abroad/volunteering-abroad> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/working-health/information-doctors/medical-experience-abroad/doctors-planning-their> [5] http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/registration_applications/uk_internships.asp [6] <http://www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/pages/home> [7] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Foundation_training [8] <http://www.copmed.org.uk/publications/the-gold-guide>