

Quality management



Response to Rotation at X Hospital and must be inserted During my clinical training I was able to visit a number of laboratory specialty areas at a number of health care facilities. Among these I was able to identify the areas I found more interesting, and the institutions from which I was able to learn most.

Why the assignment is being completed - assignment for course A, by you on request of your supervisor

Date of Submission

Abstract

As a response to particular elements of the rotation program, part of clinical training in medical courses, this paper represents an objective and hopefully constructive personal comment on a specific experience. The First Person writing style stems from this exploration of personal opinions and reactions to experiences at Hospital X.

It is a privilege to be able to spend time at health institutions being exposed at first hand to the practice and day-to-day work that takes place there.

Among the many areas I was able to visit were chemistry, hematology, and microbiology specialist laboratories.

In most of these, the experience I had was both interesting and valuable on a learning level. The training, the information shared with me, the interactions I was able to have with staff, and the environment all contributed to my being able to learn and experience more. I was generally assigned a specific mentor - a member of the staff of the institution who guided me and instructed me as we observed the happenings together. I was also assisted by numerous staff members when able to "try things out" such as working with the resources available. The "hands-on" nature of much of the learning was very valuable, as I was able to see how instruments worked and

experience the way in which the theoretical knowledge that was being shared with me, was used practically in the real-life situations I observed. Mentors or guides also communicated much of their experience with me. Again, their experience, shared with me, was very valuable as it gave me perspective on how their everyday work relates to the theoretical knowledge I am learning. It was also important for me to be able to share my opinions and thoughts. With most staff at the institutions, this was encouraged. The conversations I had, and the questions I asked, were enjoyable, interesting, and mutually respectful. I did not feel as if I was imposing on their time, or that I had nothing to offer. Instead, the majority of people listened to me with interest, and debated with me, even when I was wrong. I felt that I was able to speak openly, and ask questions, and give opinions without embarrassment or fear, since I would receive positive, thoughtful, and meaningful responses.

Perhaps of most value to me, and definitely the most enjoyable of my experiences, was with guides and trainers who let me spend a lot of time with them, assisting them in their work directly. This made me feel included in the process of their work, and I was able to have many valuable conversations on an informal basis which added to my understanding and knowledge. It was also in these contexts that I learned most on a practical level. As I was guided to carry out a task, my mistakes were corrected, and I was shown efficient and effective ways of using instrumentation and technology.

All of the practices by mentors and guides mentioned above are, in my opinion, excellent for aiding learning. I found that every such rotation experience taught me more, both on practical and theoretical levels. Also I

got to know people in the field and understand their perspectives and opinions. The value of learning from their experience cannot be overstated – I felt that they were happy to share their knowledge with me, and were willing to listen to me respectfully, and guide my learning positively.

In only one instance I was really disappointed.

At Hospital X I was assigned to complete a one week period. I was expecting a similar process to that I had experienced at other institutions, and at first, this was so. I met a mentor staff member and hoped to spend time with her, learning hands-on, through observation, and through conversation.

It is unfortunate that I was unable to experience the same levels of enjoyment, and learning in this instance. While I did spend some time engaging in practical work and learning, the bulk of my experience was spent at my mentor's desk, doing homework or studying. Despite my mentor being a very pleasant person, with whom I could speak easily and comfortably, she did not seem to understand the benefits for a student of this kind of program. I felt after completion of this rotation that I had not learnt very much, nor spent my time productively. Throughout the week, I felt that I could have received more instruction, guidance, training, and especially hands-on experience with the instruments and technology available there. We did not discuss much. Neither was I involved in her daily tasks and activities.

This particular rotation venue has enabled me to contrast the styles of learning I experienced elsewhere to this one, and define what I believe is most valuable in this program. I have also thought of a suggestion that may add value to the experiences of other students. These thoughts follow in the next paragraphs.

The value of having one person who is assigned to the student as a guide or mentor is evident. Selection of people to be those mentors or guides needs careful consideration, however. A mentor should be someone comfortable with having someone “ shadow” them throughout their own working day. A friendly, pleasant person is good, but someone who is happy to share knowledge, and provide hands-on instruction is essential. The best instruction I had was from people who enjoyed discussing the work we were doing, helped me to get information from other staff, showed me how to carry out tasks, and openly discussed their difficulties and successes. Practice and experimentation with equipment, and the technology available is very valuable. Especially when this is done by the student while the mentor is guiding him/her, this experience teaches the required skills, and “ fills in” theoretical knowledge.

Providing the student with some opportunities to work independently - with just supervision - is also a worthwhile exercise. Applying the knowledge and skills gained in a safe, supervised environment is invaluable. After being instructed carefully, the tasks assigned to me which allowed me to work independently were most enjoyable. The feeling that I was making a contribution to the process in the institutions was most worthwhile.

Opportunities to ask questions, and to debate with experienced professionals was invaluable. I highly appreciated the staff members that were prepared to consider what I was asking, or suggesting, as worth their time and thought. Many important aspects of the practical and theoretical components of the work they were doing became clearer to me during informal discussions.

One addition that I believe would make the experience even more worthwhile would be a short, formalized discussion with the mentor/guide

after each day's work. If the student is able to discuss the tasks, processes, and theory of what has been done that day, a clear summary of the experiences would be possible. This would not have to be a long, structured meeting, but rather a frank conversation, with the mentor able to comment openly on the performance of the student, as he/she perceived it.

The system of rotation as additional learning opportunity for students, in a "real-life" situation has proven to be exceptionally worthwhile for me. As stated, most of my rotation opportunities proved to be valuable, enjoyable, and certainly added to my knowledge and skills. I trust that my comments will be considered as constructive and informative.