Training tips

Designing a basic surgical training timetable

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Many hospitals are trying to develop a timetable for surgical SHOs that complies with the needs of working time, teaching and service commitment. This suggested plan is taken from the 'best practice' that I have seen and will need to be modified for each surgical department.

Basic day

The first task is to define the working day and its subdivisions.

08:30–09:00	Review of admissions over last 24 h Hand-over
09:00–10:00	Ward duties
10:00–12:30	Learning experience (theatre, OPD, teaching WR, core BST lectures, <i>etc.</i>)
12:30–13:30	Lunch-time tutorials & meetings
13:30–15:30	Learning experience (theatre, OPD, teaching WR, core BST lectures, <i>etc.</i>)
15:30–16:30	Ward duties Hand-over

Timetable

Start with the 'on call' day and the day after.

DAY 1 (ON-CALL)

08:30–09:00	Review of admissions over last 24 h
09:00–10:00	Teaching ward round Ward duties
10:00–12:30	Teaching ward round
12:30–13:30	Lunch-time tutorials & meetings
13:30–24:00	(Ward/A&E/theatre)

DAY 2

00:00–08:00	On call
08:30–09:00	Hand-over
09:00–13:30	Off duty
13:30–16:30	Off duty or BST core lectures?

Typical timetable

This assumes 'on call' on Tuesdays.

MONDAY

08:30–09:00	Review meeting
09:00–10:00	Ward duty
10:00–12:30	OPD/theatre
12:30–13:30	?Tutorial
13:30–15:30	OPD/theatre
15:30–16:30	Ward duty

TUESDAY

08:30–09:00	Review meeting
09:00–10:00	Ward duty
10:00–16:30	On call (ward round, A&E, theatre, <i>etc.</i>)

WEDNESDAY

08:30–09:00	Review meeting
09:00–13:30	Off duty
13:30–16:30	Off duty/personal study or possible teaching meetings

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THURSDAY

08:30–09:00	Review meeting
09:00–10:00	Ward duty
10:00–12:30	OPD/theatre
12:30–13:30	?Tutorial
13:30–15:30	OPD/theatre
15:30–16:30	Ward duty

FRIDAY

08:30–09:00	Review meeting
09:00–10:00	Ward duty
10:00–12:30	OPD/theatre
12:30–13:30	?Tutorial
13:30–16:30	Off duty/personal study or possible teaching meetings

WEEK-END

09:00–10:00	Review meeting
10:00–16:30	Off duty/on call 1:5?

Timetable rules

The timetable should be accompanied by a set of simple rules. The basic 'rules' can be modified for each department.

Rules for SHOs

1. Duty to attend the wards at 09:00 and at 15:30.
2. Duty to make best use of all learning opportunities.
3. Have a responsibility to self-directed learning.
4. Keep a full professional and personal 'portfolio'.
5. Have a duty of care to patients and support for other health care workers.
6. To read BST (GPPS, General Profession Practice of Surgery) handbooks from the surgical colleges.

Rules for wards

1. Only one nurse to bleep doctors following discussion about the need to contact doctors. Doctors must answer their bleeps as soon as possible.
2. All 'routine' work for doctors to be ready at 09:00 and 15:30.

Rules for consultant trainers

1. Must produce a timetable and individual training plan for each SHO.
2. Ensure that OPD and theatre sessions are structured to provide training and teaching.
3. Provide formative assessment (appraisal) in the first two weeks, half-way through, and at the end of the attachment.
4. To be aware of the MRCS syllabus.
5. To read BST (GPPS, General Profession Practice of Surgery) handbooks from the surgical colleges.
6. Accept that the SHO may not be available to attend all clinics and theatre sessions.

Rules for hospital managers

1. Ensure BST teaching takes place with lectures in protected, bleep-free time.
2. Provide support such as ward secretaries, postgraduate centre, computer access and a database with details of trainees' progress.
3. Provide a postgraduate manager to support trainees and surgical tutors.
4. Provide a library with 24-h access.
5. Provide adequate quarters and food.