

Real-life story - how I succeeded in foundation training

Sangeetha talks about her experience of how to make the most of the foundation programme.



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F1 Doctor

Employer or university

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Salary range

£20k-£30k

Introduction

After five to six years of medical school and getting through finals, most Foundation Year 1 doctors look forward to this year as a respite before specialty (ST) exams. However with ST applications starting in December of Foundation Year 2, I have found that this is probably the most valuable period in preparation for specialty applications, and we should gear ourselves to make full use of the opportunities available this year.

The F1 year

This is a good time to gain exposure to our career choices by applying for rotations which include our career options and by doing taster sessions. This is vital in making an informed career choice and in demonstrating commitment to our field of interest. It also provides a good opportunity in forming working relationships with people in the field. This is important in finding out about personal experiences, work-life balance, help with preparing for applications and advice related to career choice.

Do look out for courses within your field of interest to increase your knowledge in the area or to develop your career-related skills.

Making the most of the opportunities

Many opportunities to perform audits, posters or presentations would arise this year, and it would be good to try and do some in our fields of interest. FY1 is a good time to do it because we are more likely to come across diverse cases and projects as part of the job.

We should also look to gain teaching experience during the year, and this could be in the form of bedside teaching with medical students, or organising OSCE practice sessions. As recent graduates, we know what medical students want to be taught and our role in teaching medical students should not be underestimated.

Do look out for courses within your field of interest to increase your knowledge in the area or to develop your career-related skills. For example, surgical skills course for those interested in surgery.

During the course of the year, opportunities will arise either at work or via external courses, to learn various skills and procedures which can be recorded in the e-portfolio as part of DOPS or the logbook. It is important to look out and learn procedures which can provide an applicant with a competitive edge. For example, different suture [1] techniques for surgery and CVP line insertions for anaesthetics.

Advice for others

I have been very lucky to be part of a supportive working environment which has provided me these opportunities, and more importantly allowed me time and supervision to undertake them. However, as foundation trainees the onus is on us to grab opportunities and make full use of them and I hope my article has inspired you to make the most of the year.

Summary of areas to look into

1. rotations/taster sessions in career choice
 2. audits/posters/presentations
 3. teaching experience
 4. courses in field of interest
 5. develop related skills & procedures
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Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Suture>