



BAPRAS

British Association of Plastic
Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons

Student Elective Report

Please return to: secretariat@bapras.org.uk

Please complete this report form as honestly as possible so that others considering an elective may benefit from your experience. If you visited more than one place, please complete separate forms for each. Please bear in mind that we will be posting this report on our website for others to read.

Student Elective Report

Name	Youngjoo Kang
Medical School	University of Oxford
Email (optional)	

Country visited	Switzerland
City or town	Winterthur
Hospital/unit/clinic	Kantonsspital Winterthur (KSW), Department of Surgery
Dates visited	15. April 2022 – 15. May 2022
Supervising doctor	Prof Dr. med. Stefan Breitenstein
Contact details of your host:	

Please give an overview of what you saw / did (200 words max)	<p>For my placement in the Department of Surgery, I rotated through Trauma & Orthopaedics, Hand and Plastic Surgery, Surgery A&E and Urology.</p> <p>Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assisting in theatre. - Ward rounds for surgical inpatients. - Preparing patient admissions. - Clerking surgical patients in A&E. - Examining patients in clinic. <p>Things I saw:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Da Vinci robotic surgery for Urology. - Hip, knee, and shoulder arthroplasty. - Bowel resections, hernias, abscesses. - Otoplasty, breast reduction, DIEP flap breast reconstruction, ALT flap head and neck reconstruction.
What were the best things about the visit? (120 words max)	<p>The Swiss system relies on public and private funds. I learned how the financial costs of healthcare can affect practice. Each procedure combined the coverage agreed by health insurers, inpatient funds from the cantonal government and the surgeon's clinical rationale. Reassuringly, many aspects of surgery are universal across cultures and healthcare systems.</p> <p>Architecture, interior design, and technology can make a huge difference in the efficiency of surgery. KSW has a newly completed, modern set of operating theatres that are beautiful and state of the art.</p> <p>There was plenty of time in theatre and I was scrubbed in and assisting</p>

	from Day 1 until my last day. I spent approximately 70% of my entire elective assisting, which I was grateful for.
What problems did you encounter? (120 words max)	<p>There is currently insufficient staff to manage all wards. This meant ward space was closed off where patients couldn't safely be looked after due to understaffing, surgeries were cancelled because there were no free beds with the reduced ward space, and we had to reserve space for emergency admissions.</p> <p>Much of what we do in Surgery relies on muscle memory, including scrubbing in, theatre etiquette and culture. There were subtle differences between my experience at Oxford University Hospitals and KSW, and the surgical environment was more hierarchical than I was used to. This required some adjustment on my part.</p>
What accommodation was provided?	The hospital has staff accommodation 5 mins walking distance from the main hospital building. Hospital accommodation is not known for luxury, but it is clean and safe with modern showers and laundry facilities. Each room has a sink and TV as well as ample closet space and a single bed. Importantly, rent is cheap by Swiss standards.
Would you recommend this to someone else? (explain if necessary)	<p>While I valued this experience greatly for helping me clarify my own priorities in surgical training and practice, an elective at KSW is not for everyone. The person most suited to learn from an elective there needs a high level of fluency in German, with at least some knowledge of Medical German, and familiarity with Swiss/Germanic professional teams.</p> <p>Additionally, at this time KSW is facing a critical staff shortage that has affected surgical lists.</p>
Are you more likely to choose a career in plastic surgery as a result of this experience?	This elective clarified for me that my love of plastic surgery is indeed universal and independent of the Plastics department at Oxford University. It also made me realize the benefits of the UK training pathway, which may take more time but ensures a strong foundation in fundamental principles of medicine and surgery.