



Tips For New Doctors

A guide to starting your intern career

Dr Sally Cahill, IMO NCHD Committee

Introduction

Hi, my name is Sally Cahill and I am currently an Intern in the Mid West region working at University Hospital Limerick.

I have been involved with the IMO as a representative for Interns and am a member of the NCHD Committee.

I want to congratulate you on your qualification and welcome you all as NCHDs. I have prepared some tips below which I hope will help you to find your feet as Interns and to help you get the most out of your Intern year.

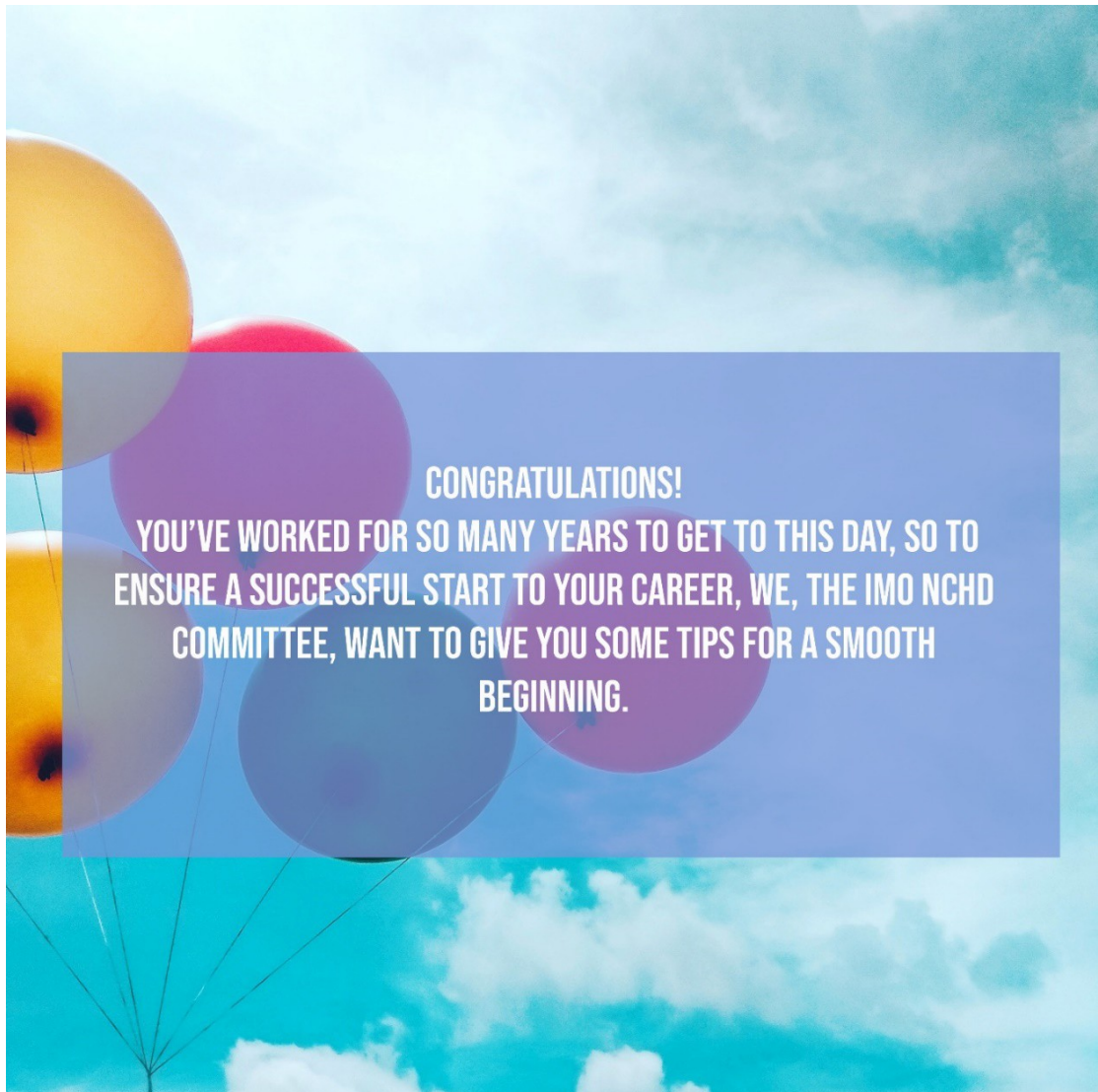


I would encourage you all to get involved with the IMO, as members, as local representatives and to consider running for the committee.

The IMO is your body and is made up of doctors of all types and is there throughout your career.

I hope you find this guide useful, and I look forward to representing you as an IMO Committee member and to working with many of you in the future.

Congratulations!



First thing's first: you don't need to know all the answers. The infamous bleep of the intern on call is a daunting thing at first but be sure to reach out for help from your medical registrars when facing your first calls.

Can't get that cannula in? Ask your fellow interns, everyone is itching to get some practice in at the beginning. Start small and build up the trusty green-line later, antibiotics will flow through the blue/pink line! Trust that over time, you will become confident at these practical skills and know, that soon you won't be nervous every time you're asked to review an unstable patient.

Helpful resources for on-call include: your local micro-guide for antibiotic prescribing, BNF, UpToDate and MdCalc.

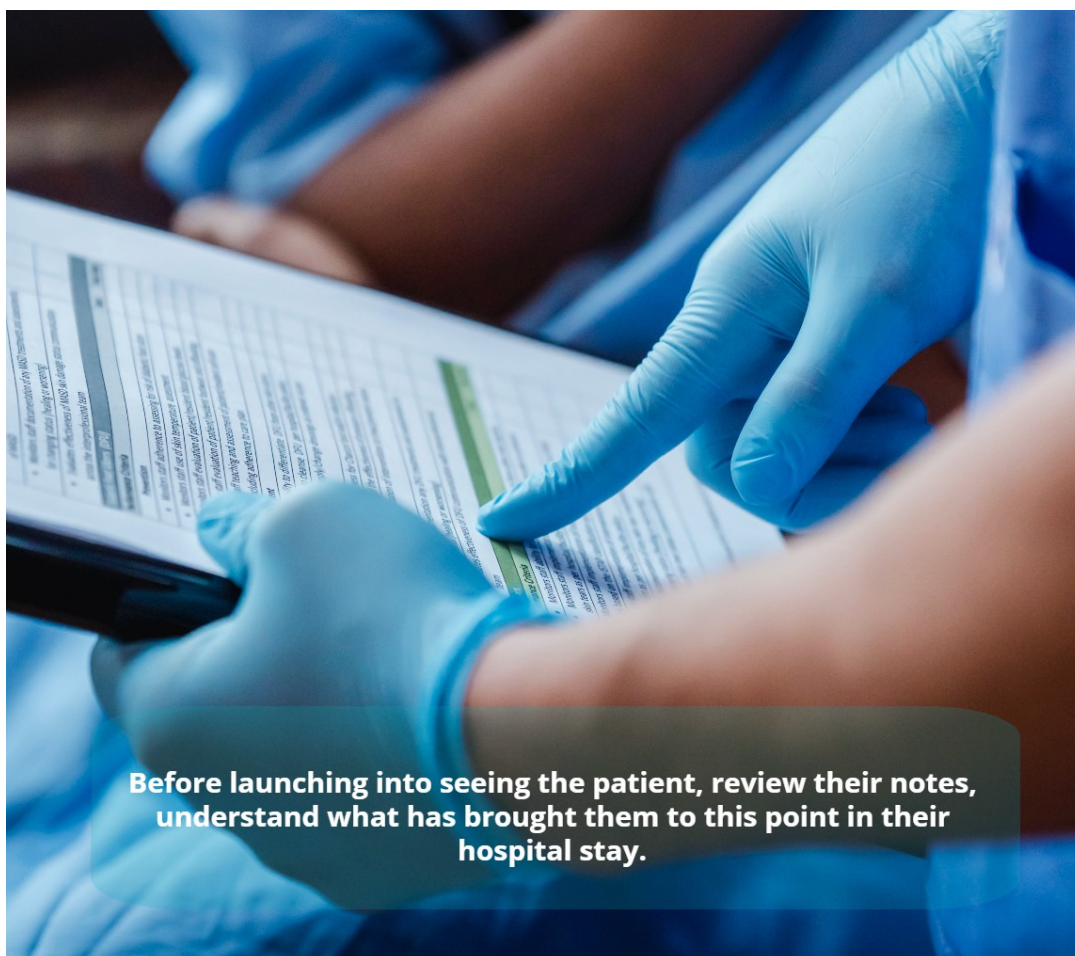
Beep, beep, beeeeeep



BEEP, BEEP, BEEEEEP
(USUALLY GOES OFF WHILE USING THE BATHROOM,
OR SITTING DOWN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A WHILE)

Before you start your first on-call shift, familiarise yourself with the rota expectations in your hospital. When does handover happen, and where? Are your calls compliant of working rules (no more than 24 hours on site, no split shifts etc)? Where are you expected to cover and what is an appropriate call for an intern to receive on-call? As per national guidance with the Early Warning Score, a score of greater than 7 warrants a senior medical review (i.e. the registrar on call). If this is not new for the patient, you may be called instead, however if a patient is suddenly deteriorating, ensure that you ask the nursing staff to also phone the registrar when they are handing over patients of this acuity to you.

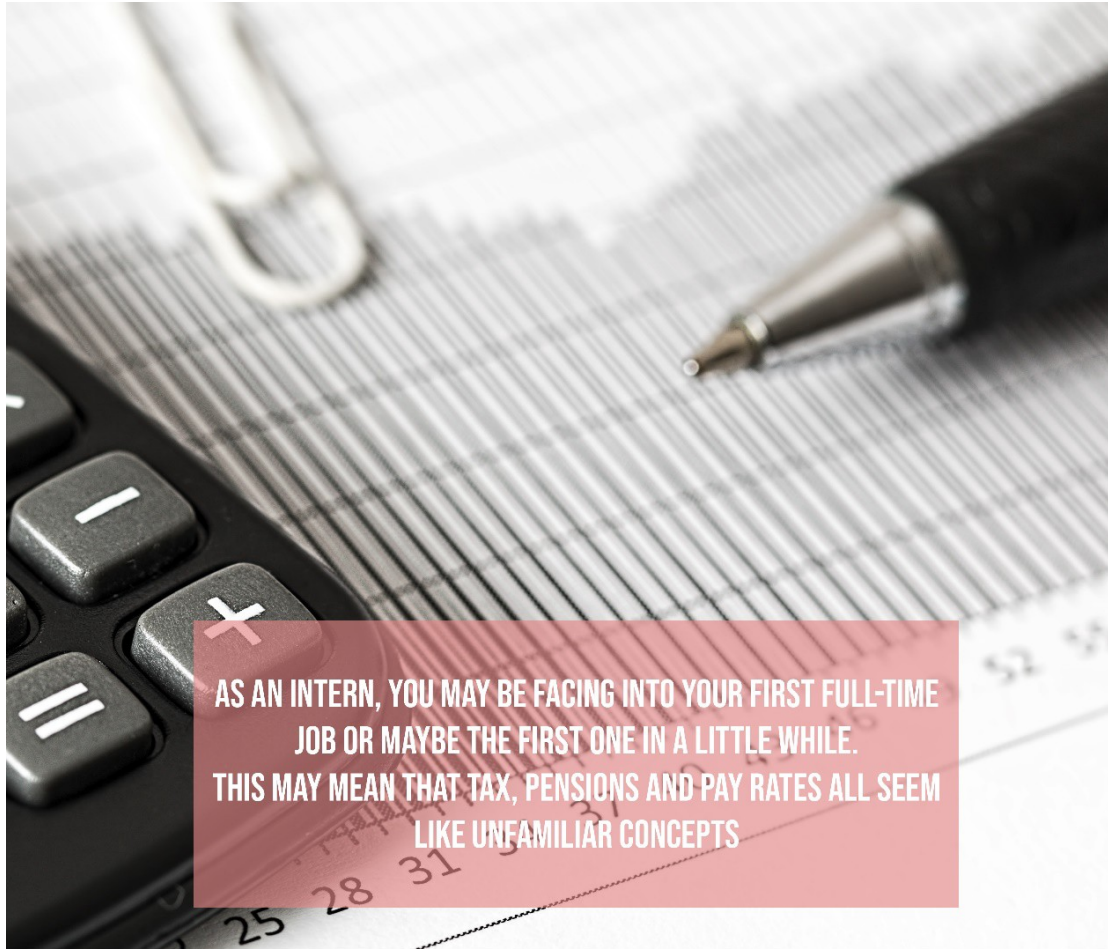
How can you ensure you get a clear handover, and understand what is needed of you? ISBAR! Identify yourself and your grade, explain the situation, ascertain a clear background history (why the patient is in hospital, what are their comorbidities), the assessment of the situation (what is the nurses' concern about the patient/what new clinical features are there?), recommendation (usually this is the time when you say you will come to review!).



Before launching into seeing the patient, review their notes, understand what has brought them to this point in their hospital stay.

This may help you to understand why they are now presenting with a new symptom, and review their vitals and medications. It's much easier to decide on their management when you have a full picture of their current situation.

Your Payslip



AS AN INTERN, YOU MAY BE FACING INTO YOUR FIRST FULL-TIME JOB OR MAYBE THE FIRST ONE IN A LITTLE WHILE. THIS MAY MEAN THAT TAX, PENSIONS AND PAY RATES ALL SEEM LIKE UNFAMILIAR CONCEPTS

Take some time to read your contract and understand your entitlements. Be sure to familiarise yourself with your pay slip. Tax rules can be mind-boggling for even the most experienced accountants, and with our nomadic lives as NCHDs, you want to ensure that you know that you're being paid correctly each time you set up with a new HR Department.

Ensure that you know how to claim for your overtime hours – some hospitals use paper-based timesheets, others, an electronic system. When you get paid, check your payslip. If something doesn't add up, ask your local HR department. The IMO Financial Services run helpful webinars to answer your questions about pay roll and tax, which can all be a little confusing to begin with. We'd recommended logging on, to learn from the experts, what to expect from our NCHD contract. (<https://www.imo.ie/webinar/nchds-know-your-payslip-w/>)

Rotations and Changeover



This is an exciting opportunity to engage with many different specialties to ascertain what you may want to pursue in the future. As a student, you may have ruled out some specialties as areas of interest. Try to approach them with a fresh attitude, given that the work of the intern is quite similar in each department, it won't make too much difference to you if it's orthopaedics or geriatrics, psychiatry or oncology.

Work/Life Balance



Use each changeover as a point in time to set new goals for the rotation ahead. You will likely have several consultants, registrars and SHOs that you work with throughout the year. Seek out the ones who are eager to help you and use these opportunities to gain mentorship for taking your next steps. Engage yourself with research/audit/teaching opportunities in the department and keep track of the work you do throughout the year.

Intern year will pass by in a flash, so use each rotation to build upon your experiences for your applications to further training/stand-alone posts. Whether it be a short audit, case report, making the rota or other leadership roles, each of the responsibilities you take on will aid you in gaining points for your future applications for further training. As much as intern year is a time to sink your teeth into clinical medicine and experiencing life as an NCHD, it's never too soon to think about your next steps.

Annual Leave



REMEMBER, NOW THAT YOU ARE WORKING,
YOU ARE ENTITLED TO A CERTAIN AMOUNT
OF ANNUAL LEAVE/STUDY LEAVE PER 6 MONTHS,
AND WE ENCOURAGE THAT YOU TAKE IT!

Although we are sure you're eager to hit the ground running, don't forget to take time out for yourself. The role of the NCHD is demanding, exciting, challenging, and unpredictable. Take the time to plan with your team, early in each rotation, to ensure you get to take some time to rest and recuperate, so that you are in the best position to provide effective care for your patients. The annual leave entitlements are listed below and are further detailed in your contract. Leave needs to be approved by your team/consultant trainer and submitted to your HR department, as per their guidance.

From January to July:

- 12 working days annual leave of 7.8 hours each, and
- 4 working days of 7.8 hours each in lieu of public holidays
- Total leave allowance of 16 working days or 124.8 hours leave.

From July to January:

- 12 working days annual leave of 7.8 hours each, and
- 5 working days of 7.8 hours each in lieu of public holidays
- Total leave allowance of 17 working days or 132.6 hours leave.

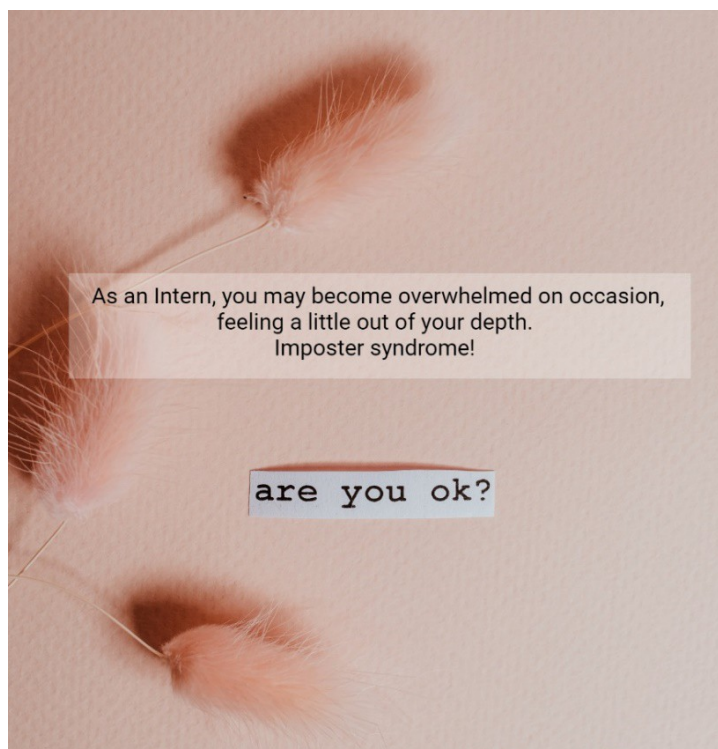
Representation and Involvement



If you're seeing these posts, you're likely aware of the IMO, the union for doctors in Ireland, representing our rights as doctors and advocating for improving working conditions. In each region, IMO representatives will be appointed. These are IMO members who volunteer their time to listen to your concerns in your organisation, and who will feed this back to national representatives and committees. Meet with your local representatives and ask them about their role to familiarise yourself with what their goals and interests are for your region. Do not be afraid to voice your concerns to these representatives, that is what they are there for. Reach out to the IMO if you'd like to get involved yourself.

Be sure to join the IMO, to keep up to date with issues relating to NCHDs and the solutions we are working towards as a committee this year. Some of the relevant issues which have already been solved by the IMO committee for interns include; orientation pay, additional intern posts for 2020 and 2021, ensuring fair assignment of intern posts for 2020 cohort amidst covid pandemic. These are some of the many things which have been acted upon by the IMO, and we are sure there will be many more.

Supports



This is normal and we have all experienced this at some point (as interns and beyond!) Try to recognise these emotions and be sure to reach out for support from friends, colleagues and local wellbeing supports in your hospital network. The times we are working in can be stressful and demanding and we want to ensure that you are able to enjoy your intern year, despite these challenges.

We, the IMO, are aiming to improve health and wellbeing for doctors this year through our working groups, guided by the new IMO President, Dr Ina Kelly. Our aims, as an NCHD committee, will be to ensure safe and efficient working hours, as well as increasing the provision of local supports for doctors in the workplace. Whether that be your mental health, physical health, work-life balance, childcare supports, these all play a role in ensuring the wellness of our doctors. This is a top priority of the IMO. Supports can be found in each hospital group, which should be made available to you at orientation.

The HSE provides a website with information on the supports they provide.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/workplace-health-and-wellbeing-unit/>

If you are feeling overwhelmed, you can also reach out to your intern network, who will be able to guide you to the best supports in your region, to ensure your wellness. Finally, if you are struggling with mental health, stress or burnout, you can contact Practitioner Health, a confidential, IMO-supported service for doctors, at www.practitionerhealth.ie.

Training Supports



Did you know? As an NCHD, you are entitled to financial supports for training and progression. These supports are claimed through the Training Support Scheme and include payment for eligible courses, examination fees, conference fees and more. The National Employment Record (NER) is the online site to claim back these supports. Make sure to avail of these supports, as training courses and examinations can be costly, however many are essential for our training and progression. (Links to TSS eligible courses –

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/ed/fin/>)

Contact us

For contractual advice and information

Member Advisory Unit : memberadvisoryunit@imo.ie

IMO House: Tel: (01) 6767273

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