This *Hitchhiker’s Guide to Core Medical Training* is similar to its namesake *Guide to the Galaxy* in that it has needed to be revised and updated as the experiences of trainees hitching around the Oxford Deanery have been fed back, but the basic plot is still the same.

The whole “Specialist Trainee (ST) in Core Medicine” can be daunting to start with. Especially as I felt my preceding four months as a hapless Foundation Year 2 doctor in Public Health didn’t leave me well-equipped to be the Resident Medical Officer as a hapless ST1, taking referrals from A&E, GPs or actually from anyone who bumped into me in the corridor.

Couple this trepidation with a whole new “eportfolio” and suddenly I wanted to hide under my desk (well I call it a desk, it was actually a horizontal piece of chipboard for FY2 Public Health doctors) and continue my root-cause analysis of a scabies outbreak in a nearby nursing home.

What is the e-portfolio? Am I now indelibly consigned to being a CT1...or is it ST1? What is are MSFs, WBAs and JRCPTB? Who is the ARCP panel? Is it a group of acronymic aliens from the Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy? Lots of wild thoughts crossed my mind with a rising feeling of panic. Maybe I had taken advantage of one too many drinks’ vouchers at the Doctors’ Mess Party….

Actually, it’s not that bad at all. The *Hitchhiker’s Guide to Core Medical Training and the e-portfolio- a practical guide* is meant to help us with that transition from Foundation to Specialist Training. As you read, it magically guesses the next question in your mind and hey presto, the answer is on the next page. It deciphers the jargon and leads you hand-in-hand to log on to the electronic portfolio (hence “eportfolio”- see it has begun to make sense already). Be it details about your assessments or how to attain the necessary competencies to apply for ST3 level jobs, the guide really does simplify it all. As well as academic issues being addressed, there is information on how to go about organising out of training experiences and appropriate support networks if things aren’t going to plan.

It’s a great resource to find out what you’re supposed to be doing, when and who with. Dr. Emma Vaux, CMT Programme Director, has worked tirelessly on the guide to ensure trainees are given the necessary information as they embark on their Core Medical Training. Having said that, CMT in the Oxford Deanery does require initiative and self-motivation on the trainee’s part, in regularly updating their eportfolio as their clinical experiences accumulate. This is by showing evidence of your achievements through appropriate assessments, having competencies signed off and doing reflective practice (a lot more useful than it may initially seem). Before you know it you’ll not need that chipboard anymore. Good luck!

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