

This summer I was offered the chance to attend the ERM Summer School in London to expand my learning as part of my studies. As I live in a different part of the country I knew I would not be able to attend this without some funding, so was delighted when the Expeditions Fund team accepted my application. This funding went towards my travel and accommodation.

Over the course of my first year on this degree we have learnt the theory, importance of, and the evidence of Point of Care Ultrasound Scanning (POCUS) - but this Summer School gave the students the unique (especially for me, as a nurse) opportunity to practice these skills and put the theory to the test. Over the course of two days we practiced on each other, our lecturers, and kind volunteers from the medical school. There is no other time in my practice as an Emergency Department nurse that I would be able to do this, and I will be forever grateful for this opportunity. Not long after finishing Summer School, I assisted a Dr in diagnosing a previously missed pneumothorax in a young patient - a clear example of how invaluable these learning opportunities are.

Aside from the POCUS training, we had many other opportunities that would not be offered to be in my day to day job. We visited the home of London's Air Ambulance, and have a walk through tour of their base and to see the preparation for the hard work they do. Never before have I seen inside an air ambulance, even though I treat these patients on an almost daily basis. I will forever remember the view from the top of the helipad, looking over the cloudy London skyline! We also participated in a mock coroners court simulation, which is an invaluable teaching experience in these pressured times for the NHS. I was able to ask the magistrate questions for any future scenarios that may occur, and this experience really highlighted the importance of our documentation, and I have certainly carried this into my practice going forward, and advised my nursing colleagues to do the same. As well as all this, we participated in simulations that challenged us, with technology not available to me at my hospital.

Up until this Summer School, I had not known the benefit of networking as a nurse, thinking this was reserved for corporate careers. However this week changed my mind entirely. I have met peers in careers I hadn't even considered, and made connections in Australia, where I hope to work in the future. Furthermore, I made some great friends, and was able to put names to faces that were previously just squares on a Zoom call! I cannot emphasize the benefit of this week in all it taught me, and the renewed energy it gave me to continue on this degree. Working full time whilst doing such a challenging course academically has tested me at many points, and I debated whether to continue. However, after being awarded some funding from the Expeditions Fund (without which, I could not have attended) reminded me why I love this course so much and encouraged me to continue.

