



BAPRAS

British Association of Plastic
Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons

Student Elective Report

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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	Charles Taylor
Medical School	Southampton
Email (optional)	

Country visited	Vietnam
City or town	Huế
Hospital/unit/clinic	Huế Central University Hospital
Dates visited	10/04/23 – 19/05/23
Supervising doctor	Dr Le Hong Phúc
Contact details of your host:	

Please give an overview of what you saw / did (200 words max)	<p>During my placement, I spent 6-weeks attached to the Plastic Surgery and Orthopaedic departments at Huế. These are very much one department in Huế Central Hospital and work closely together. Within this hospital, I was supervised by Dr Le Hong Phuc and worked with him in theatre to assist with the daily elective and emergency plastic cases. I was also fortunate enough to assist Dr Le Nghi Thanh Nhan, Dr Tran Nhat Tien, and Dr Dang Le Hoang Nam with their cases.</p> <p>I assisted in a range of operations including digital amputation, burn fasciotomy's plus airway access, wound debridement, thigh free flaps and more. By gaining first-hand exposure and being taught by the surgeons' in-between cases, I have developed a new appreciation for and understanding of, the complexities of plastic and reconstructive surgery.</p> <p>The days would start with a 7am morning meeting to discuss yesterday's and today's cases followed by a pre-operative ward-round and then theatre. During the morning meetings, I would see the patients I assisted with previously and follow them up over the following weeks. I would also identify the cases that I would like to assist with that day.</p>
What were the best things about the visit? (120 words max)	<p>The best aspects of my elective were certainly how welcoming the Hue Plastic Surgery team were. Dr Phuc and his team were brilliant at getting myself and the other students involved with all aspects of the department. As someone who loves theatre, I was thrilled to be able to spend each morning and most afternoons scrubbed in assisting with complex cases. Over the 6 weeks, as I became more ingrained within the department, I was able to be more active when assisting. From</p>

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	suturing and making the first incision to helping with forming local skin flaps, I was able to gain first-hand experience in both simple and complex cases – the take home learning points were fantastic.
What problems did you encounter? (120 words max)	I encountered limited problems and any that I did, should I have raised them with the accommodation or hospital staff, they were resolved immediately. The major problem was the anticipated language barrier. However, this wasn't as large as I initially expected as many of the more senior surgeons spoke good English and by the end of my time there, I had begun to associate many of the words with the surgical instruments so I was able to act as a useful surgical assistant by reaching for the equipment after being asked in Vietnamese. Culturally, the Vietnamese can also be very shy and initially appear disinterested. However, if you persist politely and compliment their English they tend to become more conversational.
What accommodation was provided?	My placement was organised by the company Work the World. As part of the placement fee accommodation was provided. The accommodation was ideal. It is a short distance from the hospital and an even shorter distance to Hué's central areas. The accommodation had common areas, quiet rooms, a pool, an outside area and the bedrooms themselves were great. The staff were also extremely friendly and made it feel like a home-from-home.
Would you recommend this to someone else? (explain if necessary)	I would undoubtedly recommend all aspects of this elective placement to others. The location (Vietnam) was perfect as it is culturally different enough to experience a very different healthcare system whilst still having enough confident English speaking doctors to enable you to make your time on placement worthwhile. The company I travelled with (Work the World) were faultless and most importantly the plastic surgery department at Hué Hospital are welcoming, friendly and engaging. Should someone decide to also do this placement, they will most certainly have a great time, learn great things, gain invaluable experience and feel like a true member of a plastic surgery department.
Are you more likely to choose a career in plastic surgery as a result of this experience?	For all the reasons listed above, I am most certainly more likely to choose a career in plastic surgery. As a medical student, your knowledge of each specialty is often limited to that of revision and to the time you spend on each placement. Further to this, plastic surgery appears to be one specialty that, in my experience, is allocated far less placement time than others. Therefore, exposure to the discipline among medical students is often low. Having taken fondly to the little exposure I previously had, I consider myself very fortunate to have been given the opportunity to devote a further six weeks to the specialty. I consider myself even luckier that those six weeks reaffirmed my previous enthusiasm and enjoyment for plastics. An enthusiasm of which I intend to continue to develop over the coming years.