



CAREERS

Working in New Zealand

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New Zealand has a shortage of medical staff across many different fields. The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners published a survey this year that showed that almost half of GPs intend to retire in the next 10 years and that 70% are working in a practice with a GP vacancy.

It's little surprise that the country relies heavily on doctors from overseas. According to the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ), 40% of doctors practising in the country were trained abroad—and those from the UK and Ireland are highly sought after because of their similar training. New Zealand is also a favourite destination for doctors looking for adventure, proximity to the great outdoors, and a more relaxed way of life.

What roles are available?

There is demand for junior doctors across all areas of medicine. General medicine, general surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, psychiatry, and orthopaedic registrars are in short supply. At consultant level, there is a particular need to fill vacancies in radiology, general medicine, and obstetrics and gynaecology.

Where are jobs available?

Roles are available across New Zealand, although the main cities tend to be the most popular destinations for overseas doctors. Mike Adam, managing director of TripleO Medical Recruitment, says that jobs in remote or rural locations offer different opportunities for UK trained doctors. "Our smaller population centres are inviting because of the autonomy you have, the challenges you face, and the increased skills required when dealing with a major trauma when potentially your back up is a few hours away," he says.

What's it like being a doctor in New Zealand?

New Zealand always ranks highly in polls of the best places to live in the world, thanks to its stunning locations and quality of life. The bad news is that doctors generally earn less than in the UK. A registrar, for example, earns on average \$NZ85 000 (£42 000; €50 000; \$56 000) to \$NZ145 000—but the cost of living in terms of accommodation, for example, is substantially lower than in the UK.

The New Zealand Resident Doctors' Association publishes salary details¹ and the Association of Salaried Medical Specialists has more information on its website.² Junior doctors work between 40 and 65 hours per week, while senior doctors generally work around 40.

Mike Adam says: "The feedback we get from the doctors we recruit is that work-life balance is a real thing. No more long commutes needed; modern, well staffed facilities and shorter hours mean more family time. We've had doctors who have come over for six months and have stayed and gained a place on a training program, or who return to the UK for training and then look for their first consultant role back in New Zealand."

How do I find a job?

Potential candidates can apply directly to hospitals in New Zealand or go through one of the many international medical recruitment agencies, which can assist with the time consuming process of applying. Job interviews are carried out by phone and by Skype, although at the most senior level candidates may be flown to New Zealand.

What are recruiters looking for?

Generally, recruitment consultants are looking for doctors who are genuinely committed to moving to New Zealand, either on a short term or permanent basis. For those with families, all members of the family have to buy into the idea.

What about the paperwork?

Moving to New Zealand can be a lengthy process and for resident doctors start dates can be important—the medical year is broken into four quarters that start in November. There is greater flexibility for registrars, and senior staff can negotiate their own start dates.

To work in New Zealand, you have to register with the MCNZ and should do so before applying for jobs.³ Its website has full details of the registration process and the pathways available, together with information about living and working in the country.

Registration with the MCNZ takes around four weeks for general registration and between four and six months for specialists. Recruitment consultants can help with the process and can also help with visa applications. The New Zealand government's immigration website contains useful information.⁴

- 1 New Zealand Resident Doctors' Association. Multi employer collective agreement. 2019. <https://nzrda.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/RDA-MECA-1-April-2019-31-March-2021.pdf>
- 2 Association of Salaried Medical Specialists. Clause 12: salaries. www.asms.org.nz/clause-12.
- 3 Medical Council of New Zealand. Getting registered. www.mcnz.org.nz/registration/getting-registered.
- 4

- 4 New Zealand Immigration. Your guide to living, working and moving to New Zealand. www.newzealandnow.govt.nz.

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