

Mock essay for RPL:

I am applying for recognition of prior learning for 6 months of training in paediatrics at the Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne (RCH) and 6 months of training in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the royal Women's Hospital Melbourne (RWH).

The following details the way in which I believe my training experiences in these posts have contributed significantly to my vocational training for general practice. In this essay I describe ways in which my training experiences have developed my skills in each of the five domains of general practice.

Communication skills and the patient doctor relationship

My experiences at RCH and RWH have taught me the therapeutic potential of the relationship between the doctor and patient. One of the rotations I did at RCH was in the respiratory unit which included looking after children and adolescents with cystic fibrosis. I found that it was crucial for these young people's sense of well being to be able to trust the doctors involved in their care. When one of these young people felt safe under my care as their resident doctor, they were able to approach their treatment with less fear. Indeed their whole stay in hospital seemed to go much more smoothly and I suspect that they recovered more quickly. The degree to which the patients were able to trust me as their doctor depended very much on the quality of the relationship I was able to develop with them.

At the RWH I worked in the recurrent miscarriage unit. I learned there that a major factor in achieving a successful pregnancy for these women was the degree to which they felt confident in and cared for by their treating doctor. Clearly the way in which I communicated with these women and was able to empathise with their situation had a big impact on their confidence in their treatment.

Applied professional knowledge and skills

My training experiences at the RCH and RWH provided me with a sound grounding in the disciplines of paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology. At RCH I became versant in a wide range of paediatric medical and surgical conditions as I worked in a surgical unit, a respiratory unit and paediatric casualty. I also developed a range of procedural skills including IV cannulation of children, lumbar punctures and suprapubic urine collections. At RWH I was involved in the management of antenatal care, labour, post partum care, and a number of gynaecology out patient clinics. I now feel confident in normal and instrumental deliveries and I have learned among other things how to place an IUD and an implanon implant.

Population health and the context of general practice

Population health issues were relevant to my experience at RCH in RWH in the following ways. I was involved in the care of a number of children suffering diseases that could have been prevented by more effective immunisation. These diseases included pertussis, epiglottitis and meningococcal septicaemia. At RWH a particular public health issue I became aware of was that of the potential consequences of sexually transmitted diseases. I dealt with patients with cancer of the cervix, HIV, hepatitis B and HSV. All these are

potentially preventable by appropriate public health measures. These experiences have made me much more aware of the need for preventative medicine at the level of public health. Many public health measures clearly require GP involvement.

Professional and ethical role

My training at RCH and RWH developed my identity as a professional and my awareness of issues of medical ethics. As a doctor I came to understand that I occupy a position in society that requires a high level of responsibility. For instance carrying out my job as a resident often required that I stayed beyond my allocated work hours in order to complete tasks required for patient care. I learned of issues of confidentiality that are particularly pertinent to unwanted pregnancy. There were times when there were conflicting obligations.

Organisational and legal dimensions

As a resident at RCH and RWH I had a number of organisational responsibilities. I learned how to keep effective records, I learned how to organise case conferences and I learned how to organise my own time effectively in order to manage busy rotations. The legal dimensions of medical practice were particularly evident in a case of child abuse I was involved in. This gave me an experience of mandatory reporting and the legal mechanisms in place to maximise the safety of a child. At the RWH I was involved in issues of consent for surgery for minors.