

Health and Development Special Studies Module – Leicester Medical School

In 2008, the “Global Health and Development” special study module was successfully delivered to medical students in Leicester for the seventh consecutive year. Skillshare International established the course in partnership with the Medical School at Leicester University in 2002.

The 12-week course for 2nd year students runs one day a week from January to May. It is delivered by academic staff alongside Skillshare International development workers, staff and guest speakers. These contributors come from different backgrounds but have in common their experience in international development and health care issues.



2008 students and course leaders

Students experience a range of teaching methods, including case studies, problem based learning, expert input and development education methodologies, all of which encourage student participation and critical reflection. They actively contribute to the course through presentations, debates and group activities. A total of 48 hours' teaching time is matched by half a day a week for self-study. At the end of the course students are evaluated through presentations of their research results on a topic of their choice. The presentations have two elements, with students firstly presenting the information for an academic and professional audience, and then presenting information on the same topic for an audience in a resource poor setting with a low level of formal education, often as a role play. Students also communicate their findings by producing and presenting a self-explanatory poster giving information about the topic.

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Students are also asked to submit a 2,500-word academic essay of a topic of their choice, in which they present their position and research to support their argument. Students are actively encouraged to reach their own conclusions and explain their arguments based on evidence and research, rather than necessarily agreeing with the lecturers and other course facilitators. In 2007 a prize was introduced for the best essay. The title of the 2008 prize winning essay, which won a Fair Trade hamper (see photo) was *The NHS should not employ any health worker trained in a developing country to minimise the 'Brain Drain.'* The following extract highlights just one of the issues that students were exposed to during the course:

“It was estimated in 2007 that to train a UK medical student it can cost up to £250,000. If the doctor arrives fully trained and with a medical degree the NHS will have not paid for the education but will receive the benefits of their service.” The essay continues to discuss the UK's Ethical Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Healthcare Professionals, and human rights issues related to migration. In conclusion, the prize winner asserts: *“Global migration needs a global solution which addresses both the push factors and the pull factors. The NHS should not stop employing health professionals from developing countries as it would be unethical to refuse the best candidate the job because of their country of origin... the UK should compensate the donor countries for the staff that do migrate to the UK so that the donor countries can improve the standards within the country and help to replace and retrain their staff.”*