UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES  

UNDERGRADUATE ELECTIVE PLACEMENTS IN HEALTH SCIENCES  

INFORMATION SHEET

1 Nature of Elective  
Visiting undergraduate students from other universities locally and abroad usually apply for clinical elective placements. This means they undergo clinical training together with UCT medical students (or, more rarely, students in Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Sports Medicine, Human Biology or Biomedical Engineering). Such students have to be registered (by the Faculty) with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) to enable them to deal with patients.

An alternative to a clinical elective placement is to do research or to observe only. Students wishing to do research or wishing to observe clinicians at work must indicate this clearly in advance and in writing; such students will not be allowed to work with patients at all and do not need to register with the HPCSA.

2 To whom must applications be addressed?  
All applications and correspondence for elective placements must be addressed by email to elective.healthsciences@uct.ac.za. (Postal address: The Elective Officer (Undergraduate Administration), Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Cape Town, Anzio Road, Observatory, Cape Town, 7925.) Tel: (021) 4066478. Please note we will respond by email.

Prospective applicants must please not correspond direct with departments. Your application will be processed only if it was submitted direct to the Elective Office.

3 How long in advance must an application be submitted?  
Applications can be considered only if they are submitted at least 1-2 years in advance of the proposed visit. The reason for this is that most disciplines are fully booked up to a year in advance, and that the process of registering batches of applicants with the Health Professions Council in Pretoria (which must be done before students arrive) takes six months.

4 Who is eligible to be considered for an elective placement?  
We accept visiting students from other health sciences faculties who are in their second last year or final (clinical) year of study only. All applicants must have a good command of the English language as all teaching and instruction is conducted in English.

5 In which disciplines and hospitals can one spend an elective placement?  
All visiting elective students may apply for a placement in the following departments and hospitals under the auspices of the University of Cape Town:

GROOTE SCHUUR HOSPITAL (Observatory, Cape Town): Medicine (including sub-specialities), Surgery, Paediatrics (Neonatology Unit), Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Psychiatry, Radiology, Radiation, Oncology, Public Health, Family Medicine, Dermatology, Cardio-thoracic Surgery, Infectious diseases/HIV Medicine, Forensic Medicine, Otorhinolaryngology, Gastroenterology (Medical or Surgical), Clinical Haematology, Neurology, Neurosurgery, Ophthalmology, Orthopaedic Surgery, Plastic Surgery and (medical) Emergency or Trauma.

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1 Emergency Unit: this is where patients come with emergency illnesses and injuries, some of which may be life-threatening. Examples might include sudden severe stomach pains, shortness of breath, or severe or persistent vomiting or diarrhea. Trauma Unit: can handle all of the same types of illnesses and injuries that are seen in an Emergency Unit, plus provide multi-disciplinary, comprehensive emergency medical services to patients who have traumatic injuries. Examples of traumatic injuries include those sustained in automobile accidents, gunshot wounds etc.
RED CROSS CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL (Rondebosch, Cape Town): Paediatrics, Paediatric Surgery, Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgery, Paediatric Neurology and Paediatric Trauma.

SOMERSET HOSPITAL (Green Point, Cape Town): Medicine, Paediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Surgery.

VICTORIA HOSPITAL (Plumstead, Cape Town): General Surgery, Trauma and Medicine.

6. **What is the duration of an elective placement?**
The clinical elective placement programmes can range from a minimum period of four weeks to a maximum of sixteen weeks.

7. **May I change the department in which I have been offered an elective and may I extend the elective period once I have been accepted?**
The full elective placement has to be spent in the department to which you have been allocated. It is not possible for you to spend your elective clerkship in more than one discipline (e.g. two placements of two months each).

Requests from students who have already taken up a place to change to another discipline or department or hospital or to extend the elective period will not be considered. Students may also NOT contact departments while they are here to change their allocated places or the nature or period of their elective.

Elective students who do not abide by these rules may have their elective placement cancelled without further notice and a letter to report this or any other transgression will be sent to the student’s home university.

8. **Registration with the University**
Registration with this University is required for the duration of the elective period at Groote Schuur or Red Cross Children’s Hospital and associated hospitals. Students must, on **arrival in Cape Town**, report to the Elective Officer at the Faculty Office, Faculty of Health Sciences, Anzio Road, Observatory, **between 08h30 and 12h30**, in order to be registered. Students who have not paid their full fee in advance will not be registered and may not start their elective clerkship until this has been done. Students who are placed at Victoria and New Somerset hospital must report at those hospitals after registration at the Faculty of Health Sciences.

9. **Fees**
Once you have been informed that we can accommodate you in one of our departments, you can secure the booking by sending us, before your arrival, the completed forms and the fees. This will be detailed in a Provisional Booking email. The registration fees for an international student applying for an elective clerkship through the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Cape Town are detailed below:

**(a) Faculty fee**
- 2015 – Clinical Elective registration fee of ZAR 4200.00 (four thousand two hundred South African Rand) for 4 weeks per student.
- 2015 –Folder research/observation Elective registration fee of ZAR 1200 (one thousand two hundred South African Rand) for 4 weeks per student

**(b) HPCSA registration fees**
All students completing a Clinical Elective must be registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). The Faculty’s Elective Office will make application on students’ behalf to the HPCSA. However, fees must be paid direct into the HPCSA bank account and proof of payment must be sent to the Faculty Office (via email).

Please note: The HPCSA increases the registration fee annually – usually from 1 April. The updated fee will be communicated to the student.
(c) Departmental fees
For electives other than clinical (medical) electives (e.g. Nursing, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Biomedical Engineering, Human Biology or Sports Medicine), an additional departmental fee of R1000 is payable.

All fees may be paid in the form of an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).

Fees are revised annually and are increased by about 10% with effect from January each year.

Foreign currencies are not accepted; all payments must be made in South African Rands (ZAR).

10 Does UCT provide financial assistance or remuneration?
No remuneration is received by students during their elective period. Students must therefore have sufficient funds for the period of their elective clerkship.

11 Is accommodation provided?
Students must make their own arrangements for accommodation. There is no accommodation available in the university residences.

12 Professional conduct and dress code
Undergraduate students are expected to act in accordance with the ethical norms laid down by the Health Professions Council of South Africa. Students who are found guilty of unprofessional conduct will have their registration terminated and a letter will be written to their home university to report their transgression/s.

Professional conduct includes an appropriate dress code, particularly when students are in contact with patients. Students must be neat and presentable; excessive casual or suggestive clothing is not acceptable. Students who come for clinical elective placements must wear a white coat at all times while on duty, and must bring such white coat with them.

Students are supplied with an identification card upon arrival, which must be worn at all times while on duty.

Students may be denied access to a particular clinical area if, in the view of the manager of the area, they are not suitably dressed.

Students must also bring their own white coats and stethoscopes. Theatre gowns and gloves will be supplied by the hospital.

13 Study visas
All non-South African students are required to obtain study permits if the elective period exceeds 90 days, before they enter South Africa. As soon as we have received a student’s completed forms and HPCSA payment, we will send the student a letter confirming the elective placement. The student must then apply to the nearest South African Consulate-General or Embassy for a study visa. When applying for your study permit/visa the following is normally required: You will most likely require two passport-size photographs, a letter from this Faculty of Health Sciences confirming your elective placement and indicating that you have been registered with the Health Professions Council, a guarantee that you are able to cover your repatriation fee to your country of origin, provision of proof of comprehensive medical insurance / health coverage and a letter from your own University confirming that you are visiting South Africa for an elective placement.

If the duration of your stay is 90 days or less, you need not apply for a study permit; you will be issued with a visitor’s visa however you must contact the nearest South African Consulate/Embassy in this regard.
Insurance cover
Once registered with the University, students will have professional indemnity cover to the value of R20 million (please note, however, that the excess is very high) and will have limited personal insurance cover. It would be advisable for you to take out additional insurance in your own country before your visit.

The maximum benefits are:
- Medical expenses R5000.00
- Physiotherapy: R600

[The following exclusions apply]

Events consequent upon:
- War, invasion, act of foreign enemy hostilities (whether war was declared or not), civil war, rebellion, revolution, insurrection or military usurped power
- Suicide (whether felonious or not) or any attempted threat or self-injury
- The injured person engaging in aviation (other than as a passenger) or flying in any craft owned by or leased to the insured
- The student engaging in:
  - Professional sports
  - Mountaineering with ropes (unless he/she is a member of the Mountain and Ski Club)
  - Any motor racing, which will mean competing against another or a clock:
  - Hang-gliding (except where the individual is a member of the University’s Hang-gliding Club), parachuting or sky-diving
- Pregnancy or childbirth
- Any pre-existing physical defect or infirmity
- Death or injury caused by use of drugs, alcohol or narcotics
- The insured person suffering from sickness or disease not directly resulting from bodily injury
- Infection with HIV, AIDS, ARC or any opportunistic infections and/or malignant neoplasm (tumour) found in the presence of HIV, AIDS, and ARC.

Other insurance
Apart from the above scheme, the University provides no other cover for bodily injury, illness or death of students and no cover for personal possessions, including motor vehicles, even where a student may be involved in compulsory academic activity. Students must arrange their own personal insurance cover.

15. Research ethics requirements for elective students

If a student, as part of an elective placement, wishes to conduct a research project involving human participants or their personal medical records, they need ethics approval. Also, it must be established in advance whether an appropriate supervisor can be identified for such a student in advance of the student’s visit. The research project must be feasible and at the student’s level of expertise.

[Note: The research proposal must undergo two separate review processes. First, the relevant departmental research committee will review the scientific and scholarly merit of the proposal. Second, the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) in the Faculty of Health Sciences will review ethical aspects of the application. A student's local supervisor at his/her home university should assist with these applications. Even if the student's proposal has ethical approval in his/her home institution, it still needs UCT research ethics approval. If you are joining a study that already has research ethics approval, your local supervisor still needs to obtain HREC approval to include you in the existing research. You also need to ask your local supervisor if you must obtain additional administrative approval or authorisation from medical superintendents or managers to conduct your research, including accessing personal medical records, in specific settings such as hospitals, community-based health centres and non-governmental organisations.

It is advisable to obtain ethics approval six months in advance of a research elective visit. Before submitting your proposal to the HREC, you need to make sure it complies with the ethical principles laid down in the Declaration of Helsinki (http://www.wma.net/e/policy/pdf/17c.pdf) and the Research Ethics Guidelines of the South African (SA) Department of Health, 2004 (http://www.doh.gov.za/docs/factsheets/guidelines/ethnics/). Your research must also comply with SA law, for instance the requirements for informed consent and special considerations when undertaking research among minors (<18 years of age).

For more information about how to apply for research ethics approval contact Mrs Lamees Emjedi, the Administrative Officer in the HREC. Her email address is Lamees.Emjedi@uct.ac.za.]