

Swansea Bay University Health Board

**POLICY FOR DOCTORS and DENTISTS IN CLINICAL
OBSERVER POSTS and
VISITING OVERSEAS HONORARY OBSERVER POSTS**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Clinical Observers (CO) are doctors who wish to gain experience of the NHS in a particular specialty. The placement is for a limited period of time to a unit or clinical team. The doctor is under the supervision of a named Consultant. This policy also applies to Visiting Overseas Honorary Observer (VOHO) who may be doctors and/or dentists who have finished their training or are senior trainees in their specialty. A Clinical Observer is a position sought by doctors and Dentist with medical and or dental degrees who for a number of reasons do not have a GMC or GDC registration and license to practice in UK.

The aims of the placement are summarised below:

1.2. Aims

1.2.1. Personal/professional development:

1. To improve communication skills in English to help prepare for examinations such as PLAB.
2. To gain knowledge and skills in library and information services.
3. To enhance their understanding of, and gain specific exposure to the work of a specialty.
4. To facilitate potential training in the UK.
5. To meet new colleagues and friends.
6. To obtain advice on job applications, CV preparation and interview techniques.
7. To obtain a first reference in United Kingdom.
8. To use the knowledge gained for the benefit of their specialty practise in their own country.

1.2.2. Improve knowledge and awareness of United Kingdom healthcare system and cultures:

1. Introduction to NHS.
2. To gain knowledge of clinical governance and audit procedures.
3. To gain experience of multi-disciplinary team working.
4. To improve awareness of social and cultural aspects of the NHS in the UK.

1.2.3. To consolidate and improve clinical skills appropriate to working in the UK.

1. To observe clinical interventions.
2. To observe ward rounds and team meetings.
3. To participate in case discussions with Consultants and other members of the multidisciplinary team.
4. In the case of surgeons to scrub in theatre to allow closer observation **but not to physically touch patients or physically assist.**
5. To attend post-graduate meetings, journal clubs and be involved in specialty educational activities where possible.

1.2.4. At the end of the placement the Consultant supervisor will provide a brief summary of the doctor's progress set against the aims and objectives previously set (Appendix D). The Consultant will retain a copy of this progress report (Appendix E), give a copy to the Clinical Observer/VOHO, send a copy to the Assistant Medical Director for Medical Education's office and send a further copy to HR where it will be retained on the Clinical Observer's personal file. If the fellowship is part of an externally approved and funded scheme, copies of the record of work done and reports under that scheme will be made available for the scheme organisation by the supervising Consultant.

2. GUIDELINES

2.1. The BMA issued guidelines for Clinical Observers (COs) for overseas qualified doctors in August 2001 and 2010.

2.2. The Home Office issued guidance on Clinical observers in January 2014.

2.3. The guidelines state "It is a matter of judgement as to what the doctor can be permitted to observe and to do."

2.4. In practical terms, and notwithstanding 2.3, it is vital that all clinical staff in the relevant departments are aware of the Clinical Observer's status. Clinical Observers and Visiting Overseas Honorary Observers have **observer** status only – see section 3.

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1. Despite the BMA guidance in 2.3. (above) clarification with the Welsh Health Legal Department confirms that any errors on the part of the Clinical Observer would leave the Health Board liable. NHS indemnity for supervising Consultants is restricted to the Consultants as employees of the Health Board, the observer must be under the Health Boards management supervision and control for NHS indemnity to apply.

3.2. Considering part 3.1. Clinical Observers and Visiting Overseas Honorary Observer will have **observer** status only.

3.3. Clinical Observers and Visiting Overseas Honorary Observer may:

- In a secondary care setting, shadow junior doctors and other clinicians in the team, such as nurses and therapists, to see how the NHS works and how patients are managed.
- Participate in ward rounds, outpatient clinics, teaching sessions and surgeries. Present cases in different settings to enable them to demonstrate clinical knowledge
- Observe consultations and participate in patient clerking, history taking and physical examinations (where appropriate and under supervision)

- attend clinical meetings
- Develop knowledge of patient safety issues
- Gain experience in clinical governance and the legal aspect of health care, by attending relevant meetings
- Attend theatre and scrub in order to observe **(but may not physically assist)**

3.4. Clinical Observers may **NOT**:

- Examine patients unsupervised.
- Prescribe.
- Perform any invasive procedures.
- Order investigations.
- Assist in operative procedures.
- Seek consent from patients.

3.5. Patients must be made fully aware of the status of the doctor. Free and informed consent for examination must be obtained and patients must retain the right to refuse, and must be supervised at all times.

3.6 Clinical Observers are not normally registered with the GMC or GDC and as such are not indemnified by a defence organisation or a medical school Dental School, furthermore they do not hold a contract of employment with the Health Board but will be covered by NHS indemnity if under the Health Board's management supervision and control.

4. **PROCESS OF APPLICATION (Figure 1)**

4.1. Overseas doctors can approach any Consultant within the Health Board to initially enquire whether that Consultant or another Consultant in the same department could act as Consultant supervisor. Visiting Overseas Honorary Observers will normally be approved well in advance of arrival in the UK by the specialty's responsible supervising Consultant. If any individual Consultant is approached and agrees to be a Consultant supervisor the overseas doctor / dentist completes the standard application form (Appendix A). The Consultant supervisor checks the applicants CV, references and application form and if satisfied sends a completed sponsor form (Appendix B), countersigned by the relevant Clinical Director, to the Medical Workforce Department.

According to the GMC, a doctor who is suspended or has undertakings or conditions on their registration may participate in a clinical observer to help maintain their skills and knowledge whilst they are suspended from the register, or as part of a return to work plan.

The GMC would need to be notified of their planned clinical activity including the dates and location of the observer, the name and contact details of the supervisor and confirmation of the limits set on the doctors activity.

In such circumstances the clinical supervisor must be satisfied that they are not putting patients at risk or bringing the profession into disrepute by allowing the doctor to participate in a clinical observer.

- 4.2. If the Consultant is not in a position to offer a Clinical Observer placement the Consultant will forward the request to the appropriate College Tutor or Postgraduate Organiser who may be able to advise or assist in finding a suitable Consultant supervisor.
- 4.3. Medical Workforce Department will process the application including occupational health procedures; police check immigration status check and provide details to the Information Governance Team.
- 4.4. Medical Workforce Department will send a letter to the Clinical Observer (CO) or Visiting Overseas Honorary Observer (VOHO) including the following information:
 - (a) Confirming CO/VOHO status including Guidance for Clinical Observers (Appendix C).
 - (b) Confirmation of start date and length of observer stay (maximum three months for CO).
 - (c) Details of Health Board's occupational health procedures.
 - (d) Name of Consultant supervisor.
 - (e) Timetable (given to Human Resources by Consultant supervisor).
 - (f) Confirmation that no accommodation is available within the Health Board.
 - (g) Human Resources Induction information.
 - (h) Appropriate CO / VOHO induction pack.
 - (i) Confirmation that transport is not provided by the Health Board.
 - (j) Confirmation of Clinical Governance awareness training
- 4.5. This letter is copied to the Consultant supervisor.
- 4.6. Each doctor undertaking a Clinical Observer should have a named supervisor who is responsible for them. The Consultant supervisor will meet with the CO/VOHO on the first day of the observer placement to discuss each other's expectations of the observer. If the supervisor is away, he/she will arrange for another Consultant colleague to meet and supervise the CO/VOHO until their return when a meeting will be held. The aims of this meeting include the following:
 - (a) Ensuring that the CO/VOHO has the Guidance Notes for Clinical Observers.
 - (b) The CO / VOHO understands the guidance notes and realises the ramifications of their observer status.
 - (c) The initial interview between the Consultant Supervisor and the CO / VOHO and should cover (Appendix D):
 - Learning needs assessment including exploring previous experience
 - Goal setting

- Ground rules, what is expected of the attached doctor or dentist and what can be expected of the supervising doctor or dentist in their team
 - Clarification of education and training expectations
 - A clear timetable
 - Attendance of Clinical Governance Awareness session
- (d) During the course of the observer, the supervisor and the attached doctor should meet for a formal mid-observer appraisal meeting to review activities and goals, and to provide formative feedback.
- (e) The Consultant supervisor will see the CO / VOHO formally at the end of the observer for an exit interview and a written report on the attached doctor or dentist providing formative and summative assessments to allow for realistic references.
- 4.7. The Consultant supervisor must inform all relevant clinical staff of the observer status of the CO / VOHO.
- 4.8. CO and VOHO may spend time with all or any of the Consultants in that department/unit and with other Consultants by agreement with those consultants and the supervising consultant.
- 4.9 Any issues concerns raised about a CO/ VOHO will be reported to the AMD Medical Education who will escalate to the Unit Medical Director.

5. GENERAL POINTS

- 5.1. A database of current and past CO / VOHOs will be kept with Medical HR.
- 5.1a All CO's/VOHO's must attend a Clinical Governance Awareness Session
- 5.2. A report on CO / VOHO placements will be a standing agenda item on the Health Board Medical Education Committee. Thus the AMD Medical Education and Education Faculty will be updated and monitor the CO / VOHO placements.
- 5.3. All CO placements longer than three months (where Home Office Immigration Regulations allow) will be reviewed by the AMD Medical Education and if required advice will be provide.
5. 4. CO / VOHO are entitled to limited library facilities and services, subject to usual library registration.
- 5.5. CO / VOHO are entitled to apply for 24-hour library access (subject to review). If they wish to apply, a letter from their supervising Consultant confirming their observation status within the Health Board must accompany the application (this must indicate a specified leaving date).

- 5.6. CO / VOHO are entitled to use the staff libraries for reference purposes only (access to book and journal stock) and are politely requested to make themselves known to library staff.
- 5.7. CO / VOHO are **NOT** entitled to utilise the inter-library loan and literature searching facility.
- 5.8. CO / VOHO can utilise the pay as you go photocopier and can access the IT facilities for word processing etc. There is a charge for printing.
- 5.9. Library membership is at the discretion of the relevant Library Service Manager and membership can be withdrawn at any time (the CO / VOHO Consultant Supervisor will be informed if this occurs).
- 5.10. CO / VOHO will not have a username and password to the Internet but may use the open access computers in the libraries (where available).
- 5.11. Annual reminders will be sent out by Human Resources to all heads of departments and ward managers to remind them of the observer status of CO / VOHO within clinical areas.

Refs:

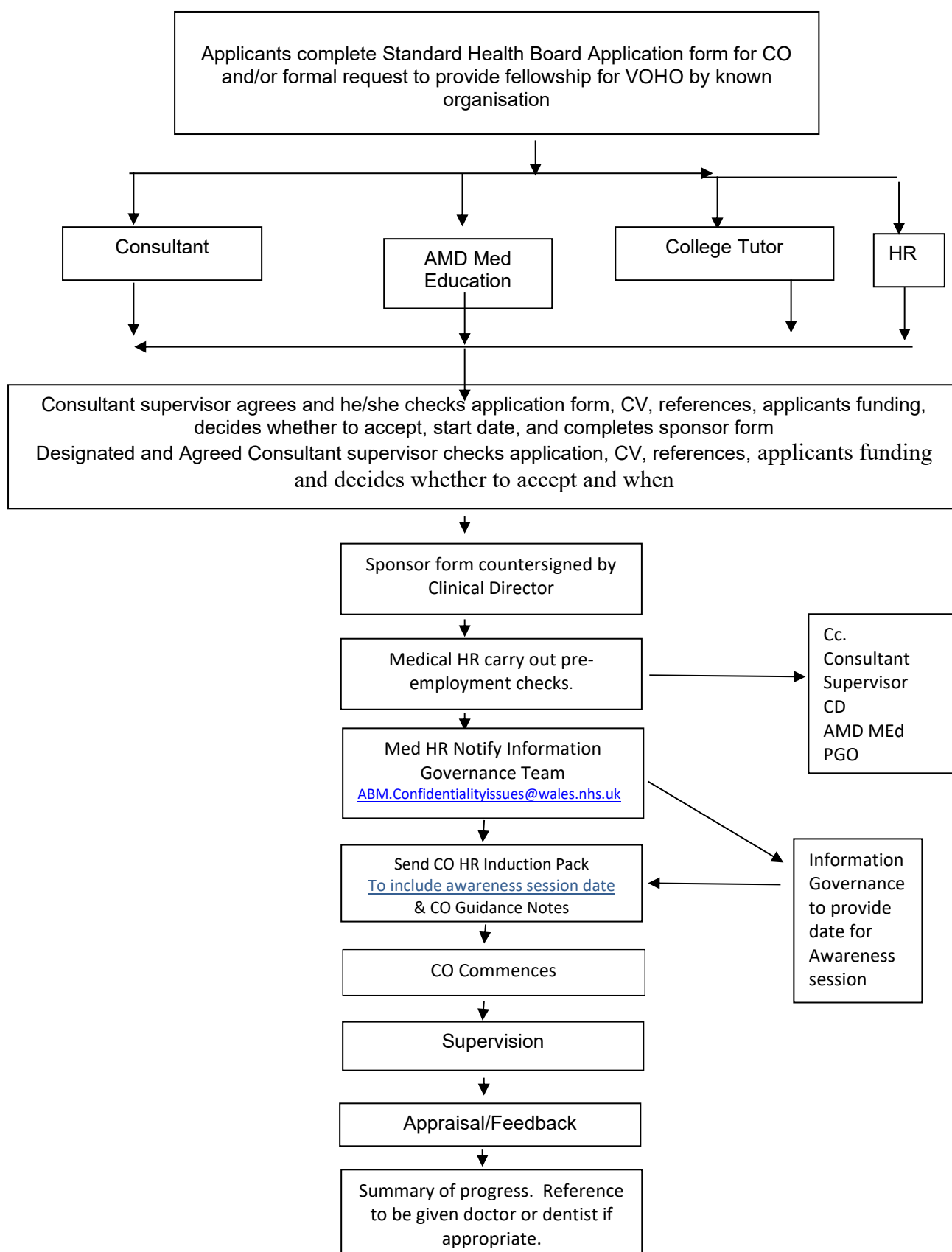
Guidelines for Clinical Observers for International Medical Graduates
Dr Sheila Cheeroth and Dr Anita Berlin
BMA Nov 2007

Guidelines on use of Clinical Observers, February 2010 General Medical Council www.gmc-uk.org

Information from "Notes for Overseas Medical Graduates Intending to Train in the United Kingdom" from the National Advice Centre for Postgraduate Medical Education (NACPME.) – see <http://www.britcoun.org/health/nacpme/>

FIGURE 1

PROCESS OF APPLICATION



Any extension request past three months will be referred to the AMD Medical Education.

**SWANSEA BAY UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD
APPLICATION FORM FOR CLINICAL OBSERVER/CLINICAL OBSERVER/VOHO**

Please complete all boxes in block capital letters and black ink or type.

Enclosed with your application you must supply curriculum vitae, certificate of qualifications, two valid references, relevant police check and verification of immigration status.

1. I am applying for: Clinical Observer/Visiting Overseas Honorary Observer within (specialty):
.....

2. Personal details

SURNAME: FIRST NAMES:

MR/DR/MRS/MISS/MS

DATE OF BIRTH:

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE:
.....
.....
.....Postcode:

Telephone Number: Mobile Number:

E-Mail.....

If you are currently living in the UK, please state how long you have been resident:

3. Immigration Status *Please delete as applicable

a) Are you a UK or EEA national? YES/NO*

b) If not, do you have evidence of permission to stay in the UK for the duration of your Clinical Observer i.e. a visitor VISA to enable you to undertake your proposed observer?
YES/NO*

c) Are you a refugee? YES/NO*

To apply for a visitor visa you will need to apply online using the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/apply-standard-visitor-visa>

4. GMC/GDC Registration Type: (if applicable)

GMC/GDC Registration NO:

Do you hold a licence to practise Yes / No

5. Current Employer if applicable

I am currently employed as (Grade) in (specialty)

And working at (location)

Date Commenced

6. Medical education, professional qualifications, postgraduate medical training, including experience in research, academic medicine or general practice.

i) Name of Medical School and country of qualification	Date From	Date To	Qualification and date obtained e.g. MB. ChB

ii) Qualifications (e.g. MRCP I or II)	Where Obtained	Date Obtained

Any other relevant educational or professional qualifications:

Give details and dates:

iii) Posts held since Medical School. Include grade of post, place of employment.

Grade Held	Specialty & Hospital	Date From	Date To	Training Details and experience gained

7. Supporting Information

Please provide any **information relevant to the Clinical Observer/VOHO** not covered elsewhere on this form, together with reasons why you are applying for this post. Attach an extra sheet as appropriate.

8. Referees

Please note one referee must be your current or most recent employer. Please include full postal address, telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address.

Name:	Name:
Position:	Position:
Address:	Address:
Post Code	Post Code:
Tel No:	Tel No:
Fax No:	Fax No:
E-mail:	E-mail:

9. Declaration:

Before you can be considered for appointment in a position of trust at the SBU Health Board we need to be satisfied about your character and suitability. If you require further information please contact the Postgraduate Medical Education's Office. All enquiries will be treated in confidence. SBU Health Board aims to promote equality of opportunity and is committed to treating all applicants for positions fairly and on merit regardless of race, gender, marital status, religion, disability, sexual orientation, age or offending history. We undertake not to discriminate unfairly against applicants on the basis of criminal conviction or other information declared.

Prior to making a final decision concerning your application, we shall discuss with you any information declared by you that we believe has a bearing on your suitability for the position. If we do not raise this information with you, this is because we do not believe that it should be taken into account. In that event, you remain free to discuss any of that information or any other matter that you wish to raise. As part of assessing your application, we will only take into account relevant criminal record and other information declared.

The Data Protection Act 1998 requires us to provide you with certain information and to obtain your consent before processing sensitive data about you. Processing includes obtaining, recording, holding, disclosing, destruction and retaining information. Sensitive personal data includes any of the following criminal offences, criminal convictions, criminal proceedings, disposal or sentence. The information that you provide on this declaration form will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and will only be used for the purpose of determining your suitability for this position. This declaration will be kept securely and in confidence and access to it will be restricted to designated persons within the Luton & Dunstable Hospital NHS Trust and other persons who need to see it as part of the selection process and who are authorised to do so.

Registration with the General Medical Council or General Dental Council imposes on doctors and dentists the duty to provide a good standard of medical care for and behave appropriately towards patients. NHS employers also have a duty to ensure that patients receive a good standard of medical care and, as far as possible, the safety of patients. Therefore, we need to establish if you have been the subject of any fitness to practice proceedings in the past, or if you are aware of any fitness to practice proceedings that are being contemplated by a licensing or regulatory body in the UK or another country. This is also reflected in the declaration.

The position for which you have applied is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that you must declare all criminal convictions, including those that would otherwise be considered "spent". With the exception of question 8 answering yes to any of the questions on the following page will not necessarily bar you from appointment. This will depend on the nature of the position for which you are applying and the particular circumstances.

1. Are you currently bound over or have you ever been convicted of any offence by a court or Court-Martial in the United Kingdom or in any other country? NOTE: You do not need to tell us about parking offences. If YES , please include details of the order binding you over and/or nature of the offence, the penalty sentence or order of the court and the date and place of the court hearing.	YES	NO
2. Have you ever received a police caution, reprimand or final warning? If YES , please include details of the caution, reprimand or final warning, including the date and reason administered.	YES	NO
3. Have you been charged with any offence in the United Kingdom or in any other country that has not been disposed of? Please note that you must inform us immediately if you are charged with any offence in the United Kingdom or in any other country after you complete this form and before taking up any position offered to you. You do not need to tell us if you are charged with a parking offence. If YES , please include details of the nature of the offence with which you are charged, date on which you were charged, and details of any on-going proceedings by a prosecuting body.	YES	NO

<p>4. Are you aware of any current police investigation in the United Kingdom or in any other country following allegations made against you? If YES, please include details of the nature of the allegations made against you and, if known to you, any action to be taken against you by the police.</p>	YES	NO
<p>5. Have you been dismissed by reason of misconduct from any employment, office or other position previously held by you? If YES, please include details of the employment, office or position held, the date that you were dismissed and the nature of the allegations of misconduct made against you.</p>	YES	NO
<p>6. Have you ever been disqualified from the practice of a profession or required to practice subject to specified limitations following fitness to practice proceedings by a regulatory or licensing body in the United Kingdom or in any other country? If YES, please include details of the nature of the disqualification, limitation or restriction, the date and the name and address of the licensing or regulatory body concerned.</p>	YES	NO
<p>7. Are you currently the subject of any investigation or fitness to practice proceedings by any licensing or regulatory body in the United Kingdom or in any other country? If YES, please include details of the reason given for the investigation and/or proceedings taken, the date, details of any limitation or restriction to which you are currently subject, and the name and address of the licensing or regulatory body concerned.</p>	YES	NO
<p>8. Are you subject to any other prohibition, limitation, or restriction that means we are unable to consider you for the position for which you are applying? If YES, please include details of the nature of the prohibition, restriction or limitation, when and by whom it was made.</p>	YES	NO

If you have answered **YES** to **ANY** of the questions above please use this space to provide details. Please indicate **CLEARLY** the number(s) of the question you are answering. You may continue on a separate sheet if necessary and you may attach supplementary comments should you wish to do so.

DECLARATION

I confirm that the information that I have provided is correct and complete and consent to the information provided being used by SBU Health Board for the purpose of assessing my suitability for the post applied for. I understand and accept that if I withhold information or provide false or misleading information this may result in my application being rejected, or, if I am appointed, in my dismissal. Extreme cases may merit reference to a regulatory or licensing body. I understand that any placement offered is subject to satisfactory medical clearance and police check.

Signed:

Name (please print):.....

Date:.....

Note: if you wish to withdraw your consent at any time after completing this declaration, please contact the Consultant/Consultant Lead petitioned as sponsor.

Once completed:

1. Please return your application, with a covering letter, Curriculum Vitae, Certificate of Qualifications, two valid references, police check and verification of immigration status.
2. If the Consultant/Clinical Lead sponsor agrees to act as your sponsor he/she will complete Appendix B of the form and return to the Medical Workforce Department.
3. Medical Workforce will issue a letter of authorisation and on the first day an ID badge will be issued and you will also be required to attend Occupational Health.

**SWANSEA BAY UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD
SPONSOR FORM FOR CLINICAL OBSERVER/VISITING OVERSEAS
HONORARY OBSERVER STATUS**

To be completed by Supervising Consultant only.

1. Personal details

Name of Clinical Observer or Visiting Overseas Honorary Observer (VOHO)

2. Observer details

Period of observer (3months duration maximum as CO)	Start: / /	Ending: / /
Within Department/Speciality:		
Name of Consultant directly Supervising applicant:		
Name of Hospital:		
First day reporting instructions:		

3. Support for Application

Consultant Sponsor (CO and VOHO must be sponsored by a Consultant of the SBU Health Board)

I understand to supervise the person above during their observership with SBUU Health Board). I also undertake to ensure that the person is aware of departmental health and safety regulations and any protocols and procedures appropriate to the observer role; failure to comply with this policy will result in the AMD Medical Education escalating to the Unit Medical Director.	
Date: / /	
Print Name	Signature

Clinical Director (or designated deputy)

Support the above application	
Date / /	Print Name:

Once completed and fully authorised please send in with a copy of the completed Standard Application Form and references to Medical HR Department.

Please note that without fully completed and signed forms, Occupational Health clearance, confirmation of identity and status, the observer cannot start placement.

SWANSEA BAY UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD GUIDANCE NOTES FOR CLINICAL OBSERVERS (CO) OR VISITING OVERSEAS HONORARY OBSERVERS (VOHO)

On your first day you will meet with your Consultant supervisor. If the supervisor is not available, he/she will have made alternative arrangements but will meet with you as soon as they return. There are several aims of this meeting.

- To welcome you to the hospital.
- To set the ground rules (see below).
- To explore your previous experience and what you wish to gain from your observership.
- To set learning objectives.
- To agree a timetable of activity.
- To agree a timetable of meetings – you will meet your Consultant supervisor every two weeks.
- To agree to you attending a Health Board Clinical Governance Awareness Session

GROUND RULES

A general rule is that you have observer status only because you are not employed by the Health Board and therefore ,must be under the Health Boards management supervision and control at all times. Any exposure to patients must be supervised by other clinical staff employed by the Health Board who are aware of your observer status.

DO NOT PLACE YOURSELF IN SITUATIONS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS.

It is vital that patients and staff are aware of your status. Free and informed consent for your presence at ward rounds etc., must be obtained and patients retain the right to refuse.

EDUCATIONAL PORTFOLIO

As a CO/VOHO the emphasis is on you to be proactive and generate learning objectives. Due to the restrictions in your activity these will frequently be focused on knowledge and understanding of clinical conditions, treatments, etc.

You will use the form in Appendix C and complete it during your first meeting with the Consultant supervisor. The onus is on you to generate learning objectives for your placement and keep a record of achievement in an educational portfolio or folder.

Appendix D is important. It is essentially a Personal Development Plan which should be kept in your educational portfolio/ folder.

Your Consultant supervisor will provide you with a written summary of progress report at the end of your time in the Health Board and a copy of this report will be retained with HR in your personal file

DOs and DON'Ts

Dos

You are expected to:

- Observe ward rounds.
- Observe outpatients.
- Observe in theatre with a Consultant only.
- Shadow other clinical staff such as SHOs, SpRs nurses and therapists.
- Observe routine physical examinations under supervision.
- Participate in postgraduate programmes.
- Attend a Governance Awareness Session

Don'ts

- You must not examine any patient unsupervised.
- You must not undertake any invasive procedure.
- You must not order any investigation.
- You must not prescribe any form of treatment.
- You must not undertake intimate physical examinations.
- You must not consent patients for surgery.
- You must not assist in theatre.
- Do not allow yourself to be pressurised into undertaking procedures or examinations.

USEFUL WEBSITES INCLUDE:

“Notes for Overseas Medical Graduates Intending to Train in the UK” – see <http://www.britcoun.org/health/nacpme/>

This policy has been drafted with significant contributions from:

Mrs Carolyn Hodder, Deputy Medical HR Manager

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Clinical Observer or Visiting Overseas Honorary Fellow
Swansea Bay University Health Board

Learning Needs	How to meet the needs	Agreed date to review Progress	Review of progress	Outcome
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

APPENDIX E

Summary of Progress (Final report) for Clinical Observers/VOHF. The completed report should be forwarded to the doctor, Medical Workforce and the AMD Medical Education.						
1	Details of doctor:	Name Contact details [email/phone]	GMC Number			
2	Details of the Supervising Consultant:	Name	Contact details [email/phone]			
3	Details of Clinical Observer:	Specialty Name/address of the Trust/organisation	Dates			
4	Details of person completing the report:	Name Title/Role	GMC Number [if appropriate] Contact details [email/phone]			
5	The doctor's performance was:	Unsatisfactory Please describe issues or concerns	Borderline	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
6	The doctor's conduct/behaviour was:	Unsatisfactory Please describe issues or concerns	Borderline	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
7	Would you be happy to work with this doctor again in the future:	Yes/No If no, please describe reasons				
Additional optional information:						
8	GMC Domain 1: Knowledge skills and performance	Unsatisfactory	Borderline	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
9	GMC Domain 2: Safety and quality	Unsatisfactory	Borderline	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
10	GMC Domain 3: Communication partnership and teamwork	Unsatisfactory	Borderline	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
11	GMC Domain 4: Maintaining trust	Unsatisfactory	Borderline	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent