

Report about the fellowship in Tampere University Hospital

written by Indrek Soosaar, M.D. (20.12.2018)

During the hand surgery fellowship, you are expected to be at the ward daily at around 07.30. Usually daily activities end by 15.00, but emergency cases are operated 24/7. I was usually free to choose my daily activities, but when there is a lot going on and a shortage of people, you might be assigned to some more specific task. There is a meeting of some sort pretty much every morning, that you are expected to attend (meetings are in Finnish). You will also have to prepare a couple of presentations to other hand surgeons (I gave them in english).

As for on call duties, you are not expected to work during your off-hours and cannot be on call, as you are probably not registered as a doctor in Finland and all communication is in Finnish. You can of course join the doctor on duty. Replantations and revascularisations tend to happen during evenings (nights) and weekends. I bought myself a local prepaid sim-card, so it would be possible to get in touch with me from the on-call phone (they can't make international calls from it). WhatsApp is widely used by the locals. Be sure to eat and go to the toilet before severe hand trauma operations, as it's normal for them to last for hours (I think the longest I was at an operation was 15 hours or so). Breaks are taken every once in a while, but it's much nicer to be focused on the operation and not your growling stomach.

Weekends are off and there is a number of days off for the period, that you can use on your own will.

You don't need to bring your own whitecoat or working clothes. These are provided by the hospital (I usually took them from the OR the day before, so I wouldn't have to worry about it in the morning). You could get shoes from the hospital, but it will take time, so it would be beneficial to have your own (I took a pair of mine and got another pair from the hospital to wear in the OR). If possible, take surgical loupes.

There is a surgical training centre near the hospital, where cadaver courses are held. About 2 times per month (not during the summer and holydays) practical training sessions are held there for hand surgeons. Usually some specific procedure or topic is discussed (for example, brachial plexus anatomy or extensor mechanism anatomy and injury), a brief presentation given, and the dissection of the region or the operation is performed on the cadaver. If you have an idea of something you would like to see or do, you have the possibility to go off topic, if there is enough time.

There is a microsurgical course organised several times a year, that you can take part of. In 2018 it cost 1500 euros (might be possible for the hospital to cover the costs). I strongly recommend attending, especially, if you don't have that much experience in the field. It's a very hands-on approach, as you will be doing different vascular anastomoses on rats' femoral vessels. During my time in TAYS, there was an old microscope, that could be set up and used for practice in the ward as well.

You could probably take part in research as well. I wasn't offered to take part in any ongoing projects or start a new one, but I didn't really have an idea for one either. If you have prepared an outline for a project, I'm sure you will be given a lot of help with it.

If you want to keep a log of operations, you should do this on your own. As far as I know, the information recorded digitally in the computer system, isn't always reliable, especially, if you are assisting.

If you want to read or study some subject, there are various hand surgery books at the hospital. TAYS has access to most of scientific literature, so it's quite easy to just download PDFs to read at home.

The bureaucracy is pretty much the first thing you will have to deal with after getting keys to your apartment. I try to give an overview of documents needed and offices you have to go to.

If your country has Finnish consulate, you can check, if it's possible to apply for social security number and tax card even before coming to Finland. All in all, I would recommend, you check the websites and conditions before arriving to the country, so everything would go smoothly and quickly.

The first thing you are going to need is a paper from the hospital stating you are going to work there, the time of employment, working hours and salary. With this you can apply for the ID and tax card (needed for the contract) from Vero (www.vero.fi).

You should also register your address at the Maistraatti (www.maistraatti.fi). Not sure, if it is really needed, but I was told at KELA, I should. They had some confusion with my contact details, but this should make your address official.

After you have signed the contract, you can apply for social security (KELA www.kela.fi) and living permit (if staying longer than 3 months; www.migri.fi).

- Social security can take 4 weeks to process and another 2 weeks for European health insurance card. I was in a hurry and was able to get both processed in a week. I went to KELA and asked for the paperwork (they also checked it, if it was filled in properly). I didn't book a time in advance and I don't think it's actually needed, as you just have to fill in the forms (which can also be done online, but I couldn't sign in, because I didn't have a Finnish bank account nor ID-card for authentication).
- For living permit you should fill in online form. After you have sent it in and payed the fee you will book a time for the appointment (I got a time 1.5 months after applying)

So, to sum things up:

1. Proof of employment from the hospital
2. Vero – ID and taxcard (https://www.vero.fi/en/individuals/tax-cards-and-tax-returns/arriving_in_finland/work_in_finland/foreign-employer/staying-longer--you-must-pay-tax-to-finland/)
3. Contract

4. Maistraatti, Kela and living permit

You should tell the authorities about the change of address at the end of your stay. All relevant official letters will then be sent to the new address after a date specified by you. They also offer to send any other correspondence to your new address for some forwarding fee. Forms for Maistraatti are available at Posti offices and https://www.vero.fi/en/About-us/contact-us/forms/descriptions/notification_of_mailing_address_3817/ for Vero.

If you are living on Kissanmaankatu, the nearest grocery store will be K-Market in Kissanmaankatu 20 building. My go-to supermarket, if I needed to buy more stuff, was the Prisma at the corner of Sammonkatu and Hervannan valtaväylä. There are different electronics and sporting goods stores in the same building as well.

There is a bakery in Keihäskatu 4. They sell nice bread, but I personally wasn't impressed with other pastries.

If looking for fast food, near the K-market on Kissanmaankatu is a pizza and kebab restaurant. There is Hesburger in the same building as Prisma and a McDonalds across the street.

There are a lot of bars in the downtown region. Beer is expensive in Finland, expect to pay between 5 and 10 euros per 0.5L.

Tampere is a beautiful city, be sure to take a hike on the trails by the lake and check out the downtown region:

- It's nice to have a walk and a munkki at the Pynikin näkötorni. There is a great view from the top to the city and the lakes surrounding it. An adventure park isn't a long way from there either.
- There is a museum district called Vapriikki in the downtown, it consists of many quite small museums, including a hockey museum and video games museum.
- Tampere has a Lenin museum (they claim, it's the only one outside Russia), that might be interesting to visit as well.
- If you are interested in parks, Hatanpää arboretum is a nice place to take a walk in.
- There is an amusement park in Tampere called Särkänniemi.
- The Moomin museum is nice as well, especially, if you enjoy the original art of the books.
- I felt Spy museum in Finlayson building to be a very interesting place to visit.
- Check also the areas surrounding Finlayson building, as there is a public park and small shops and cafes

If you buy a single ticket from a bus driver, it costs something around 3 euros. It makes sense to get yourself a Nysse card (<http://joukkoliikenne.tampere.fi/en/tickets-fares/tampere-travelcard.html>) Customer service at Frenkellin Aukio; can be topped up at R-kiosk), it's a contactless card, that you can load money on to use for public transport tickets (I think it was 1.8 eur for a single ticket, good for 60 min or so). Bear in mind, to get a bus to stop at the bus stop, you have to wave the driver. Also, the bus won't stop to let you off, if you don't push the STOP button. Entering the bus is done quite strictly through the front

door (If you are in a wheelchair or carrying big boxes, they might open the middle door as well), exit the bus through the middle door or the one in the back. There is a tramway under construction. Locals use bicycles pretty much in any weather all around the year, so this is something to consider as well. It's about 45min walk from TAYS to city centre.

Tampere has a nice small airport, with various national and international flights arriving and departing from it. It's about a 45min bus ride from TAYS area.