

2018 Semester 1

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The placement allowed me to start seeing patients from start to finish, and as such allowed me to combine all the individual skills and processes I had been learning into one cohesive consultation. I was able to work on skills in which I had little exposure, as well as get repeated practice in other skills and thus become more proficient in parts of a consultation that are performed routinely.

Furthermore, there were a variety of presentations that are less common in a metropolitan setting in which I had the privilege of being exposed to. Due to less specialists being in the vicinity, there was more responsibility on the primary care person, which resulted in a greater test of skills and better learning opportunities for myself. I had a vastly different experience in a non-rural setting where all suspected such presentations were immediately referred instead of providing a thorough work-up. As such, I certainly learnt skills in the rural placement that I would not have otherwise had the chance to practice.

Before completing the rural placement, I had no intention of considering working in a rural setting. After experiencing the sense of community and greater breadth of clinical knowledge and skills required, I would certainly consider working in a rural setting.

The NAFEA scholarship avoided needing to borrow money, and allowed me some freedom from my extremely tight budget and a significant stress relief that allowed me to focus more energy on getting the most from my placement.