



Your Canadian Connection  
to Study in Australia



# Medicine Frequently Asked Questions

OzTREKK's students who are about to enrol in an Australian Medical program often have questions about the school, program and certification process following graduation. We put this Medicine FAQ package together to help answer key questions you may have, and have listed sources of information for reference. It is important to understand the requirements and procedures associated with practising medicine in the jurisdiction in which you plan to work.

*Information last updated: May, 2009*

## Program Information

### Q.) What is the difference between the Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) degree and the Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree?

A.) MBBS and MD degrees are equivalent medical degrees with different names. Degree titles differ around the world. The MBBS is offered in Australia, the U.K. and most Commonwealth of Nations states. MD degrees are offered in Canada and America, as well as countries such as Iran and Russia.

Australian universities do offer an MD (Doctor of Medicine); however, this is a higher doctoral, academic-research degree which resembles a Ph.D. An Australian MD is a post-MBBS degree. (Note: the exception to this will be the University of Melbourne's professional Doctor of Medicine program, which will have its first intake in 2011).

Throughout North America, the MD is a first professional degree, which is not a research degree but a degree enabling graduates to become medical doctors.

In Canada and the U.S., the original medical degree that was granted to graduates was called the Bachelor of Medicine. However, in the 19th century, many North American medical schools changed degree titles from the traditional Bachelor of Medicine to the MD.

### Q.) What are the academic statistics of the entering class in to the medical program at the University of Queensland in comparison to Canadian universities?

A.) At the University of Queensland, the international students' academic results are comparable to those entering medical school in Canada.

In 2008, the University of Toronto medical school's entering class had a minimum MCAT of 22M, a median of 33Q and the highest of 43T. For the entering class of international students at UQ in 2008, the minimum MCAT was 22M, median 29Q and a high of 40S. The entering MCAT scores in 2009 at UQ were minimum 22M, median 30P and highest 41S.

#### University of Toronto

##### 2008 Entering Class

	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Verbal Reasoning	7	10	13
Physical Sciences	7	11	15
Biological Sciences	8	12	15
Writing Sample	M	Q	T

\*2009 statistics not available at time of publication

#### University of Queensland

##### 2008 Entering Class

	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Verbal Reasoning	7	9	13
Physical Sciences	7	10	14
Biological Sciences	8	10	13
Writing Sample	M	Q	S

##### 2009 Entering Class

	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Verbal Reasoning	7	9	13
Physical Sciences	7	10	14
Biological Sciences	8	11	14
Writing Sample	M	P	S



**Q.) Will I be able to complete clinical rotations or electives in Canada or the United States, as part of my UQ medical program?**

A.) Students have an opportunity to complete one elective overseas in Year 1 of the medical program, which is four weeks in duration. They can also complete one elective overseas in Year 4, which is eight weeks long. Students also have the opportunity to complete two more clinical rotations in Years 3 and 4 outside Australia. The University of Queensland has established a network of international clinical sites, enabling students to undertake their clinical rotations overseas.

## **Practising Medicine in Canada**

**Q.) What do I need to know about practising medicine in Canada?**

A.) As a graduate from an Australian medical school who wants to practise medicine in Canada, you are referred to as an International Medical Graduate (IMG).

The Physician Credentials Registry of Canada explains the term, international medical graduate (IMG), is used to describe a physician who has graduated from a medical school outside of Canada. An international medical graduate must:

- a. Be a graduate from an international school/college listed in the International Medical Education Directory. The medical school/college granting the degree (as well as the name of the medical degree and year of graduation) must be listed in the International Medical Education Directory.
- b. Have completed all requirements to obtain the final qualification of Doctor of Medicine or equivalent qualification, including any postgraduate clinical training or internship required to obtain the degree.

“...a Canadian citizen or Canadian permanent resident who studied medicine outside of Canada is also considered an international medical graduate or an international medical student. ”

(Source: Physician Credentials Registry of Canada; <http://www.pcrc.org/en/img.shtml>)

To practise in Canada, IMG's need to undertake measures including:

- ☐ Send medical credential documents for source verification
- ☐ Pass the Medical Council of Canada's Evaluating Exam (MCCEE)
- ☐ Submit proof of language proficiency (in English or French)
- ☐ Undertake a Postgraduate Training Program (residency) through a Canadian-accredited medical school
  - 2 years for family medicine
  - 4-5 years for other specialities
- ☐ Many Postgraduate Training Programs/residency positions require applicants to have passed the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination Part 1 (MCCQE1).
- ☐ Complete other examinations for a postgraduate training program or a certification requirement specific to your area of medicine.

A helpful resource which outlines the registration process to practise medicine in Canada can be found at:  
[http://www.img-canada.ca/en/licensure\\_overview/exam%20chart.htm](http://www.img-canada.ca/en/licensure_overview/exam%20chart.htm)

Finally, because Canada does not manage the registration of physicians at the national level, it is essential for you to be aware of the IMG requirements for licensure for the province in which you wish to practise medicine. Each province and territory may have different requirements. For an overview of your province's route to licensure, please visit the following Canadian Information Centre for IMG's web page: <http://www.img-canada.ca/en/provinces/index.html>



**Q.) Can you explain the medical residency structure in Canada?**

A.) Residency in Canada is also known as Postgraduate Training. A specific residency is a Postgraduate Training Program. International Medical Graduates are eligible to apply for a residency position through the Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS) or an IMG-specific program.

CaRMS is the main gateway to residency matching in Canada. The main residency matching process at CaRMS is for "postgraduate Year 1 entry (R-1) residency positions." Seventeen accredited Canadian medical schools participate in the Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS). This service matches prospective physicians to a postgraduate training program. IMGs may apply to CaRMS in all participating provinces/territories except Alberta (IMGs wanting to practise medicine in Alberta, please see: <http://www.aimg.ca>).

The length of a residency varies for the different specialties. For instance, postgraduate training in Family Medicine is two years in length. Specialty programs certified by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) may be four or five years in length, depending on the program.

Residency prepares physicians for independent practice and medical specialties (such as family medicine, pediatrics, dermatology, etc.) Residency programs are based in hospitals and other health care institutions, and use both inpatient and outpatient settings for teaching purposes. Residents are employed by the specific hospital where they are completing their training program and receive a salary and benefits. Postgraduate trainees (residents) practice under an educational license and are not licensed to practice independently.

There are quotas set for postgraduate training (Residency Match) disciplines. These quotas are divided into two categories: the domestic quota (for Canadian medical school graduates) and the International Medical School graduate quota. Following their residency, physicians then complete the Canadian Medical Council Qualifying Exam II and apply for certification to the appropriate body, such as the College of Family Physicians of Canada, or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons. Certification normally involves passing that college's specific certification examination.

This information is from CaRMS and the Canadian Information Centre for International Medical Graduates. You can obtain Postgraduate Training information, including the postgraduate training programs available and the application process, by visiting the CaRMS website at: <http://www.carms.ca/>. CaRMS also has a helpful video, explaining how residency training is organized in Canada as well as CaRMS' role in the process.

**Q.) Do you have any statistics regarding the matching success of international medical school graduates for a residency spot in Canada?**

A.) According to CaRMS, such statistics do not exist.

**Q.) How will my status as an International Medical Graduate affect my chances of receiving a residency in Canada?**

A.) As mentioned above, all medical graduates need to complete a medical residency prior to being certified to practice independently in Canada. It is difficult to determine individual chances of a student obtaining a residency of their choice, as a match to a particular residency is assessed on a case-by-case basis, based on multiple factors, including: educational transcripts, personal statements, letters of reference, and interviews. Your success at matching will also be based on your exam results as well as the relationships which you forge during your clinical rotations at university.

To maximize your chances of having a strong application for a residency place in Canada, it is strongly recommended that you complete some of your clinical rotations or electives in Canada, while undertaking your Australian medical degree.



## **Practising Medicine in Australia**

### **Q.) Can you explain the medical internship structure in Australia?**

A.) According to the Australian Medical Association, after completing the Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery degree, graduates receive provisional registration and become junior doctors (or a doctor-in-training) and enter the medical field. This training is known as an “internship” and normally lasts for one year.

The training takes place in public hospitals, general practice and community-based settings. You will be exposed to a wide range of clinical situations and environments, including emergency medicine and surgery. This training involves work rotations in different clinical departments. After successful completion of one year of training, you will receive a full medical registration by the relevant state board.

Before you begin to independently practise medicine, you must then complete at least one more year of prevocational training (or residency). This involves working in public hospitals and may include rotations in regional and rural settings.

This exposure aims to prepare the trainee to meet the needs of the hospital system. It also helps you decide which area of medicine you are most suited to, as you will be working with different doctors and experiencing the various specialties and areas of medicine. During this on-the-job training, you will be known as a Resident Medical Officer (RMO). After completing this prevocational training, you are then able to apply to become a licensed family doctor in Australia.

Upon finishing your RMO training, if you wish to specialize, you will then go on to complete your vocation training, or specialist medical education. This will lead to a fellowship of one of the recognized specialist training colleges in Australia. Junior doctors undergoing this training are known as registrars.

Specialist training programs generally take between three to eight years to complete and are administered by the particular specialist professional college. Once you have completed your specialist training, you must successfully complete the college's examinations and are then awarded fellowship of that particular college  
(Source: <http://www.ama.com.au/node/4130>).

### **Q.) Upon completing the MBBS program, can I stay in Australia to pursue medical practice? If so, what is the process involved?**

A.) Yes, international students graduating from Australian universities, who wish to go on to complete their internship in Australia, will have an opportunity to apply for a “Skilled Graduate Visa (subclass 485)”.

Applicants must have completed at least two years study at an Australian university and have successfully completed their degree. Successful applicants will be entitled to remain in Australia for an additional 18 months, and this entitles them to a temporary work visa. The Skilled Graduate Visa provides a defined pathway to a General Skilled Migration Visa and permanent residency status in Australia.

With regards to becoming a permanent resident in Australia, you would apply via the skilled-migrant scheme, which rewards points to those who have a skilled trade or profession in an area of great need by Australia. Medicine, at the moment, is one of those areas, meaning that you would receive the highest number of skilled profession points available.

There are also other criteria which can gain you points. Once you have met the minimum number of points, you are then eligible to apply for Permanent Residency status in Australia. For further information, please visit:  
<http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/485/>



**Q.) How will my status as an international student graduating from an Australian medical program, affect my chances of receiving an internship in Australia?**

A.) In Canada, the 17 Canadian faculties of medicine administer clinical residencies once medical students have completed their medical studies. This procedure is different in Australia because clinical residencies, also known as internships, are administered by each state's Department of Health.

Each Australian state's Department of Health outlines the number of internships available each year, as well as the various rules and regulations governing internships.

For instance, there are 10 categories when it comes to the internship match in the State of Queensland.

The following outlines the state's applicant priority list:

**State of Queensland: Category Definition of Applicant Priority**

1. Medical graduates of Queensland universities who are Australian citizens or permanent residents (guaranteed a placement offer).
2. Medical graduates of interstate/New Zealand universities who completed Year 12 in Queensland and are Australian citizens or permanent residents.
3. Medical graduates of interstate/New Zealand universities who are Australian citizens or permanent residents.
4. Medical Graduates of interstate/New Zealand universities who are New Zealand citizens or permanent residents.
5. International students who are medical graduates of Queensland universities who are permitted to remain in Australia for internship.
6. International students who are medical graduates of interstate universities who are permitted to remain in Australia for internship.
7. Australian Medical Council (AMC) graduates who are Australian citizens or permanent residents and require a year of supervised training to meet general registration requirements of the Medical Board of Queensland.
8. Medical graduates of international universities who are Australian citizens or permanent residents.
9. Medical graduates of international universities who are New Zealand citizens or permanent residents.
10. Medical graduates of international universities who are overseas citizens or permanent residents.

\*Please note: priority groups are different in each state. Please contact the state in which you wish to attain an internship

Upon graduating from an MBBS program in Australia, the majority of international students from Canada would fall under category 5 or 6. The majority of Australians fall under categories 1-4, meaning they have first choice of internship sites. It is likely that many of the internships offered in urban areas may be taken by the time the match comes down to international students from Canada. The internship selection therefore may be more limited for Category 5 and 6 graduates, and these graduates may have to complete the internship in a rural setting.

(Source: <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/medical/interninfo.asp>)