

Student Elective Report

Name	Halimat Afolabi
Medical School	UCL
Email (optional)	

Country visited	South Africa
City or town	Cape Town
Hospital/unit/clinic	Groote Schuur
Dates visited	01/04/2019 – 30/04/2019
Supervising doctor	Prof. Donald Hudson
Contact details of your host:	

Please give an overview of what you saw / did (200 words max)	In the beginning of the elective I was given a time-table with the weekly activities and I was told that I could attend any of the sessions. This included elective surgeries and clinics e.g. maxillofacial, skin cancer, transgender etc. It was very self-directed, much like medical school, i.e. there is a timetable of various activities that are taking place and you just show up to what you want. No one is expecting you, but when you're there they do let you get involved e.g. when they are operating, they let you scrub in and hold instruments and cut sutures etc during the operation. The longer you're there, the more they'll let you do. I really enjoyed the flexibility of choosing what to do as this allowed me to see a wide range of cases. You are also permitted to attend the Red Cross Children's Hospital and see paediatric burns surgery.
What were the best things about the visit? (120 words max)	Overall, I have enjoyed this elective and my time in plastic surgery. I enjoyed regularly assisting in operations and sitting in on clinics was also very interesting as I saw a wide breadth of pathology. I had access to many of the facilities in the Health Sciences building, and I also attended some lectures in the medical school. It was interesting to see how similarly it operated to my own medical school in the UK. During the weekends I thoroughly enjoyed exploring the city. It has some of the most beautiful landscapes I have ever seen and from the top of one of its most famous tourist attractions, Table Mountain, there were breath taking panoramic views of the entire city.
What problems did you encounter? (120 words max)	The program in general was quite organised, however, the timetable I was given, didn't always match up with what was actually going on. My advice to students is to ensure that you make friends with the registrars who are relatively friendly and happy to have you assisting them in operations and can tell you the daily activities that are occurring. Don't be afraid to ask them for their number so that you can ask them questions if no one is around and you're not sure where to go. The

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	consultants are also friendly, and they occasionally ask you some trivia so try to brush up on anatomy, but don't worry if you don't know, they won't hold it against you.
What accommodation was provided?	No accommodation was provided but I found a great Airbnb that was a 15 minute walk from the hospital.
Would you recommend this to someone else? (explain if necessary)	The elective is great for students who want to be in a well-resourced environment, who are self-directed and looking for a relatively relaxed placement. If you want a lot of responsibility, to be integral to the team, and to do many procedures, I have heard Johannesburg and Columbia are good locations for that as they are very understaffed so rely on visiting medical students and staff.
Are you more likely to choose a career in plastic surgery as a result of this experience?	Yes, this experience again has highlighted how diverse plastic surgery is as a speciality, as well as how creative and interesting it is and I would love to be apart of this field.