SUMMARY SNAPSHOT

INTERNATIONAL SUPPLY OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

MET 02

BACKGROUND

Overseas trained medical professionals bring valuable skills and experience. They are a key component of Australia's health workforce, providing patients with access to care not only in rural and remote areas, but metropolitan and regional areas as well. Some may work in Australia on a temporary basis while many others go on to become permanent residents of Australia.

International medical graduates must first apply to the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs for a visa under which they may work or continue their training in Australia. They are usually overseas when applying, but others who have already entered Australia can apply. Previously, applicants were assessed by the Australian Medical Council (AMC) as to whether they were eligible to seek registration to practise medicine in Australia and then, if successful, apply through the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency to be registered to practise nationally. But now applicants go directly to AHPRA for assessment.

As part of their Medicare Provider Number applications to the Australian Government Department of Human Services – Medicare, overseas trained doctors must apply for an exemption under section 19AB of the Act to access Medicare benefits for the services they provide.

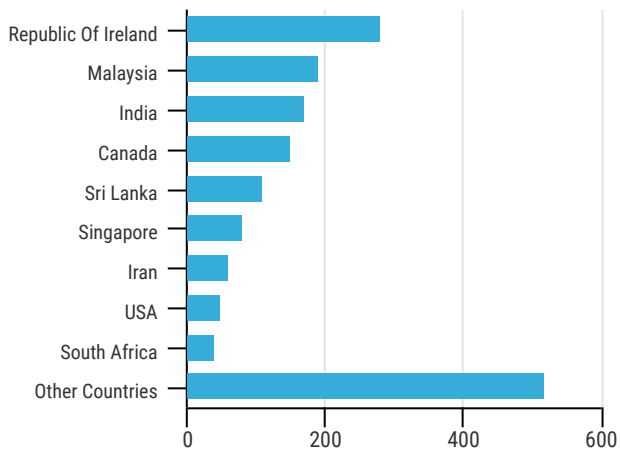
Further information is avaliable from http://www.doctorconnect.gov.au/

PROGRAMS

Primary 457 subclass visas, in 2016/2017

2,730

39.6% were from the United Kingdom.
The 442/402 subclass was not reported on.



Primary visas granted to medical practitioners, 2011-2017

Financial Year	457	442/402	Total
2011–12	3,300	260	3,560
2012–13	2,860	230	3,090
2013–14	2,440	210	2,650
2014–15	2,540	290	2,820
2015–16	2,730	210	2,940
2016–17	2,730	0	2,730
2016–17 Proportion of total (%)	100.0	0	100.0
Change 2015–16 to 2016–17 (%)	0.0	-100.0	-7.1
Change 2011–12 to 2016–17 (%)	-17.3	-100.0	-30.4

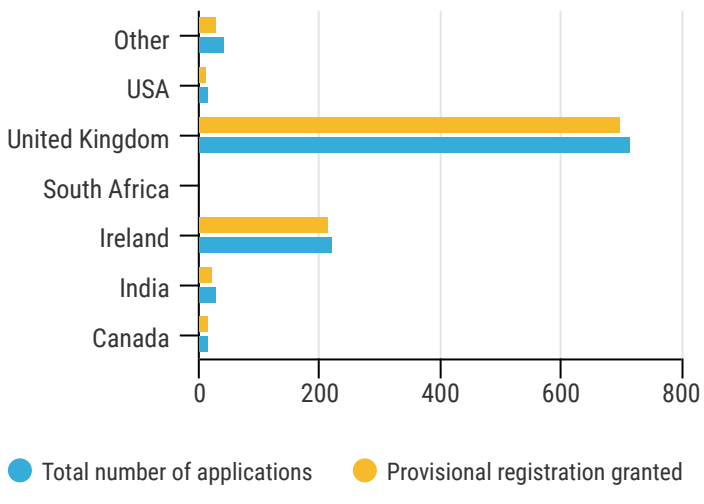
Data collection was transitioned from AMC in 2013/14 to AHPRA where there are slight differences in the collection approach.

REQUIREMENTS

Competent Authority Pathway, provisional registrants

1,001

International Medical Graduates from the United Kingdom formed the largest proportion (70%) followed by Ireland (21.5%).



Competent Authorities are designated overseas-accredited medical training and licensing examination authorities that have been reviewed and approved against criteria developed by the AMC as competent to undertake a basic assessment of medical knowledge and clinical skills for the purposes of registration in Australia.

The administration of IMG assessment for the Competent Authority pathway was passed over to the MBA/AHPRA and the assessment of overseas trained specialists to the relevant specialist medical colleges with effect from 1 July 2014.

The data collection from AHPRA are reflect from 1 January 2015.

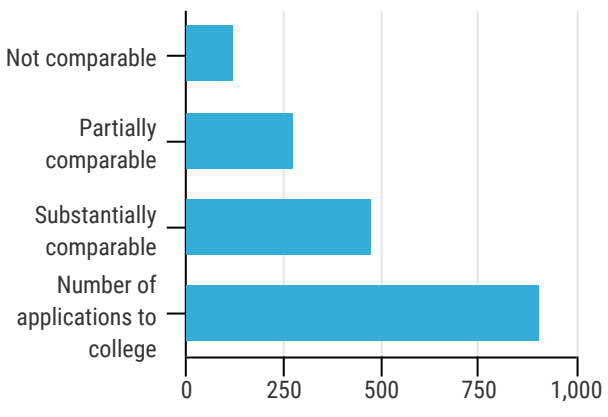
Doctors who are not eligible for either the Competent Authority or Specialist pathways are assessed through the Standard Pathway. The Standard Pathway has two alternative processes leading to the AMC Certificate: standard pathway (AMC examinations) and standard pathway (workplace-based assessment). This data has not been collected.

ASSESSMENTS

Standard specialist assessment, number of applications to College

909

General practice (33%) and Adult medicine (16%) are the largest specialist colleges.



Overseas trained specialists applying for comparability to an Australian-trained specialist must have completed all training requirements and be recognised as a specialist in their country of training before applying under the specialist pathway for assessment of comparability.

There are three possible outcomes of assessment:
- Substantially comparable;
- Partially comparable, requiring up to two years of up-skilling to reach comparability; and
- Not comparable.

The majority of medical colleges will allow participants who are considered substantially comparable to Australian-trained specialists to gain fellowship, although most require a period of practise under supervision.

International medical graduates with specialist qualifications who are eligible for the Competent Authority Pathway apply for provisional registration under the Competent Authority Pathway. They must complete 12 months supervised practice if they wish to apply for general registration, in addition to applying for specialist registration through the Specialist Pathway.

This section brings together the available data on medical practitioners who have trained overseas – their assessment by, the AHPRA, specialist medical colleges, and those with approved working visas issued by the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs.