



CAREERS

Working as a doctor in Canada

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For the past four years, Canada has been ranked as the best country in the world for quality of life, a measure that covers everything from housing to education and the environment. With its wide open spaces, sophisticated cities, and active lifestyle, it is a popular destination for doctors seeking new challenges abroad and a better work-life balance.

Canada has an ongoing shortage of locally trained medical staff which is likely to continue for some time. Statistics Canada estimates that 4.5 million people across the country are without a family doctor and the Canadian health authorities are actively recruiting overseas doctors to fill the gaps.

Nova Scotia, the Canadian province with the most acute shortage, has sent representatives from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia together with provincial immigration officials to medical recruitment fairs in the UK.

What roles are available?

Canada suffers from a shortage of general practitioners or family doctors, particularly in remote, rural areas. As well as GPs, there are a wide range of other roles available, and psychiatrists, paediatricians, anaesthetists, and emergency medicine specialists are highly sought after.

Where are jobs available?

There are jobs available across Canada and in major cities such as Toronto and Vancouver, but the highest demand is in remote or rural areas and outer metropolitan areas. In the province of Alberta, 18% of people don't have a GP and in French speaking Quebec it's 26%.

What's it like being a doctor in Canada?

Doctors in Canada are highly regarded and can enjoy a good work-life balance, generally working 35 to 40 hours a week, depending on their location and specialism. Full time GPs can expect to earn around \$C300 000 (£173 000; €205 000; \$228 000) to \$C400 000, paediatricians \$C400 000 to \$C500 000, and anaesthetists around \$C500 000.

How do I find a job?

There are a number of ways of finding a job, either through provincial health authorities or international medical recruitment agencies. Getting a job in Canada is complicated and time consuming. It can take 12 to 18 months between applying for a role and starting work, which is why applicants tend to use

recruitment specialists who can provide guidance during the process.

What are recruiters looking for?

The right qualifications, skills, and experience are a given, but recruiters are also looking for candidates with the right attitude. "We'll be keen to find out your motivation for relocating and make sure you know about the process required," says Nicky Gray, commercial director of Head Medical, a recruitment consultancy which places doctors in roles in the UK and around the world. "The licensing process for Canada is fairly complex and takes around 12 months, so we advise that people speak to us a least 12 to 18 months ahead of when they plan to relocate," she says.

The paperwork

Doctors need to check the World Directory of Medical Schools to ensure that their medical degree is recognised in Canada. Before applying for a job, all overseas trained doctors must pass the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination (MCCQE) Part I. This is a one day online exam which can be taken in test centres in the UK—five times a year from 2020.

With that in the bag, applicants then need to pass the MCCQE Part II to obtain the Licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada (LMCC). Some Canadian regulatory authorities may require you to have the LMCC to apply for a medical licence within their province or territory.

To maintain a licence to practise in the UK doctors need to be revalidated every five years by the GMC. If you are not practising in the UK, you can relinquish your licence while remaining on the GMC register. This avoids the need to revalidate and you pay a reduced fee while maintaining good standing with the GMC during that period.

Unless you have a Canadian passport, you will need a visa to work in Canada. Many applicants are guided by a recruitment consultancy or an immigration agency—ensure it is regulated through the Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council. You can find out more about the immigration process on the Canadian government website (www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada.html).

Useful contacts

The Medical Council of Canada has a website full of resources for doctors considering applying to work there: physiciansapply.ca

Alberta Health Services: www.albertahealthservices.ca/careers

Nova Scotia Health Authority: www.nshealth.ca/careers

Healthmatch BC (health professional recruitment service funded by the government of British Columbia): www.healthmatchbc.org

Health Force Ontario: www.healthforceontario.ca/en/Home