



Name: Hector Waudby-West

Year bursary awarded: 2023

Medical school: University of St Andrews/University of Dundee (ScotGEM)

Elective location: Chicago, IL, USA

Elective department: Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at Loyola Medicine

Elective duration: 6 weeks

Elective summary:

I am a final-year medical student on the ScotGEM degree run by University of St Andrews/University of Dundee and recently had the opportunity to complete a six-week elective within the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at Loyola Medicine. During each week of the elective, I rotated through a different subspecialty and thus gained experience in: hematopathology, dermatopathology, cytopathology and surgical pathology (Head, Neck and Thorax; gynaecological, gastrointestinal).

A typical day started at 8am as I had the opportunity to join the residents' didactic sessions. These were usually either "unknown" sessions or lectures on a variety of topics designed to help the residents prepare for their board exams. I would then typically preview cases with my assigned resident before signing out with the attending. Depending on the caseload, there was sometimes an afternoon sign-out with the attending. Otherwise, I would spend the afternoons reading up on the cases that I had seen earlier in the day. I made the most of any other opportunities that arose and so also had the chance to observe an autopsy and gross specimen preparation of brains, hearts and lungs.

During my final week, I was asked to prepare and deliver a presentation to residents and attendings on an interesting case that I had seen during my time in the department. I chose to present a case of Primary Cutaneous Follicle Centre Lymphoma as I had particularly enjoyed both my hematopathology and dermatopathology rotations and this case was an interesting overlap between the two subspecialties.

Initially, I found the elective to be a very steep learning curve as I had never spent any time in a pathology department before. That said, the residents and attendings that I spent time with were extremely keen to teach and were happy to answer any questions I had. This resulted in a very rewarding learning experience and my confidence had improved significantly by the end of my six weeks.

I am extremely grateful to the BDIAP for their generous support in allowing me to complete this elective. Prior to the elective, I had an interest in pathology as a specialty but had no real experience on which to base any future career decisions. Now that I have had the opportunity to spend some time working in a pathology department, I am driven to keep building on my experience so that hopefully I can be successful in gaining a place in histopathology training in the future. Once I return to my home medical school, I am undertaking a four-week SSC in autopsy pathology and also hope to get involved in some pathology-related projects.