



SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
MEDICAL EDUCATION & TRAINING

A Report on the Junior Doctor Allocations in South Australia

for positions commencing January 2014

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South Australian Medical Education and Training (SA MET) Unit administers centralised application, allocation and offer systems for intern (Postgraduate Year 1) and Postgraduate Year 2+ (PGY2+, Resident Medical Officer) positions in South Australia. This report provides an overview of statistical data, user feedback and system evaluation for 2013.

Intern application, allocation and offer system

In 2013 (for the 2014 calendar year) there were 630 eligible medical graduate applicants for a total of 278 intern positions. These positions were allocated according to agreed categories that give priority to local, Commonwealth supported graduates. For the 2014 clinical year, South Australia's intern positions were filled by 230 local graduates and 48 interstate applicants.

Data Collection and Analysis

A secondary data collection was undertaken during the application process to obtain information about preferred rotations and career pathways from applicants who accepted a position. This information could be useful to Local Health Networks (LHNs) for rostering, career planning and assists with future medical workforce planning for South Australia.

PGY2+ application, allocation and offer system

In 2013 (for the 2014 calendar year), there were 788 eligible applicants for 395 PGY2+ positions in South Australian Local Health Networks that were managed through a centralised process by the SA MET Unit. These positions were offered to applicants using a merit-based process that takes into consideration applicant training program preferences, a merit based selection process, interviews (if required) and ranking by the hospital. This resulted in 369 positions being filled via the SA MET process. In addition, a large number of PGY2+ positions are filled directly by LHNs independently of the SA MET process.

To assist hospital units with employee selection, 2,341 referees were nominated by applicants with 88% percent of referees completing referee reports.

Looking to the future

Comprehensive evaluation processes have indicated that both the Intern and PGY2+ systems were easy to use and had benefits for both applicants and hospitals. User feedback, analysis of usage data and problem logs have been used to make further improvements for 2014.

INTERNS

Applications for intern positions were made online (www.saimet.org.au) and applicants were able to select their preferred Local Health Network (LHN) to complete their medical internship.

Applicants are offered an intern position using a computer based algorithm that considers residency status, university, internship location preferences and the number of available positions. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of available positions a randomised ballot is used to allocate applications to positions. Offers are made in order of applicant category (Appendix A).

For the 2014 intern year applicants were allocated to a LHN rather than an individual hospital (Table 1). This is in line with the administrative and employment structure of the South Australian health system. It also provides a greater choice of clinical rotations and allows the LHNs to match staffing, supervision, service requirements and training opportunities. To ensure adequate pastoral care and oversight, interns have been provided with a 'home' or base hospital. In addition to term rotations at the home hospital there are opportunities for rotations to a community setting, general practitioner clinics, rural location or other hospital within the LHN.

Applicants

Information for applicants regarding the application and allocation process was provided on the SA MET website from February 2013. Applications opened on Friday, 10 May 2013 and closed on Friday, 7 June 2013. The closing date and the first round allocation date were agreed to by all jurisdictions.

Applicants were required to provide personal and contact information, residency status and demographic data, upload specified documentation and rank LHNs in preferred order. All applications were verified by SA MET staff using computer aided algorithms, manual review and cross checking (if required) to ensure that the eligibility criteria (Appendix B) had been met and applicants were categorised correctly. Applicants who did not meet the eligibility criteria were marked as ineligible, provided with an email explaining the reasons for their ineligibility, and excluded from the allocation.

A total of 786 applications were commenced by applicants with 735 of these submitted by the closing date. Following verification of all applications 630 were determined to have completed their application and met the eligibility criteria.

Ineligible/Incomplete applications

A total of 91 applications were deemed to be incomplete at time of submission or did not meet the eligibility criteria (Table 1). Reasons for this were:

- > incomplete application: 51.6%
- > English language proficiency requirements not met: 34.1%
- > inadequate documentation: 4.4%
- > international medical graduate: 5.5%
- > not able to commence in January 2014: 2.2%
- > residency status not appropriate: 2.2%

These applications were excluded from the allocation. Where there was any doubt regarding an applicant's eligibility the applicant was provided with an opportunity to provide supporting evidence prior to being marked as ineligible.

Allocations

Eligible applicants are allocated to available intern positions using a computer-based algorithm that takes into consideration:

- > intern category (Appendix A);
- > applicant's LHN preferences; and
- > number of available positions at each LHN.

As some LHNs receive more first preference rankings than there are available positions, the computer algorithm uses a randomise function to determine which applicants are offered positions.

This randomise function extracts a random list of eligible applicants from the relevant intern category, then to exclude any common groupings, a second shuffle algorithm produces a randomly ordered list of applicants. The order of this list is used to allocate individuals to their highest preference training hospital until all available positions at that hospital have been filled. This process is repeated for every offer round.

Notifications to successful applicants are sent by email, with applicants required to respond online. If a position is declined, that position will be reallocated to an applicant from the same or next priority group who has not yet received an offer of an intern position in South Australia.

Allocation data

A total of 787 applications were commenced by applicants with 735 of these submitted by the closing date. Following verification of all applications 691 were determined to have completed their application and met the eligibility criteria. For the 2014 South Australian intern year there were 278 intern positions available. All medical graduates from South Australian universities, and 48 interstate graduates, were offered an intern position (Table 2).

Currently South Australia has 8.7% of all Australian intern positions, in comparison to having only 7.2% of the Australian population¹. South Australia continues to participate in jurisdictional discussions around intern positions with the purpose of best meeting the needs of both Australia's health care system and medical school graduates. Further data can be reviewed in Appendix C.

Quality Assurance

Prior to initial offers being made, a comprehensive quality assurance analysis was undertaken to validate the allocation process. This showed that:

- > all offers were made to applicants who met the eligibility criteria;
- > published category groups were adhered to; and
- > ballot outcomes, where required, were random with no significant association between applicant surname, application submission date or application validation/verification date and allocation outcome.

¹ Population data from Australian Bureau of Statistics, 3101.0 - Australian Demographic Statistics, Sep 2013.

First preference allocation

An analysis into the number of applicants in each category who received their first preference was undertaken. 88.5% of medical graduates who accepted an offer of internship in South Australia received their first preference. 6.5% of medical graduates accepted an offer for their second preference and 4.7% and 0.3% medical graduates accepted an offer for their third and fourth preferences respectively (Table 3).

Rotation selection

Interns are required to undertake a variety of clinical placements during their intern year. These include mandatory or 'core' placements in appropriate medical units, surgical units and an emergency medicine department. Non-core rotations are also available to make up five terms or clinical placement across the year. The term rotations available vary between the LHNs and are dependent on the health services provided in that region.

Applicants who accepted an offer are able to complete an online preference form through their account. The relevant hospital term rotation list is provided for applicants to select preferred rotations in order. Annual leave intentions and requests were also collected to assist LHNs with rotation rostering.

The information collected was provided to Medical Education Officers (MEOs) and administrative staff through their hospital administrator account.

National Audit of Intern Acceptances

In order to manage the significant number of applicants who accept intern positions in multiple jurisdictions, the National Medical Intern Data Management Working Group (NMIDM WG) coordinated a National Audit of Intern Acceptances.

The audit uses data provided by the jurisdictions to identify applicants who have accepted multiple intern positions nationally. Those applicants are contacted by the Central Administrator and given a timeframe in which to decide which position they will accept. Applicants who do not make a timely decision are withdrawn¹ from all accepted positions except the first one that they were offered.

The audit aims to ensure that applicants have the most equitable and timely opportunity to obtain an intern position in Australia and to minimise the number of vacancies at the start of the clinical year. With increasing medical graduate numbers across Australia, the audit does not aim to prevent applicants receiving multiple offers but rather clarify and resolve which offer an applicant truly intends to accept when two or more offers have been accepted in different jurisdictions.

An audit of intern applications was undertaken in June 2013 and this showed that there were 6144 applications for an internship in Australia by 3660 applicants (2982 domestic and 448 international medical students). Of these, 2561 applied to one jurisdiction, 564 applied to two jurisdictions and 535 applied to three or more jurisdictions.

¹ The Terms of Use that are accepted by applicants when applying for a position allow positions to be withdrawn from applicants in order ensure timely management of multiple acceptances or in the event that an applicant is subsequently found to be ineligible.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the intern application system is undertaken annually to assist with quality improvement and ongoing development. These surveys asked respondents to rate the usability of the online application systems. 109 medical graduate applicants (13.9%) completed the survey and 96.8% found the system was easy to navigate and 95.2% indicated the system had easy to understand instructions.

POSTGRADUATE YEAR 2 AND BEYOND (PGY2+)

Following internship, junior doctors may begin pre-specialist training or undertake a general training year. Pre-specialist training programs may focus on specific generalist or specialty areas. These positions provide junior doctors with experience in specific clinical specialties and are suitable for those who know the specialty career pathway they wish to pursue.

The general (non-specialist) training positions within hospitals provide junior doctors with further general hospital experience and clinical exposure. These positions provide rotations through a range of medical, surgical and emergency units and are suitable for junior doctors who have not yet decided on a specialist career pathway or who wish to gain more general clinical experience prior to undertaking specialty training.

Recruitment and allocation of some PGY2+ positions in South Australia is undertaken through a centralised process administered by the SA MET Unit on behalf of SA Health. Some training programs choose to extend existing staff contracts and/or advertise positions outside of this central application and allocation process and as a result, the data presented are not representative of the entire state's prevocational training workforce.

Allocation of Specialist Training Positions (Registrars) is not undertaken by the SA MET Unit and recruitment for these positions is undertaken directly by hospitals and/or specialty colleges.

Applications

SA MET Unit has an online application system for PGY2+ positions. The system allows applicants to submit employment applications, nominate referees and select their preferred training programs. Following the close of applications, applicants are ranked on merit by the hospital-based training program administrators. The SA MET Unit then matches applicants to positions optimising applicant preferences, hospital merit ranking and available positions.

As there are often more applicants than positions available, the SA MET Unit undertakes a supplementary allocation process to manage any vacancies that may arise post-allocation.

Allocation data

In 2013, SA MET Unit received 817 completed applications of which 29 did not meet the eligibility criteria (Appendix B) and were not included in the allocation. For positions commencing in 2014, there were 37 training programs across the LHNs that PGY2+ applicants could choose and select their first, second and third preferences. The allocation of PGY2+ applicants is undertaken in rounds and is based on applicant's preferences, and training program ranking.

In 2013, the allocation of PGY2+ was undertaken in three rounds. 383 positions were filled in the first round and a further 29 and 5 positions were filled in rounds 2 and 3 respectively. A complete list of applicants and allocation for each training program is provided in under Appendix C.

Training program preference analysis

In order to explore the decisions behind junior doctors' preferences, a number of preference feedback questions were incorporated into the application form. Completion was voluntary, however 100% of the eligible applicants (788) completed the questionnaire.

Analysis of these data showed that 92.8% of applicants had a specialty training program in mind, with paediatrics, rural general practice and general practice being the most preferred with 11.5%, 10.8% and 10.3% of applicants intending to pursue the specialty respectively.

Referee reports

PGY2+ applicants are required to nominate referees that can be used by hospitals during the selection process. The applicant nominates at least two referees and provides their name, email address and phone number. Referee report forms are made available via an online form. When the applicant submits the referee information, a unique hyperlink is generated and emailed to the nominated referees. The nominated referees may then follow that link and complete an online referee report for the applicant. The referee form collects the following information:

- > *Supervisor's information:* relationship to the applicant, capacity of work, number of clinical encounters with applicant, period of supervision of applicant, hospital and unit location.
- > *Trainee information:* communication skills, clinical competencies, professional and personal conduct.

The referee reports are provided in-confidence and copies are not provided to applicants or to any person or institution outside of the SA MET Unit's matching process. Applicants may check the status of their referee reports by logging into the application system at any time.

Evaluation

The SA MET Unit undertakes a survey of the PGY2+ application system each year to assist with quality improvement and ongoing development. The survey cohort consists of junior doctors applying for PGY2+ positions in South Australian public hospitals commencing in January 2014.

- > *Applicant opinion:* 86 users out of 788 (11.3%) job applicants completed the online survey with 89.9% finding the system easy to navigate and 87.1% indicating the system had easy to understand instructions.

APPENDIX A: INTERN CATEGORY GROUPS + ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN INTERN CATEGORY GROUPS FOR 2014	
CATEGORY	CRITERIA
Category 1	Australian Citizens, Australian Permanent Residents and New Zealand Citizens
1.1*	Medical graduates from a South Australian University - Commonwealth-supported (HECS-HELP) or SA Bonded Medical Scholarship Scheme (SABMSS)
1.2	Medical graduates from a South Australian university - full-fee paying
Category 2	Australian Citizens, Australian Permanent Residents and New Zealand Citizens
2.1	Medical graduates from an interstate or New Zealand University - who completed Year 12 in South Australia
2.2	Medical graduates from an interstate or New Zealand University
Category 3	Australian Temporary Residents and New Zealand Permanent Residents
3.1	Medical Students from a South Australian University
Category 4	Australian Temporary Residents and New Zealand Permanent Residents
4.1	Medical graduates from an interstate or New Zealand University
Category 5	Australian Temporary Residents and New Zealand Permanent Residents
5.1	Medical graduates who have spent two or more semesters in an overseas campus of an Australia or New Zealand University (e.g., Monash Sunway campus, UQ New Orleans campus)
*Category 1.1 applicants – an intern place is currently guaranteed in SA under the 2006 COAG commitment	

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR AN INTERNSHIP POSITION IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA FOR 2014

To be eligible to apply for an internship position in South Australia you must:

- > Have graduated from Medical school in an Australian or New Zealand university in the last three years and have a visa or residency status that allows you to work unrestricted in Australia for the duration of your prevocational training.
- > Be able to begin working on the January start date, which includes compulsory orientation, and fulfil the minimum 12 month contract working full time.
- > Have **not** completed an internship in Australia or NZ before.

All positions offered through this process are for a minimum of 12 months. Applications for a part-time position will be considered and are subject to negotiation with LHNs. A part-time position is not guaranteed.

English Language Proficiency Testing

All applicants must provide evidence that they will meet the Medical Board of Australia's (MBA) English Language Proficiency Registration Standard.

If you completed secondary school in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, UK, Ireland, USA or South Africa ('Exempt Countries') you will be required to provide a copy of a school certificate or similar document. If you completed secondary schooling in any other country you must have successfully passed an AHPRA approved English language skills test (IELTS, OETS) in the last two years, or have been continuously enrolled in study if taken more than two years ago. You will be required to provide a copy of your skills test report with your application. You should note that Foundation year programs or completing an Australian, UK or similar secondary school program outside of these countries (e.g. SACE Certificate in Malaysia) **DO NOT** count as equivalent for registration. If you are unsure you should contact the MBA for clarification.

APPENDIX B: PGY2+ ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR A PGY2+ POSITION IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA FOR 2014

To be eligible to apply for a PGY2+ position through the SA MET Unit you must:

- > have general registration as a medical practitioner in Australia issued by the Medical Board of Australia, or
- > currently have provisional or limited registration and you will have general registration on or before the January start date, and
- > be available for a 12-month full-time contract commencing on the January start date.

Applicants seeking a part time contract or who are not able to commence on the January start date are not eligible to apply for a PGY2+ position through the SA MET Unit. You will need to negotiate employment directly with the hospital outside of the SA MET Unit's allocation process.

International Medical Graduates

To be eligible to apply as an International Medical Graduates (IMG) you must meet the following criteria:

- > Successfully completed both the Australian Medical Council MCQ and the Clinical examination or have advanced standing towards the AMC Certificate under the Competent Authority pathway (CA pathway).
- > Currently holding limited registration - Satisfied or currently completing the requirements of an Australian intern year or equivalent supervised training (core rotations) thus eligible for general medical registration with the Australian Medical Board .

You are not eligible to apply for a position through this website if you do not have, or will not have by the January start date, general registration with the Medical Board of Australia

APPENDIX C: DATA TABLES

LOCAL HEALTH NETWORK (LHN)	2012	2013	2014
Central Adelaide LHN*			
> Royal Adelaide Hospital			
> The Queen Elizabeth Hospital	131	146	148
<i>*Includes rotations to the Women's and Children's Hospital</i>			
Southern Adelaide LHN*			
> Flinders Medical Centre			
> Repatriation General Hospital	68	73	74
> Noarlunga Health Service			
Northern Adelaide LHN			
> Modbury Hospital	51	51	50
> Lyell McEwin Hospital			
Country Health SA LHN			
> Mount Gambier and Districts Health Service	6	6	6
Total	256	276	278

PRIORITY GROUP	ADELAIDE UNI	FLINDERS UNI	ACT UNI	NSW UNI	QLD UNI	TAS UNI	VIC UNI	WA UNI	NZ UNI	MONASH MALAYSIA	TOTAL
CATEGORY 1.1	114	84									198
CATEGORY 1.2	1	1									2
CATEGORY 2.1	-	-	1	2	6	2	4	-		-	15
CATEGORY 2.2	-	-	-	1	6	11	-	2		1	21
CATEGORY 3.1	20	10	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	30
CATEGORY 4.1	-	-	-	7	2	1	2	-		-	12
CATEGORY 5.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	0
Total	135	95	1	10	14	14	6	2	0	1	278

TABLE 3: INTERN PREFERENCE ANALYSIS, 2013					
	RECEIVED 1 ST PREF.	RECEIVED 2 ND PREF.	RECEIVED 3 RD PREF.	RECEIVED 4 TH PREF.	TOTAL
CATEGORY 1.1 AND 1.2	188	12	0	0	200
CATEGORY 2.1. AND 2.2	23	3	10	0	36
CATEGORY 3	24	2	3	1	30
CATEGORY 4	11	1	0	0	12
TOTAL	246	18	13	1	278
% OF TOTAL RECEIVED	88.5%*	6.5%	4.7%	0.3%	100.0%

**first preference percentage rate will change in future allocations*

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF POSTGRADUATE YEAR 2+ APPLICANTS AND ALLOCATION OFFERS, 2013	
	TOTAL
TOTAL APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	817
ELIGIBLE APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	788
APPLICATIONS WITHDRAWN PRIOR TO ALLOCATION	58
REFEREES NOMINATED:	2341
REFEREE REPORTS COMPLETED:	2070
ROUND ONE OFFERS MADE	383
ROUND TWO OFFERS MADE	29
ROUND THREE OFFERS MADE	5
OFFERS MADE AFTER FIRST THREE ROUNDS USING 'UNMATCHED SYSTEM'	48

TABLE 5: PGY2+ APPLICATIONS AND OFFERS FOR THE 2014 CLINICAL YEAR MADE BY SA MET, 2013

LOCATION	PROGRAM	AVAILABLE POSITIONS	OFFERS	DECLINES	POSITIONS FILLED	POSITIONS UNFILLED
FLINDERS MEDICAL CENTRE (FMC)	FMC 3-100 General Training	44	46	2	44	0
	FMC 3-200 General Practice Training	7	7	1	6	1
	FMC 3-300 Basic Physician Training - Adult Medicine	15	15	0	15	0
	FMC 3-600 Emergency Medicine	8	6	1	5	3
	FMC 3-400 Surgical RMO Rotations	16	18	3	15	1
LYELL MCEWIN HOSPITAL	LMH 5-100 General Training	30	37	7	30	0
	LMH 5-200 General Practice Training	2	2	0	2	0
	LMH 5-250 General Practice Training with Paediatrics	8	12	4	8	0
	LMH 5-300 Basic Physician Training	6	6	0	6	0
	LMH 5-500 Obstetrics & Gynaecology	7	5	1	4	3
	LMH 5-550 Obstetrics & Gynaecology with Paediatrics	8	8	0	8	0
	LMH 5-560 Paediatrics	1	2	1	1	0
	LMH 5-600 Emergency Medicine Training	8	10	3	7	1
	LMH 5-400 Surgical RMO Rotations	6	6	0	6	0
MODBURY HOSPITAL	MOD 6-100 General Training	25	33	8	25	0
	MOD 6-200 General Practice Training	2	2	0	2	0
	MOD 6-350 General Practice Training with Paediatrics	4	3	1	2	2
	MOD 6-450 General Surgery Service Post	2	2	0	2	0
	MOD 6-460 ENT Surgery Service Post	1	1	0	1	0
MT GAMBIER & DISTRICTS HEALTH SERVICE	MGDHS 10-100 General Training	2	2	0	2	0
	MGDHS 10-110 DRANZCOG	0	0	0	0	0
	MGDHS 10-160 Advanced Rural Skills Anaesthetics	1	1	0	1	0
	MGDHS 10-250 General Practice Training with Paediatrics	2	2	1	1	1
	MGDHS 10-600 Emergency Medicine Advanced Specialised Training	0	0	0	0	0
ROYAL ADELAIDE HOSPITAL	RAH 1-100 General Training	55	60	5	55	0
	RAH 1-200 General Practice Training	2	2	0	2	0
	RAH 1-300 Basic Physician Training	20	20	1	19	1
	RAH 1-400 Surgical RMO Rotations	19	20	2	18	1
THE QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL	TQEH 2-100 General Training	22	23	1	22	0
	TQEH 2-200 General Practice Training	8	8	0	8	0
	TQEH 2-300 Basic Physician Training	7	9	2	7	0
	TQEH 2-400 Surgical RMO Rotations	9	10	1	9	0
WOMEN'S & CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL	WCH 4-100 General Training	11	11	0	11	0
	WCH 4-500 Obstetrics and Gynaecology	9	10	1	9	0
	MHS 7-700 Mental Health Services	15	5	2	3	12
	PDN 9-800 Paediatric Basic Training	13	13	0	13	0
	Total	395	417	48	369	26*

*reflects positions that were not filled via SA MET. Hospital units employ staff outside the SA MET process to capacity.