

Fellowship in Tampere University Hospital

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I knew about the fellowship program beforehand through previous courses in TAYS but the decision to apply came when a colleague recommended applying in 2022. The application process was easy and all the instructions were well written and available on the TAYS website. The process was very professional and after I got the confirmation all additional information was promptly provided. Dr.Olli Leppänen was very helpful and provided all contacts and gave instructions on who to contact and how to proceed. Moving to Finland was quite easy because of that. The most difficult part of the transition was getting all papers and tax forms in order – this takes time and multiple trips to local tax office. Having a Finnish phone number and bank account would have probably made the process easier. Everything can be done in English, so while speaking Finnish is very helpful, it is not an unavoidable obstacle. For any application the first thing you need is a confirmation of employment from the hospital.

The fellowship consisted of following and assisting the hand surgery team in TAYS. The workday starts at 7.30 – usually there are presentations or collective meetings in the mornings. The regular workday ends by 15.00. Emergency surgery is carried out 24/7 and while not mandatory, the team was always happy if you wanted to join during the evenings or weekends. The main method of contact is WhatsApp which is widely used by the locals. During my stay I got to participate in most of the different hand related ailments and traumas in a big central hospital. There were unusually few traumas requiring replantations but overall there were enough different kinds of difficult trauma patients and revascularisations to get a good overview and knowledge of these problems. These cases are often treated together with the help of plastic surgery team which gave a very beneficial extra glimpse into the reconstructive and plastic surgery work in TAYS. The fellow is always encouraged to take part in and see different surgeries – not limited only to hand surgery. Overall there is much freedom to learn and participate in activities more suited to your interests and needs.

Working clothes and a locker is provided by the hospital. It is recommended to bring your own shoes and loupes if you have them. Most of the revascularisations and microsurgery is carried out under the microscope, so not having personal loupes is not a big obstacle.

There are also multiple practical courses for personell that the fellow can usually also participate in. Cadaver courses are held regularly where different surgical techniques can be practiced. The hospital also has a microsurgery course, where microvascular techniques can be practiced on rats.

The fellow is expected to also give a few presentations on different topics. You can also choose your own topic. There is various literature available for research and learning, also access to online journals and articles on a wide range of topics.

Tampere is a beautiful city with many options to spend your free time on. There is a very good and frequent tram line to the city centre from the hospital, also many different bus routes that are easy and handy to use. There are a few museums and good restaurants in the city, many sports activities to take part in. The lakeside right next to the hospital is beautiful with good tracks for walking/hiking or skiing in the winter.

Overall the experience as a fellow was very pleasant and beneficial. The staff is friendly and very helpful in any question you might have and I was made to feel right at home during my stay in Tampere.