I went to Sri Lanka between June-September 2013, as part of my PhD, to conduct a clinical pilot study investigating pulmonary injury after self-poisoning with ingested organophosphorus pesticides. Here are 10 steps that could help you succeed at the DPMD overseas fellowship board:-

1. **What do you want to learn?** Deciding what it is you want to research or experience is very important if you are going to spend valuable hours of your life trying to make it happen. Make sure it is something you feel passionate about, as this is what will sell the idea and keep you motivated during hard times.

2. **Do your background research.** Use the internet (Google, Facebook, Linkedin, Research Gate etc.), personal contacts and journal searches to explore and firm up your idea and to build your case for the application process. Your idea has to align with current Defence Medical Services (DMS) research interests, so a chat with your Defence Professor would not go amiss.

3. **Write your initial ideas down in a document:** e.g. introduction, background (including relevant literature review), aim, relevance to DMS output, funding sources etc.; and make sure that your curriculum vitae (CV) has been updated with the most important parts on the first page. These two documents can be sent to all the people listed below when asking for their advice or support.

4. **Make early contacts** with potential institutions and key individuals without making any commitments. They can sometimes give you valuable information, e.g. visa application types and time scales, and government regulations on foreign medical workers.

5. **Funding.** Let’s face it – this is a major crunch point. The single services hold the budget for travel and subsistence, so you need your Single Service Career Manager’s (SsCM) approval and also the approval of the Medical Officer in Charge at the Institute of Naval Medicine (MOIC INM) if you are Navy! If you can find someone other than the military to help fund your research experience, the more success you are likely to have. Be creative; apply for a small research grant, become sponsored by a drug/equipment company, entice a Professor with a decent research budget to contribute some funds to your research idea and co-author some papers.

6. **Discuss your idea** with your educational supervisor, Defence Consultant Advisor (DCA), SsCM and Single Service Consultant Advisor (SsCA). Although not necessary, I recommend meeting them in person to discuss your idea, which will also convey your commitment to the proposal. You need their blessing for them to write a good supporting letter for your application.

7. **Find out the application deadlines** and get up-to-date application forms (JSP 950). It will help if you can get your hands on a recent successful applicant’s submission to guide you.

8. **Write the Overseas Fellowship application well.** Make sure the names, addresses, spelling and grammar are correct and get someone to ‘staff’ your application so that it is in the appropriate military format. Use the headings they provide (as well as your own additions) as that is what the Board will mark you on. Think carefully how you will sell the benefit that your idea/experience will give you, the military patient and the DMS as a whole.

9. **The General Medical Council** (GMC) has to
approve out-of-programme training (OOPT) (counting towards certificates of completion of training (CCT)). Alternatively, you can apply for out of programme experience (OOPE) where no GMC approval is required and does not count towards the CCT. This will be done by DPMD once you have successfully completed the Overseas Fellowship Board.

10. **If at first you don't succeed, try again, but better.**

Good luck!

---

**Author**
Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Elspeth Hulse Royal Navy MBChB FRCA Dip Med Tnx
ST5 Anaesthetic registrar, Royal Infirmary Edinburgh
PhD student, University of Edinburgh
Overseas fellow, SACTRC, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.
Elspeth_uk@hotmail.com

---

**THE CHURCH OF ST LUKE ROYAL HASLAR; AN APPRECIATION**

For those readers who have served at Haslar, this publication will be of great interest and stir many memories. Starting with a summary of the history of the hospital itself, the book moves on to describe the history and architecture of St Luke’s, before focusing on specific aspects including the stained glass windows and the organ. A particularly enjoyable section is the chapter describing a walk round St Luke’s today. Beautifully illustrated throughout with high-quality colour photographs, the book is a must for anybody with an interest in the history of Haslar.

Copies are available, at a cost of £8.00, through the Haslar Heritage website, [www.haslarheritagegroup.co.uk](http://www.haslarheritagegroup.co.uk)