

ELECTIVE (SSC5a) REPORT (1200 words)

A report that addresses the above four objectives should be written below. Your Elective supervisor will assess this.

My placements in Paris was one of the highlights of my final year at medical school. I initially chose Paris for this elective, because it is a city that I am quite familiar with and that I have been to several times in the past. That being said, I have never lived in the city so this experience felt quite different in many ways. I also thought it would be interesting to see how the practice of medicine is in France compared to the UK, and to have the chance to be in a French speaking medical environment. Being from Morocco, where medicine is practiced in French, I thought it could be interesting to have this experience. The hospital was at where I was based, Hopital Européen Georges Pompidou, is one of the largest public hospitals in Paris. Spending three weeks there as a visiting medical student was a valuable experience for me and I have learned a great deal about myself as a person but also as a future doctor. The goals I had in mind prior to starting this internship revolved around clinical work, research, interpersonal skills, and global health.

The first goal I wanted to achieve throughout this rotation was to immerse myself in radiology and explore the different aspects of this specialty including MRI scans, CT scans, and ultrasound. Throughout my five years at medical school, I have not really had the chance to have a clinical placement in a radiology department. This is quite unfortunate for me personally, as this is one of the specialties that I am most interested in and so I thought the best way to inform myself about the specialty further would be to pursue an elective in it so I can explore it further. I have found that dissecting MRI scans or CT scans for exam purposes was always something I thought was interesting and academically challenging. This is what initially drew me to this specialty. The time I spent at the hospital in radiology only confirmed my passion for radiology and has made me want to seek further opportunities in this field. During my time there, I spent most days interpreting scans with chief doctors and interns. I learned about radiographic signs that suggest that a certain pathology may be present. I also learned to recognize the different organs in the body across all imaging modalities, and that was something I used to struggle with during exams. Once, one of the doctors walked me through a Doppler ultrasound scan and I now would feel rather confident performing one myself. Though this might not necessarily be a skill that is expected from an F1 doctor, I feel that I have learned an important skill.

The second goal I had in mind was to become involved in radiology research particularly with regards to research aiming to describe the role that AI can play in aiding diagnosis and improving clinical accuracy. I have tried to involve myself in as much research opportunities as possible during medical school, however I have never published any articles in radiology. I thought this elective could be a great opportunity to get involved in research especially after I found out that another one of the visiting international medical student was actually there for research purposes only. After discussing with him the different components of his research paper, we agreed to work together to produce a final article. I was in charge of formatting the raw data and writing an introduction to the paper. The process of writing this paper together taught me a lot about working as part of a team even with people that I may not know well, as I had only met the other student two days prior. Working on this paper also meant that I had to do research on my own about the impact of a specific AI tool called DLR and its role in improving MRI image reconstruction. After three weeks, we finalized the article and are hoping that this will be submitted and published in a medical journal sometime soon. Overall I can say that I have achieved this goal of working in radiology research as we have a finalized manuscript.

The third goal I had in mind was to compare and contrast the public health sector in the UK versus France. During my numerous placements at NHS hospitals in the UK, I have learned about how the system works and how usual patient journey looks like. During the three weeks I spent in Paris, I had a number of discussions with doctors and interns about what that looked like in France. For example, unlike the NHS, the public health system in France is not completely free. Some of the cost is covered by insurance companies might have to be paid from patients out of pockets. I also noticed after seeing how appointments work that the waiting times for imaging is shorter on average than in the NHS for non-urgent scans. For urgent imaging however the time frames are somewhat similar. In terms of hospital facilities in general, I thought the NHS and the French hospital where I was based were quite similar, although this particular hospital had received during my time there a brand new photon-counting detector scanner which is a very new technology. Being in such a high-tech environment allowed me to experience a wide breadth of opportunities.

Finally, the last goal I had in mind was to develop my interpersonal skills (working as part of a team, practicing active listening, being proactive and seeking opportunities), and practice clinical medicine in French. I achieved that through working with the team on the research paper, but also interacting with other staff members about patient cases. In many ways, radiology relies a lot on a team of people; Radiographers, radiologists, interns, chief doctors, etc and witnessing these interactions first hand inspired me greatly on a personal level and taught me what a good team working environment looks like. I hope to mirror these qualities myself when I become a foundation doctor and have to work with the whole MDT team. In terms of interpersonal skills, I believe I put myself out of my comfort zone by simply being in a place where the main language is not the language that I have learned medicine in, but also in seeking research opportunities. I feel that I have truly grown as a person but also as a future doctor.

Overall, my experience at the hospital was very valuable. I was able to experience the health care system of another country, and compare that to what I know in the NHS. This experience was also very rich in terms of the people I met and the experiences I had. Though I did not anticipate to do any research there, I ended up writing a research paper with somebody I met there. This, I believe goes to show that I have also improved in terms of proactivity but also in terms of seeking new opportunities and being out of my comfort zone. This experience has made me even more willing to explore other opportunities abroad and make use of the time I have to explore my passion further.