



The College of Emergency Medicine

Top tips for trainees to have an excellent Emergency Medicine training programme



Excellence in Emergency Care

Top tips for trainees to have an excellent Emergency Medicine training programme

1. Be organized.

- Establish important contacts at the Deanery, the College and within your regional training programme
- Identify mandatory training days and inform your rota organizer well in advance
- Book courses and conferences early and secure study leave in good time

2. Be exam focused.

The MCEM and FCEM exams are challenging - they help to drive up the quality of doctors working in Emergency Medicine, but preparing for them is tough alongside clinical work.

- Sit the critical appraisal paper early – it will help in writing your Clinical Topic Review, and it is a relief to get it out of the way!
- Start planning your CTR early – find a topic that you are interested in and become an authority!
- Try to attend a mock exam at least once per year in higher training

3. Be proactive – manage your training.

- Arrange regular meetings with your Educational Supervisor, and outline clear objectives for your training with them
- Get to grips with the ePortfolio, and maintain up-to-date curriculum-linked evidence of activity so that preparation for ARCPs is not frantic
- Carry a list of assessments (WPBAs) that you require – aim for one per week, and focus on the rare presentations early each year
- Participate in your regional training days, and develop a tight, sociable group of trainees with meaningful teaching sessions
- Keep a logbook of procedures / ultrasound scans / interesting patients

4. Consider subspecializing.

Emergency Medicine is a fantastic career and can be made even more interesting by adding subspecialty interests and skills. Few trainees regret taking time Out of Programme.

- Pre-Hospital Emergency Medicine
- Paediatric Emergency Medicine
- Intensive Care Medicine
- Toxicology
- Ultrasound
- Academic Emergency Medicine
- Clinical leadership etc...

5. Expect tough and stressful times.

Emergency Department rotas can be challenging, and every shift can feel like an 'on-call'.

- Plan holidays and time-off well ahead.
- Arrange study leave that will break up your working routine and keep you interested when you are feeling tired and risk feeling burnt out.

6. Keep interested!

Stay up to date with brilliant online resources, blog sites, podcasts and the wealth of Free Open Access Medical Education (#FOAMed via Twitter)

- Life in the Fast Lane
- ENLIGHTENme
- EMCrit
- St. Emlyn's

7. Develop management skills.

This may not be the sexy part of a career in Emergency Medicine, but it is an essential and often sizeable part of an Emergency Medicine consultant's role.

- Take an interest in service development – it is everyone's duty to improve standards and trainees often bring a fresh perspective from other sites that they have worked at.
- Practice with your consultants how to respond to complaints / incidents / staff issues etc.
- Attend and contribute to local clinical governance activity.

8. Enjoy your downtime.

To be effective as an Emergency Department clinician you need to keep a lid on exhaustion and stress.

- Be sure to develop a healthy work/life balance.
- Socialise with colleagues and the wider hospital community.
- Don't take it all too seriously!

9. Push for educational opportunities.

Shop floor/real time teaching can be difficult - especially with the balance between service provision and training. Be motivated and determined to push for innovation in training, and continuous learning opportunities.

- Look for the learning points with every patient encounter.
- Engage with other specialties and recognise shared learning opportunities.
- Find a mentor whom you respect and trust and meet with them regularly. There are plenty of inspirational people out there in the world of Emergency Medicine.

- Remember why you chose Emergency Medicine. Compared to other specialties, Emergency Medicine is still relatively young: think of the specialty that you want to be working in for the next thirty years, and make sure that is where you are going.
- Get involved in delivering teaching – there is no better way to consolidate your own knowledge.

And above all...

10. Fight for your patients.

Take ownership of their care. Emergency Departments will always be tough, busy and demanding environments, and it is futile to dream of an empty department. Patients are vulnerable to these pressures, and it is easy for care to be compromised by external stresses.

- Timeliness is an important skill, but above all, patient's care comes first.
- Be the best you can be at all times to inspire and motivate those whom you work with from junior colleagues to nursing staff. It is infectious.
- Enjoy being a team player – there is no other specialty like EM for the reward of working so closely with so many different members of a team.

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