



# PATHWAYS TO GENERAL PRACTICE FOR INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATES

## Introduction

International Medical Graduates (IMGs) whose qualifications are from a medical school outside of Australia or New Zealand, make up a significant proportion of the clinical workforce in general practice. If you are thinking about employing an IMG in your practice, there are different pathways and restrictions you need to be aware of. This document provides a brief overview of these requirements.

## Pathways for IMGs

### *Competent Authority pathway*

This pathway is for IMGs who have undertaken medical exams with one of the international authorities approved by the Medical Board of Australia as competent to assess the applied medical knowledge and basic clinical skills of IMGs:

<https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Registration/International-Medical-Graduates/Competent-Authority-Pathway.aspx>

### *Specialist pathway*

This pathway is for IMGs who have a primary qualification in medicine and surgery, that is awarded by a training institution recognised by both the Australian Medical Council (AMC) and Work Directory of Medical Schools (WDOMS), and who have satisfied all the training and examination requirements to practice in their field of specialty in their country of training:

<https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Registration/International-Medical-Graduates/Specialist-Pathway.aspx>

### *Standard pathway*

This pathway is for IMGs who are not eligible for the Competent Authority or Specialist pathway. As a minimum, to qualify for this pathway people will hold a primary qualification in medicine and surgery awarded by a training institution recognised by the AMC and WDOMS and will have passed the AMC MCQ exam and an English language test:

<https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Registration/International-Medical-Graduates/Standard-Pathway.aspx>

An IMG will be eligible for one of three kinds of registration under the Standard pathway:

- **Limited Registration (area of need):**  
<https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Registration/Types/Limited-Registration/Area-of-Need.aspx>
- **Limited Registration (Postgraduate Training Program):**  
<https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Registration/Types/Limited-Registration/Postgrad-Training.aspx>
- **Provisional Registration:** for this type of registration, the IMG will also need to have passed their AMC Clinical Examinations: <https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Registration/Types/Provisional-Registration/Medical-Council-Certificate.aspx>

## Restrictions for IMGs

There are three common restrictions for working within general practice:

1. **19AB:** restricts IMGs to work within a Distribution Priority Area (DPA) for a moratorium of 10 years in order to access Medicare Benefits: <https://www.health.gov.au/topics/medicare/access-practitioners-industry/doctors-and-specialists/19ab>
2. **19AA:** restricts Australian citizens and permanent residents who are not Fellowed and requires them to join a 3GA training program while preparing for Fellowship to access Medicare Benefits: <https://www.health.gov.au/topics/medicare/access-practitioners-industry/doctors-and-specialists/19aa>
3. **Area of Need:** Area of Need certificates are required for practices employing an IMG seeking Limited Registration (area of need) and are also given based on a location's need for GPs: <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/working-in-health/area-of-need-requirements-for-international-medical-graduates>

## Pre-Employment Structured Clinical Interview (PESCI)

Doctors intending to apply for Limited or Provisional registration to work in general practice will also need to sit for a Pre-Employment Structured Clinical Interview (PESCI). This is an assessment of their knowledge, skills, clinical experience and attributes to determine whether they are suitable to practice in a specific location. To learn more:

<https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Registration/International-Medical-Graduates/pesci.aspx>

## Supervision requirements

A Doctor on Provisional or Limited Registration will need to be supervised until they hold General or Specialist Registration. AHPRA requires all IMGs to have a Principal Supervisor and at least one Co-Supervisor. To be eligible to supervise, GPs require:

- Specialist Registration: if nominated GP has General Registration (not Specialist), they must provide an explanation for the Board's consideration about their experience and why they are suitable. This may not be accepted.
- Three years full time equivalent practice with General and/or Specialist registration in Australia: if the GP does not have three years' experience, an explanation must be given for the Board's consideration as to why they are suitable. This may not be accepted.
- Completion of the Board's online education and assessment module to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities as a supervisor.

If concurrently consulting their own patients, a supervisor can supervise one level 1 IMG and up to three on other levels. If not consulting their own patients, a supervisor can supervise a maximum of four IMGs (including more than one on level 1). For more, see:

<https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Policies/Supervised-practice-guidelines.aspx>

## Where to now

If your practice is looking at employing an IMG, contact your local workforce agency. The Rural Workforce Agency Victoria has a dedicated team to assist with recruiting Australian and overseas trained doctors, including IMGs, to regional Victoria. Register by calling 03 9349 7800 (option 1) or visiting the website <https://www.rwav.com.au/recruitment-program-information-gps-and-gp-locums/>

## Contact details

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