

I am very grateful to The Music Therapy Charity for providing a grant to help fund my final year international placement in Sabah, Malaysia. The £1000 received provided the majority my travel and accommodation expenses during the three months I spent on placement.

My placement consisted of working five days per week in three different clinical contexts: 2 days in adult and child oncology care in a local hospital, 2 days in a psychiatric hospital working with in- and out-patients, and one day in a community stroke rehabilitation centre. I gained experience working with individuals and groups, children and adults, short- and medium-term work, and three very diverse clinical contexts. It would not have been possible to gain this variety of experience on a domestic placement.

My personal situation thankfully afforded me the opportunity to take this time to work within a different culture. The experience was both challenging and rewarding, and most certainly mind-opening. My understanding of the importance of practicing cultural sensitivity was constantly reinforced throughout the three-month period, understandings which will certainly carry through to my practice in future work both with domestic and international clients.

Furthermore, I learned about regional difficulties where there is little provision or understanding of music therapy. Paid work is scarcely available and prospective music therapists must travel abroad to study. This is unfortunate as I observed much need for music therapy in the contexts in which I was placed.

As I continue to reflect and learn from this international placement, I would like to thank The Music Therapy Charity for helping make this experience possible.

Conor O'Brien