

New Zealand Medical Students' Association

Guide to Graduation

Edition 2 2024: Guide to Employment



nzmsa

Guide to Graduation: Guide to Employment

is brought to you by the
NZMSA Workforce Team 2024

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With support from
Hauora Taiwhenua
RDA & SToNZ
Te Whatu Ora Health NZ
Medical Council New Zealand

Designed by Sam Butler of [Resonate Media](#)

Disclaimer:

This is a student-produced publication and is written as a guide for students only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this document, NZMSA cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions.

Please note that ACE resources have not been made fully available by the time of writing this guide.

Therefore there may be inconsistencies with the information in this guide and the ACE process. We recommend you follow the updated ACE guidelines when they become available.

You got a hospital you wanted

Congratulations, cause for celebration! The last date to accept the offer is **Monday 9th September 2024**, so make sure you accept the offer before this date.

Not accepting the offer is equivalent to declining it - therefore you won't re-enter the talent pool, nor will you be eligible for the 2025 ACE intake process.

You received an offer, but not one you want

If you decline, again you won't re-enter the talent pool, nor will you be eligible for the 2025 ACE intake process.

It is possible to switch locations during PGY1, so NZMSA recommends accepting your offer and trying to move. There is however no guarantee you'll be successful in moving hospitals.

You did not receive an offer

Firstly, take a deep breath, and recognise this does not mean your medical career is over by any means! There are three options to consider, and we recommend doing all of them.

The first option is the National Talent Pool. On the **27th August 2024**, all unmatched applicants are placed in the Talent Pool automatically. From here, districts can review and select any unmatched applicant. For more information check out the [ACE website](#). Note the talent pool stays open until the **1st August 2025**. We recommend also contacting hospitals directly to inform them of your interest. Contact details are available [here](#).

The second option is via the [Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand website](#). Here you can register as an RMO, and apply for jobs.

The final option is to get in touch with NZMSA. We would like to support all graduates who do not receive a first round offer through this process. By contacting us at vpadvocacy@nzmsa.org.nz or vpworkforce@nzmsa.org.nz, we can help advocate on your behalf. We would then contact Te Whatu Ora to help you get employed. This also helps provide guide us for areas of future advocacy.

The NZMSA Contact Form can be found [here](#).

In 2023 we started a programme of taking the individual cases of students who had not received job offers to Te Whatu Ora and we pushed for those students to get jobs. This scheme was successful and all those students were offered PGY1 positions.

This year we are offering the same service. If you have not received a PGY1 job offer please fill out the form below and send it to our Vice President Advocacy, Divyashri vpadvocacy@nzmsa.org.nz. She will collate these cases and advocate for these people to be placed in PGY1 positions.

The information in these forms is kept confidential. Only the VP Advocacy sees this information within our organization and the data is passed on to key figures in Te Whatu Ora.

When we speak about the process publicly it will be about broad trends, eg. numbers of applications received. This is important as public awareness of the issue is an important part of pushing for change.

It is important to note that this service is only available to people who did not receive any offer of employment, it is not open to people who received an offer for a location they no longer wish to work in.

If you have any questions about the process please contact Divyashri or another member of the NZMSA team.

Contracts

If you have accepted an offer, you will enter a contract with Te Whatu Ora (TWO). This contract will either be:

1. An Individual Employment Agreement (IEA), where terms and conditions are negotiated between you and Te Whatu Ora **OR**
2. A Single-Employer Collective Agreement (SECA, previously known as MECA) where you join a union who negotiates the contract for you.

If you choose a union, your terms of employment with TWO will be as outlined in the relevant SECA. If you do not join a union, then TWO is required to offer you an IEA, which tend to be based similarly to one of the union's SECAs.

The IEA contract is offered often depends on the union which majority of the House Officers at the hospital you are employed at are members of. IEAs tend to be initially 30 days, with the purpose of this being to give you a decision whether to continue with your IEA, or join a union.

You may choose to join a union at any time, even if you have signed an IEA, in which case your IEA contract will be terminated and you will sign the relevant SECA.

Unions and their respective SECAs are discussed in more detail below.

What is a union?

A union is a professional collective body which aims to represent the rights and interests of its members (e.g RMOs) by advocating for their needs at a high level. They can also help employees on a personal level by providing advice and information about work-related issues.

Who are your union options?

As a PGY1 In Aotearoa New Zealand, your union choices are New Zealand Resident Doctors' Association (NZRDA) or Specialty Trainees of New Zealand (STONZ).

[Click here for the NZRDA website](#), and [here for the NZRDA SECA](#) valid 18th June 2024 - 31st July 2026.

[Click here for the STONZ website](#), and [here for the STONZ SECA](#) valid 14th February 2024 - 28th February 2026.

Why or why not join a union?

The main roles of unions are to represent its employees. This is particularly relevant if you encounter any employment issues, or would like advice. Because our unions represent a large number of doctors, they tend to have more negotiating and advocating power than a single doctor.

There's a fee to join a union, to help finance the employees who organise advocacy and represent members of the respective unions. These are similar between the unions, and NZMSA recommends putting more emphasis on the contracts themselves when choosing a union.

NZRDA costs \$480 annually or you can pay \$40 per month.

STONZ costs \$241.50 for PGY1 (\$20.13 monthly), and \$483 for each year thereafter.

For both unions, there is the option of having payments deducted from your TWO payslip, for which STONZ charges an additional \$1 administration fee.

You can join NZRDA [here](#) or join STONZ [here](#).

Can you change unions?

If you want to change unions you can do this at any time. However, you cannot be bound by another union's SECA terms until you change employers (which is not possible under TWO) or until 60 days before the SECA you were covered by is due to expire. The STONZ SECA renews on the 28 February 2026 and the RDA SECA renews on the 31st July 2026. The unions will go into negotiation with TWO in the months leading up to their individual SECA renewal.

The following messages are sponsored by RDA and STONZ. **NZMSA remains impartial to the respective working unions.**



NO PAY CUT

EVERY
RESIDENT
DOCTOR
COUNTS



JOIN US
nzrda.org.nz



WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK



NZRDA is the union which represents the interests of all resident medical officers including: Registrars; House Officers; Trainee Interns; Clinical Students; GPEP Trainees; and Junior Dental Officers. Since 1985, NZRDA has protected and advanced the interests of RMOs through collective bargaining, fearless advocacy, and strategic engagement at all levels of the health system.

LET'S IMPROVE THE FUTURE

NZRDA has work underway to:

- Work with Colleges to improve the training pipeline;
- Improve the culture of medicine;
- Make ICU rosters safer;
- Phase out consecutive weekend long days for house officers.

Joining NZRDA connects you to a proud history of improving RMO working conditions and a clear strategy to improve the future of medicine. We believe that every doctor can help ensure they leave their job in a better place than how they found it.

SAFER ROSTERS – Our collective agreement contains safer rostering provisions for 140 acute on duty rosters, as well as strong rostering protections for all RMOs including:

- Maximum of 30% nights on ED/ICU rosters;
- Maximum of 2 long days in 7;
- Recovery time for RMOs after fatiguing on call.

FAIR PAY FOR ALL RMOs – We negotiate salary increases for all RMOs in all specialties. In 2024

NZRDA negotiated a new collective agreement without pay cuts and which kept the exam step.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION – Our collective agreement requires reimbursement of all costs of training on the pathway to a vocational scope of practice, and all examination attempts.

RMO WELLBEING – Our collective agreement requires a workplace free from bullying & harassment; work to phase out consecutive long days, and safe, accessible car parks for RMOs working after dark.

WHAT DOES NZRDA MEMBERSHIP MEAN?

- Coverage by the NZRDA's collective agreement;
- Employment advice & representation on all workplace matters;
- Indemnity insurance through the NZRDA group cover scheme of NZMII;
- Free life insurance of \$10,000 to all members;
- Access to financial support for the furtherance and protection of the education and training of RMOs through the NZRDA Education Trust.

HOW TO JOIN



Joining is easy! Go to www.nzrda.org.nz or use the QR code.

For **trainee interns** and **clinical students**, membership is **FREE**.

For all employed **RMOs**, the annual subscription fee is **\$480.00** and can be paid annually or in monthly instalments by direct credit or credit card.



WHAT WE DO

Our aim is to negotiate a Collective Agreement that offers best possible benefits to support your training, your career and your work life balance.

Why join a UNION

As an RMO, what you do, how you work, how you are paid, and your contract is unique. Unions understand the complexity of the RMO Workforce and are here to support you so you can get on and do what you've been trained to do.

Joining a union means you will have support in issues you face regarding your contract, and employment conditions (STONZ supports members with thousands of queries each year), and you'll also benefit from the collective bargaining power of a union. Joining STONZ also gives you a say on what we do, and how we do it!



To help you make an informed decision about your future we've put together some useful resources to help answer any questions you may have on our website.

If you can't find the answer, don't hesitate to contact us support@stonz.co.nz or give us a call on 03 745 9258. You do not need to be a member to get in touch. **We're here to help if you need us.**

What are the key differences between RMO Contracts?

The key differences are around Medical Education, our focus on training, RDOs and your salary.

The STONZ executive team are all working as junior doctors and are ultimately responsible for the day-to-day running of the union, as well as the strategic direction. We have a [full comparison document](#) between the two different contracts available on our [website](#). STONZ is also the only union representing junior doctors affiliated with the CTU (Council of Trade Unions).

Who can join STONZ?

STONZ started by initially advocating for the changes which impacted mostly surgical trainees; however, we have grown quickly to become so much more.

We now represent RMOs across all specialties and levels.

What happens if I want to change my T&Cs once I start work as an RMO?

Employment law states that you can only be covered by one collective agreement for the life of that agreement. This means that if you are a member of a union, even if you resign from that union, you can't be covered by another union's collective agreement until the agreement you were covered by comes up for expiry.

Also, be aware that with the creation of Te Whatu Ora | Health NZ moving from House Officer to Registrar, or between hospitals no longer presents an opportunity to change your T&Cs so it's important to think about what's good for you now, but also for your future career.



Union for junior doctors
run by junior doctors

stonz.co.nz



CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR GRADUATION

Woohoo - you did it! Congratulations. We understand that the move from Trainee Intern to House Officer can be a huge change, so being part of a network that will support you and your career not only now, but well into the future is invaluable.

Kia ora koutou,

Six years of study! Congratulations, you're almost there! With job offers out, it's an exciting time for you, but there are also lots of things to think about over the next few months, and union representation is just one.

STONZ is a union representing and advocating for all junior doctors, no matter their specialty. Our team provides advocacy for any doctor who wants to manage their career and training pathway effectively. We don't believe in a one size fits all approach, so if you're considering a specialist career, you need a union that advocates with specialties in mind.

At STONZ we believe that collaboration is key, that's why we work closely with all parties to find solutions that work. So, if you're looking for a union that is truly run by RMOs for RMOs, consider joining the STONZ team. We would be privileged to be part of your journey and to be part of the network that will support you not just at the start, but also well into the future, wherever this takes you.

For some of us, it wasn't so long ago that we were in your shoes, a mix of nervous excitement about what the future holds. And for others on our team about to step into SMO roles after a 10+ year Journey as an RMO, we've been there, and we are here to support you as you start weaving your specialist pathway.

As you head towards the end of your TI year, make sure you check out our checklist for TIs on our website - and we definitely recommend ticking off as much paperwork and life admin as you can before starting work next year.

You don't have to be a member to give us a call or send an email, so make sure you contact us or reach out to one of our friendly delegates if you have any questions.

We look forward to seeing you around the hospitals next year!
Ngā mihi nui,

Rich Storey, Jordan Tewhaiti-Smith, Christina Matthews, Emma Littlehales, Alastair Hercus, Briana Northey



TRAINEE INTERN CHECKLIST

When considering union membership, seek out independent advice and ensure you understand its impact on your contract. It's not easy to change your T&C's, so it's important to think about your career now and in the future.



**Kiwisaver/
Superannuation**
As an RMO you are entitled to a match of your KiwiSaver/
Superannuation contributions up to 6%.
You need to have at least 3% of this directed to Kiwisaver but the other 3% can be directed to a separate superannuation scheme if you wish (or of course you can have the full 6% to Kiwisaver).

ACE Do you know what you need for your ACE application? It pays to be prepared and organise what you need early! As well as the ACE website rmo.acenz.net.nz you can also check out some handy hints and top tips on our [website](#).

Interviews*

Not all Hospitals do interviews as a part of the ACE process however some do.

*Click [here](#) for some key interview tips for you.



Indemnity Insurance

Your Hospitals will require you to have personal indemnity insurance. Under the STONZ SECA you will be reimbursed the cost of MPS indemnity insurance. You can check out MPS here www.medicalprotection.org/newzealand.

Employment Contract

Know your contract! It's so important to read your contract (including the small print), and understand what you are signing. Make sure you seek independent advice if you have questions, even if it's just talking it through with friends and family.

And you can always seek advice from STONZ too if you're a member.



Wellbeing

Starting work full time can be a big change, especially working long days and nights. Often working full time can have a big impact on social activities like team sports and hobbies. Maintaining a work/life balance can be difficult, so we encourage you to think about how you're going to work towards finding the right balance for you once you start working and training full-time.

Insurance Any time you are making a big change, like starting a new career it pays to check in on if your insurances are sorted and if your needs have changed.

Finances Now is a good time to check in with a financial advisor like MAS.

Research STONZ as a union have committed a percentage of membership income to ensuring that trainee interns (TIs) and resident medical officers (RMOs) working and training environments are evidence based. We are looking to fund novel and local research to ensure recent literature is available to help us advocate for positive change. If you're planning a research project, you can read more about funding opportunities.



Leave Planning

It's a good idea to plan ahead and have a plan to take leave throughout the year. Even if it's a day or two at home to tick off some 'life admin' or catch-up on some rest and read a book. Leave can be difficult to get, so plan ahead and book some breaks throughout the year – even if you don't have set plans yet.

Social Media A lot of RMOs have set up local Facebook pages or similar, which can be a great place to find local rentals, social events and other advice about moving/living and working in your new region.

Relocating? If you incur expenses moving to your first House Officer job, make sure you check out the SECA to see what you're entitled to claim back from the Hospital!

Relationships Work life is always easier if you make positive relationships with colleagues, SMOs and the RMO Unit. Don't be afraid to drop into the RMO Unit and introduce yourself or ask a question! Even as a TI, it's never too early to start building these relationships.

stonz.co.nz



Your future career It's important to think ahead about what you can do now, or during your House Officer years to support your application to training Colleges. If you've got a particular specialty in mind, make sure you know the pre-requisites required including any courses, conferences and any particular 'Run Allocation' that you'll need as a House Officer in order to progress. To help with this process STONZ has developed a 'Career Plan' to help you plan your career with your supervisors and mentors.

Union Comparison Table

We have collated some of the bullet points from the RDA and STONZ SECAs for your convenience. Please do note that these are abbreviated summaries, and for comprehensive information we encourage you to read the RDA and STONZ SECAs to be fully informed before you make a decision to join either union.

This table has been reviewed by a representative from Te Whatu Ora Health NZ to ensure information is accurate and up to date.

You can find the table [here](#).

Next Steps

Congrats on your offer of employment! Now that you have been offered employment there are some requirements to complete. Read about them, then follow our checklist below to ensure you've completed everything before starting work in 2025.

1. Te Kaunihera Rata o Aotearoa | Medical Council of New Zealand

The Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) is governed by an elect Council and operates within the standards set by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003. The primary role of the Council is to protect the health and safety of patients by ensuring doctors are competent and fit to practise. The funding that allows MCNZ to do this comes from fees that doctors pay to be registered and to practice medicine.

Application Process

Applications are made online via the MCNZ's online portal myMCNZ. Logins will be emailed to you in the last week of August.

You will need to provide the following documents to graduates@mcnz.org.nz:

- Job offer
- Certified copy of your passport or driver's license
- A statutory declaration - if required to explain name differences

The complete application must be received by the MCNZ by Monday 21 October 2024. Applications will be put on hold until the MCNZ receives a pass notification from your medical school. Practising certificates are issued mid-December 2024

Fees and Registration

To practise medicine in New Zealand, you must be registered and have a practising certificate. You can apply to have this fully refunded through your paycheck but you will have to have this money upfront before you start!

There are two separate fees:

- Registration application (when you make the application with the Council) - \$367.39 (GST inclusive)
- Practising certificate (once your application is approved)

The practising certificate fee can range from \$464 to \$1,160. This is dependent on which cycle and date you fall under. There are 4 practising certificate cycles dates for each year (February, May, August, and November). Which cycle date you fall under will depend on your birth date.

Pre-vocational Training (for PGY1 and PGY2)

Graduates of New Zealand and Australian accredited medical schools and doctors who have sat and passed the New Zealand Registration Examination (NZREX Clinical) must complete prevocational medical training. Prevocational medical training ensures that postgraduate year 1 (PGY1) and postgraduate year 2 (PGY2) doctors (collectively known as interns) continue to build on their undergraduate education.

Interns are required to complete a minimum of 12 months in each post-graduate year, however an intern remains a PGY1 or PGY2 until the requirements for the relevant postgraduate year are completed. Interns must complete their internship in an intern training programme provided by an accredited training provider.

For more information on pre-vocational training, please refer to [MCNZ website](#).

2. Indemnity Insurance

Medical indemnity insurance is a requirement for working as a doctor in New Zealand. In your first year, as a PGY1 House Officer this will be paid for you. In subsequent years, this will usually be covered through your hospital contract. However, you do need to choose which indemnity insurance provider you would like.

Indemnity Insurance is important because it means you have support, medico-legal advice and representation when you need it. It also covers associated legal costs and loss of income that may occur during an investigation process such as coroner's inquest, patient complaint or disciplinary action. You can indicate on your employee paperwork which indemnity insurance company you would like to be covered by.

There are three options for indemnity insurance in New Zealand:

- Medical Protection Society (MPS)
- Medicus
- New Zealand Medical Indemnity Insurance (NZMII)

Sponsored advertisements. NZMSA does not formally endorse any indemnity insurance provider.



Medicus

Support when you need it

PROTECT YOUR FUTURE CAREER WITH MEDICUS.

As a health professional practising in New Zealand, you can expect **an average of one complaint a year to be brought against you.**

Medicus offers Aotearoa's most comprehensive professional indemnity insurance for medical and allied health practitioners practicing in New Zealand, or students undertaking tertiary study in New Zealand.

Why Medicus?

Medicus guarantees unwavering support whenever you require it. We are committed to delivering professional liability indemnity and assistance at every stage.

Medicolegal advice

Our in-house liability team and legal advisers work together to guide you every step of the way.

**Apply for your
cover now.**

Don't leave it to chance -
join via www.medicus.co.nz
today!



Professional support to become the best doctor you can be

Medical Protection helps you avoid risks throughout your whole career

Medical Protection is about more than just providing indemnity. We have helped thousands of members with a wide range of professional queries.

Our advisers are experienced medical doctors in New Zealand who understand what it is like to practice medicine in the real world. They are available 24 hours a day to help and advise you for any emergency matters.



- 100% member owned without private shareholders making a profit from your subscriptions
- Discretionary cover, allowing us to assist you in even the most unusual circumstances
- Occurrence based cover meaning you are indemnified for your time in membership, even after you leave, and will not require paying for tail cover (unlike insurance products)
- Supporting healthcare professionals at every stage of their career, from students and resident doctors through to GPs and consultants

0800 2255 677 (CALL MPS)
advice@medicalprotection.org

[medicalprotection.org/nz](https://www.medicalprotection.org/nz)

Free
membership
for PGY1s



Looking out for you every step of the way.

World-class indemnity insurance from Kiwis who go the extra mile to protect you and your wellbeing.



Trainee Intern

Entrusted with the future of healthcare, TIs deserve to practice and grow with confidence. That's why Trainee Interns are entitled to **FREE** Indemnity Insurance with us.

PGY1

We understand the unique challenges Resident Doctors face in New Zealand. Our **NZMII Group Scheme** provides a comprehensive service at no cost to you so you can practice with confidence.

Get insured now
nzmii.co.nz

Contact Us

0800 102 220
general@nzmii.co.nz



NZMedicalIndemnityInsurance

3. Choose a Contract

See the above section on Unions & Contracts

4. Write Down the Start Date

Orientation is 6th of January 2025. First day on the ward is 13th of January 2025 (dates may vary). Check your employment offer for more details and contact the RMO office if you are unsure.

5. Graduation Chats with MAS [Optional]

Would you like some free advice about how to manage your student loans and finances? Use the QR code on the advert below to get in touch with the MAS reps for a free in person or zoom 'Grad Chat'.

Employment Checklist

- Register with Medical Council
- Complete Pre-Vocational Training
- Get Indemnity Insurance
- Choose a Contract
- Write Down the Start Date
- Graduation Chats with MAS [Optional]



Supercharge your savings!

We can help you get ahead

Getting started in your professional career is a lot to think about. A MAS Adviser can help graduating students get ahead with a free 1 hour meeting at a time and place that suits you. Whether it's protecting your income, protecting your things, or setting up a KiwiSaver account – we're here to help.

Plus, you'll go in the draw to win \$3,000.

New Zealand grown, Member owned

We're proud to be a New Zealand owned mutual insurance and investment company, that's enhancing the financial health and wellbeing of our Members since 1921.

Our range of insurance and investment options can help grow our Members' wealth and protect what matters.



**Register for a free financial health
check-up with a MAS Adviser and
be in to win \$3,000.**

Scan to register

Or go to mas.co.nz/grad24



Benefits and Financial Aid

Moving can be costly, but there is help around! A great way to start looking for benefits and financial aid is to check the [MSD website](#). They have a short quiz which can help identify what aid you might be able to receive.

Some examples of potential aid can be found below.

Jobseeker Benefit

You must not be in employment and are looking for and available for a job. Learn more here.

Moving Costs Grant

You don't need to be on a benefit to qualify for this help, but you do have to pay this grant back. You must be entering a tenancy under the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA), i.e. you have a formal tenancy agreement, and have moving costs. [Learn more here](#).

Through your Union

Written within the MECAs of RDA and STonZ is a clause entitling new graduates to reimbursement of some of the costs associated with relocating.

Expenses payable are:

- 50% of actual and reasonable travel costs will be reimbursed for the House Officer and any family members as agreed with their employing District. Actual and reasonable costs will cover petrol costs, flights, or ferry tickets upon production of receipts
- Expenses during travel and on arrival at the new locations, on production of receipts. This may include accommodation and meal costs for up to eight days for the House Officer and any family members relation with them.
- 50% of the cost of removal of furniture and effects (there are exclusions)
- Actual legal expenses of up to \$1,500 if the House Officer has to shift their family to a new location and sells the house or buys one within 12 months of appointment.

Learn more in either of the unions contracts (RDA [here](#), SToNZ [here](#)).

Student Discounts

Make the most of them while you still can!

Ferry Companies

[Bluebridge](#)

[Interislander](#)

Moving Companies

[Pack & Send New Zealand](#)

National Storage Facilities:

[Store Ur Box](#)

[All Secure Self Storage](#)

Regional Help

Local flat FB groups and RMO FB groups. Search on Facebook, or ask your local RMO unit to be put in touch with these groups.



Community, Challenge and Big Skies: Rural Health is Calling

by Hauora Taiwhenua

Among the career paths available to healthcare graduates, there's a road less travelled yet full of opportunity, challenge, community and purpose in the most beautiful regions of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Rural health is a life-long adventure where no two hours are the same. It's also a sector in huge need of healthcare professionals who want to make a difference. Of 195 rural practices, more than half have opportunities for general practitioners.

Deep Connections and the Thrill of Genuine Medicine

Among the bush and beaches of the Coromandel, Dr Fiona Bolden has been a rural GP since 1996. She says it's a challenging and profoundly satisfying career, with a deep connection to the community. "Rural communities are genuine communities, and rural medicine is genuine medicine. The role of a rural GP offers an array of clinical scenarios, encompassing the entire spectrum of medical practice. Anticipating what will come next is a constant thrill."

Plus, as Dr Bolden points out, the connection to the natural environment is genuine too. “The wilderness is your playground, just outside your doorstep. Raising children with a strong bond to the outdoors is something really special.”

Communities in Need

Francis Bradley, a first-year doctor at Whangārei Hospital, chose rural health after spending a day at work with his father, a rural GP: “I saw the mutual love and respect between my father and the people he cared for. What a privilege to be so intimately connected to the community.’



Dr Fiona Bolden, rural GP & Hauora Taiwhenua Chair

Raised in Kaitāia, Francis saw the need in rural areas. “Contributing in a place of need is really important for me and rural Māori communities are in desperate need.”

To anyone considering a career in rural health, Francis says: “If you love people, community, learning and expanding your clinical skills, and you want to live a balanced life with friends, whānau, beach, and beautiful mother Earth or Tangaroa, you definitely won’t regret it!



From Birth to Palliative

With more than two decades in healthcare, Gemma Hutton is a nurse practitioner at Twizel Medical Centre and loves working in remote rural communities.

“I love the connection and relationships you build with whānau from birth to palliative. The autonomy of the work. How I have been able to use all of my skills and grow them. I have never stopped growing and learning in this role.”

Autonomy, Variety and Being Valued

Estelle Arundell, a sixth-year Otago University medical student, grew up in South Canterbury. She is aiming for qualifications in rural hospital medicine and rural general practice. The daughter of two rural GPs, Estelle is currently on placement in her hometown of Fairlie. “I have known these people all my life and it has been a meaningful experience to be part of their care. The Fairlie medical centre offers a lot of services and I have been able to develop a wide number of skills.”

To anyone considering a future in rural health, Estelle says: “You feel very valued in a rural community. You see great variety and learn so much from your patients. The scope of practice is wider and you have more autonomy. The sense of community more than makes up for not living in an urban centre. If you enjoy continuity of care, centred on a holistic model, as well as a challenge, then rural health is for you.



**Hauora
Taiwhenua**
Rural Health
Network

Dr Georgia's Ramsden's Tips for starting PGY1: LMNOP

Leave

Be aware of your leave entitlements and make the most of them. Especially know what you are entitled to in terms of education and make the most of the fact that work pays for you to do courses and training.

Medications

Get to know how to use resources so you can easily find the doses of meds. Ask the HO you are with on each run and what resource they use (eg NZF) and figure out if this works for you, and spend time getting to know the resource so you can use it efficiently next year.

Nurses

Can be your best friend and most helpful resource (or make your job a nightmare!). Try to remember nurses' names and figure out who the helpful ones are. Ward clerks are also very helpful.

Own Time

Protect your own time - don't take on a new job right before handover. Do all the obvious things like eat well, sleep well, and exercise. Lastly, it's okay to take sick days if you're not coping.

Peers

Your best support is your peers. Sometimes being a HO is really hard and really stressful. You have little control over your time and your jobs and mostly have to just carry out what the consultant and reg tell you. You guys are all in the same boat and will need each other when you are stressed and fed up. Also know that it gets better!

Signs of Burnout

Burnout is not uncommon in house officers, as we make the move from full time students to full time doctors. Early recognition of the signs of burnout, and appropriate action, can lead to positive outcomes.

Signs of burnout can include:

- Chronic fatigue
- Irritability
- Reduced performance
- Emotional detachment
- Physical symptoms e.g. headaches, stomach issues, muscle tension
- Sleep disturbance
- Decreased motivation

Things to ask yourself if you think you might be becoming burnt out:

- Have you become cynical or critical at work?
- Do you drag yourself to work and have trouble getting started?
- Have you become irritable or impatient with co-workers, customers or clients?
- Do you lack the energy to be consistently productive?
- Do you find it hard to concentrate?
- Do you lack satisfaction from your achievements?
- Do you feel disillusioned about your job?
- Are you using food, drugs or alcohol to feel better or to simply not feel?
- Have your sleep habits changed?
- Are you troubled by unexplained headaches, stomach or bowel problems, or other physical complaints?

Managing Burnout:

- **SIGNS:** Recognise the signs of burnout as outlined above to help you identify when you need to make some changes.
- **OPTIONS:** Assess your options and address any specific concerns with your pre-vocational educational supervisor. Establish clear goals for what needs to be accomplished immediately and what can wait.

- **BREAKS:** Ensure you're having regular breaks throughout the day to rest and recharge. It can be as simple as taking five minutes, micro breaks can go a long way.
- **SUPPORT:** Seeking support can be really beneficial. Reaching out to coworkers, friends, or loved ones can provide valuable support and collaboration to help you cope. Additionally, consider exploring employee assistance programs like counselling services offered through MPS, MAS, EAP, 1737, or your GP.
- **RELAX:** Try a relaxing activity. Explore programs that can help with stress such as yoga, meditation or tai chi.
- **EXERCISE:** Engage in regular exercise to manage stress more effectively and give yourself a break from work. Physical activity can help improve your overall well-being and provide good mental health benefits.
- **SLEEP:** Sleep helps to restore well-being and is good for protecting your health.
- **LEAVE:** Use your sick days/leave. Apply for leave early, and space it out throughout your runs, and if you are really feeling acutely burnt out, using your sick days is always an option.
- **MINDFULNESS:** Mindfulness is the act of focusing on your breath flow and being intensely aware of what you're sensing and feeling at every moment, without interpretation or judgement. In a job setting, this practice involves facing situations with openness and patience, and without judgement
- **TALK:** reach out to others, some are suggested below. Getting a bit of extra support through the hard times can help a lot.

Where to Get Support

- Your pre-vocational educational supervisor
- Other house officers and registrars
- Counselling services through through MPS/MAS/your personal GP
- STONZ/RDA
- Local RMO FB pages
- Friends & family

Tips for the transition:

- **LEARNING:** Medicine is forever evolving, embrace that it is a commitment to lifelong learning through various avenues like courses, conferences and reading.
- **MENTORSHIP:** Find and engage with mentors who can help guide, give advice and support you through becoming a doctor
- **RESILIENCE:** It's a massive shift from being a medical student and with that will come finding coping strategies for managing stress and maintaining well-being, overall helping to build resilience
- **SELF-CARE:** prioritise yourself!!! Including all elements of your hauora (mental, physical, social and spiritual) to help maintain your well-being
- **FEEDBACK:** Seek and be open to feedback and embrace constructive criticism. It can be scary but can help to improve your skills and professional development
- **NETWORK:** Connect with other house officers, registrars and the wider medical team as they can become a vital support system.
- **WORK-LIFE BALANCE:** Set boundaries to make sure you have time for your personal interests, hobbies and relationships outside of the hospital.

Useful Resources

- Research Review New Zealand provides independent clinical research updates and webinars. They include quick summaries on the latest critical research and commentary by local experts. A great tool for busy students and interns on clinical interest areas and general study needs. We cover over 50 clinical areas. Students and interns can receive regular issues by email at no cost. Simply sign up online or scan the QR code.
- Empiric app
- Auckland RMO handbook app
- Marshall and Rudy On Call book
- Calgary guides website
- Mind the bleep website
- NZF website
- MD calc app
- Script app
- Pocketdr app
- Almost a dr app

- ATSP app
- Christchurch clinical campus skills app
- Hospice New Zealand's palliative care guide website
- Wellington ICU notes/Tripp notes

Guide to Employment II: Dropping September 2024

The next issue will be all about how to set up for your final year at medical school and include short and snappy info about:

Elective admin

- Overseas study Studylink form
- ACE references and overseas electives
- Insurance
- The Elective Network database

Summary checklist for starting TI

- TI Grant
- EFTS extension form

Overview of ACE

Top tips for your TI year

- Helpful apps, websites, study tips and more!

