

Getting Your Foot in the Door

Editorial

Congratulations to the Internship Forum (IF) team for the success of the second *Live IF* event in Birmingham. Special thanks to our new IF lead Derek Ho and our new EMWA Honorary Secretary Beatrix Doerr and a bunch of dedicated volunteers. Because we have to get this MEW edition out shortly after the Spring Conference, details of the Birmingham *Live IF* will be provided later in the year. Promise!

In this June edition of GYFD, we are presenting the first part of a series on visa regulations and work permits related to internships in the EU. I would like to thank Van-Anh Dao for doing the legwork of researching the German requirements. We will tackle those of other countries in upcoming issues.

Remember Sara and Zuo Yen, IF participants who contributed to our September 2016 GYFD? Well, we are happy to receive postcards from them in this edition, giving us updates on their medical writing journey 6 months after their participation at the IF in Munich. Way to go, ladies!

Raquel

Visa regulations for internships in Germany

An internship normally differs from employment and may therefore be subject to regulations that are different from (and sometimes less stringent than) standard labour legislations. In Germany, an internship that a) lasts longer than 3 months, and b) is not organised and financed by a public or educational body is regarded as an employment.¹ In principle, an internship in the framework of the EMWA Internship Forum is subject to certain visa regulations as described below.

EU citizens who want to do an internship in Germany do not require a visa or permit. However, applicants from non-EU countries who do not have the necessary EU or German work permit are required to obtain a Schengen visa. This visa requirement applies to interns who are students as well. Foreign students are allowed to take an internship in Germany only after they have completed at least four university semesters or 50% of the study time. Another requirement

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for students is that the subject of their study has to be relevant to their internship of interest.² For example, some appealing candidates for medical writing internships are biology, pharmacy, and medicine students.

For most applicants, the Schengen visa must be issued by the German Embassy in their home countries before they come to Germany. However, people from some countries such as Australia, Israel, Japan, Canada, New Zealand, South Korea, and the US can simply register at the local authorities after they have arrived in Germany. Important documents for the visa application are proof of finances (in this case, the internship contract), accommodation and/or travel details, and passport and/or travel documents. Visa application form in German, English, and many other languages are available online. It is possible that a 3-month visa is issued by the German Embassy first, before the Schengen visa that is valid for the intended period of the internship is given when the applicant arrives in Germany.³

References

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3. Wie ist das Prozedere bei der Beantragung eines Arbeitsvisums? [Cited 14 Feb 2017]. Available from: <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/FAQ/VisumFuerD/07-Arbeitsvisum.html?nn=350374>.

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Postcard from Belgium

The last time I wrote for MEW, I had just started an internship in a medical consultancy company in Cambridge (UK), thanks to the EMWA *Live* Internship Forum that took place in Munich in May 2016. And here I am, on the move a few months later, enjoying the (not-so-bad) Belgian weather in my very first full position as a medical writer.

I started working as a publication writer in a contract research organisation, XPE Pharma & Science, in mid-December 2016. Since then, I have gone through an extensive training period and taken up diverse projects: manuscripts, conference abstracts, drug dossiers, minutes of symposia... As we do work for different clients across a range of indications, I need to get familiar with new therapeutic areas, which definitely keeps my brain fed on engaging topics.

The social part of the job is a huge detail not to be missed: I have a vibrant team of writers and publication managers around me, with whom I interact (and learn from) every day. I frequently hold meetings with clients who are leading experts in their fields; it is always a great opportunity to be updated with the latest breakthroughs in pharmaceutical research.



In this new step of the journey I am doing nothing but start to discover the ins and outs of being a medical writer. I clearly have a long road ahead... but the farther I go, the more exciting it gets. I am looking forward to describing the landscape I will be seeing in a few months' time!

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Postcard from Taiwan

Greetings from Taipei!

Six months of intensive hunting for an

opportunity to becoming a medical writer have come to fruition. I am now a medical and regulatory writer in Clinipace Worldwide Taiwan and I moved from Zurich to Taipei in February! It is exciting as I am finally part of the medical writing family. At the same time, starting my new life in Taipei is equally fascinating!

As a new medical writer, I am undergoing a training stage with well-structured training modules which provide an overview of the pharmaceutical industry, an introduction to working in a CRO, insights of various documents involved in drug development, and the techniques of writing these documents. As part of the training, I get the chance to work hands-on on real projects. So far, I have been writing clinical study reports, informed consent forms, and drug safety update reports. From the writing process, I start to appreciate the complexity of drug development and the amount of effort being channelled into each report to ensure high quality and compliance with regulatory requirements. Furthermore, I find that this is the best time and place to bolster my time management skills, as delivering documents according to timelines is of utmost importance to keep up with the clinical development plan.

I am in the middle of the steep learning curve in my new function, and I am enjoying it so far! I see each assignment as a new challenge, and I look forward to expand my medical writing experience to be able to receive every task with increasing confidence.

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