



To: General Practitioners

From: National Director, National Services and Schemes

Date: 22.12.2025

Circular Number: NCO–33-2025

**International Medical Graduate Rural GP Programme – Webinar 14th January 2026
1:30pm**

Dear Doctor,

I am writing in relation to the International Medical Graduate (IMG) GP Programme. This programme is a collaboration between the HSE and the Irish College of GPs (“the College”) and was established to implement an initiative approved by the Medical Council for recruitment of International Medical Graduate doctors to Ireland.

The programme commenced in 2022 and since its inception, the programme has enrolled 174 candidates. 39 of these candidates have now completed the programme and positive feedback has been received from IMG candidates and GP Host Practices. IMG candidates are in place across all the Health Regions, and the initiative has helped ease the pressures on GP Practices in areas such as the southwest, southeast, midlands and western seaboard.

The HSE, in conjunction with the College, are now actively seeking more GP host practices for the programme. In this regard, I attach an FAQ document for your attention. I would be obliged if you could consider the attached with a view to expressing an interest as a host GP practice on the programme. I also attach a link to the ICGP IMG Programme website (<https://www.irishcollegeofgps.ie/Home/Lifelong-Learning-PCS/IMG-Rural-GP-Programme>) for ease of reference. To note, if you have employed an IMG Doctor who has now completed the programme, you are eligible to participate again.

In order to provide additional support for the host practices, an annual contribution in the order of €12,000 will be provided to each Host GP. The Host GP will receive this support in Year 1 and Year 2 and it can be used towards costs associated with the IMG programme or membership of medical organisations. With regards to the GP practices who have hosted an IMG candidate who has now completed the programme, (prior to December 2025) a €12,000 contribution will be provided to these practices.

The College are holding an information Webinar session on **Wednesday, 14th January 2026 at 1:30pm** to provide all GPs, interested practices and Primary Care Units with further information on the programme to discuss the requirements for GP host practices. Please see webinar details below:

Join Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/91775731326>

Or

Meeting ID: 917 7573 1326

If you are interested in hosting an IMG candidate, please provide your name and practice location to natcontractsoffice@hse.ie by **Friday, 30th January 2026**, cc'ing your Primary Care Unit Manager. The National Contracts Office (NCO) will then engage with the College to



progress further. Should you have any queries in relation to this letter or the attached FAQ document, please do not hesitate in contacting the NCO at natcontractsoffice@hse.ie.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the work of you and your practice teams in delivering services during the year and wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new Year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pat Healy', written in a cursive style.

Pat Healy
National Director
National Services and Schemes

International Medical Graduate Rural GP Programme

Frequently Asked Questions

Information for Host GP Practices

Welcome to the International Medical Graduate (IMG) GP Programme

The IMG GP programme is an important component of the multifaceted Irish College of GPs response to the GP workforce challenges in Ireland, especially in rural Ireland.

What is the IMG GP Programme?

The programme aims to identify, support and integrate a cohort of GPs into the Irish GP workforce. It incorporates two years of a self-directed learning and mentored practice.

The programme is supported by the [Irish College of GPs](#), [HSE](#) and GP medical indemnity organisations.

The role of the IMG GP Programme is to:

- identify and recruit eligible IMG GPs, in accordance with the programme criteria, for rural General Practices
- facilitate supported and supervised practice
- assist the IMG GP to undertake the MICGP exams, leading to Specialist Registration with the Irish Medical Council
- encourage the retention of the IMG GPs in Irish General Practice

The IMG Programme is supported by a dedicated team. The team supports IMG GPs through the application stage, programme commencement, a bespoke education programme to final membership of the Irish College of GPs and Specialist Registration with the Irish Medical Council.

What does this education programme entail?

The education programme is a self-directed learning programme. The following **mandatory** aspects required are included alongside two years of supervised practice, in a GP setting.

The IMG GP is required to:

1. Attend a two-day induction course at the beginning of the programme,

They will be shown how to undertake a learning needs assessment and how to maintain the learning log.

2. Attend a further two-day induction course later in the programme.
3. Undertake at least **twelve** modules of specific Irish College of GPs online courses over the two years on the programme.
4. Complete two 12-week online courses with University College Dublin that covers a range of topics relevant to general practice.
5. Complete five short online courses that are provided by the public health service provider in Ireland-Health Service Executive (HSeLanD).
6. Complete a minimum of 50 hours per year in a GP out of hours service.
7. Sit the Clinical Knowledge Test (CKT) and an in-person Clinical Competency Test (CCT) within the two-year programme period.

What are the benefits of hosting an IMG GP in my practice?

Aside from providing additional clinical support, employing an IMG GP on the programme has number of valuable benefits to a GP practice to include:

- Reducing pressure on the principal GP and other team members.
- Improves access for patients creating more appointment availability and potentially reducing waiting times.
- Enables more flexibility for the principal GP – providing an opportunity to take leave, focus on leadership tasks or areas of special interest, and potentially reduce working hours.
- Helping with succession planning when the principal GP is approaching retirement.
- Provides an opportunity for a GP practice to expand its business and increase the range of services available to patients.
- Strengthens the educational profile of the practice and contributes to the professional development of the Clinical Mentor.

The appendix below outlines insights from Clinical Mentors on their experience of hosting an IMG GP in their practice. Furthermore, a report <https://www.rte.ie/news/regional/2023/0519/1384602-overseas-gps/>

Interested in becoming a Host GP Practice?

Information for Practices

Eligibility Criteria

The programme is open to all **rural** practices (as defined by local county councils) who meet the criteria set out below.

1. At least one GP in the practice must hold a GMS contract.
2. All the GPs in the practice should be members of the Irish College of GPs, in good standing.
3. All GPs in the practice must be enrolled on and in compliance with the [Irish College of GP PCS](#).
4. The practice must have a history of involvement in medical education. This can include any one of the following:
 - Be a training practice
 - Take medical students
 - One of the GPs is a CME tutor
5. The practice should have a designated consulting room for the candidate.
6. The practice must nominate a clinical mentor for the candidate. The clinical mentor must:
 - be based in the practice where the candidate is located, six sessions (of which four should coincide with the candidate)
 - be in active clinical practice for a minimum of five years post MICGP
 - be on the Specialist Register of the Irish Medical Council (IMC)
 - have professional good standing
 - declare any prior or ongoing performance issues with the IMC or other regulatory bodies in other jurisdictions.

What are the Clinical Mentor Commitments?

The **clinical mentor** will commit to:

1. Supporting the IMG GP by discussing clinical cases and identifying any gaps in knowledge and learning needs
2. Liaising with the Irish College of GPs project team regarding the progress, strengths, and concerns regarding the competence of the IMG GP
3. Liaising with the Irish College of GPs project team with any concerns regarding the competence of the IMG GP at any stage during the programme's duration
4. Providing assessments of the IMG GP to the Irish College of GPs project team

5. The Clinical Mentor will also need to resource additional time to review the IMG GPs consultations initially and incorporate at least one week of induction when the IMG GP is shadowing.

If I have applied and have successfully enrolled on the programme, what are the host practice commitments?

By enrolling in the programme, the **practice** will commit to:

1. Employing the IMG GP and being responsible for agreeing terms of employment, for example hours of work, remuneration, role and responsibilities
2. Allowing the IMG GP to attend the mandatory four-day induction programme and provide two weeks study leave per year
3. Arranging for the IMG GP to gain appropriate supported and supervised experience in a GP out-of-hours service
4. Offering support to the IMG GP regarding social issues, e.g., integration into the community and work-related issues
5. Facilitating the IMG GP to join the local Irish College of GPs CME group

It is the practice's responsibility to undertake the Garda vetting and all other employment checks (visas, employment permits etc).

Who employs the IMG GP Candidate?

The IMG GP will be employed directly by the host GP practice, with all employment terms to be negotiated and agreed between the two parties. Practices are advised to consult their nominated HR company when establishing contractual arrangements.

What are the costs associated in applying to host an IMG GP?

The GP Practice application incurs a non-refundable administration fee of **€250**

Apart from the IMG GP's salary, are there other associated costs for the host GP practice?

Yes, the practice will incur capital costs in employing an IMG GP, as is the case when taking on a new member of staff but there are costs specific to taking on an IMG GP, as follows:

Medical indemnity for the IMG GP (reduced rate for programme participants)	€5000 - €8000
Critical Skills Employment Permit (CSEP) application fee (<i>if applicable</i>)	€1000
UCD online courses:	
GP Mentorship Part 1	€500
GP Mentorship Part 2	€500

Paid study leave of 2 calendar weeks per year**, plus 4 days induction <i>** for preparation of MICGP exams only</i>	Pro-rata
Holiday leave (excl. bank holidays) of 4 weeks per year	Pro-rata

In recognition of the above, an annual contribution in the order of €12,000 will be provided to each Host GP. The Host GP will receive this support in Year 1 and Year 2 and it can be used towards membership of medical organisations and any of the above associated IMG costs.

How Can I Apply?

The Clinical Mentor in the GP Practice must log into their icgp.ie account to complete the [application form](#).

If I apply, will I automatically host an IMG GP?

If a practice meets all the eligibility criteria and a suitable candidate has been identified, the Clinical Mentor will be invited to a Practice Discussion with the Clinical Director of the Irish College of GPs.

Appendix 1 – Host GP Previous Experiences

Dr Brendan Payne, principal GP at Woodbrook Family Practice in the rural town of Newmarket, Co. Cork, previously mentored one of the first IMG GPs to join the programme in early 2023, who has since successfully completed it. In August 2025, he welcomed a new IMG GP from Romania to begin his journey on the programme in his practice."

Dr Payne quotes '***From my experience and other Rural GP colleagues, I can certainly say that you've made a real difference to supporting rural Practice in a very real way***'.

In May 2023, Dr Madden told an RTE reporter that '***the scheme has been transformational***'. As a single-handed GP Practice in Abbeyleix, County Laois, Dr John Madden was unable to attract any doctors to work in his rural practice, particularly after Covid-19 outbreak making it increasingly hard for single-handed practitioners to take any time off.

He has since welcomed two IMG GPs commenced into his practice, with one just very recently completed her time and the other on track to complete by the end of 2025. The presence of two MICGP-qualified GPs in this small rural community will greatly enhance timely access to general practice services for local residents.

Full story available at the following link: <https://www.rte.ie/news/regional/2023/0519/1384602-overseas-gps/>

International Medical Graduate Rural GP Programme

Frequently Asked Questions

Information for International Medical Graduates

Welcome to the International Medical Graduate (IMG) GP Programme

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What is the IMG GP Programme?

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What does the education programme entail?

The education programme is a self-directed learning programme. Please note - this is not a GP training programme. IMG GPs must have at least three years GP experience to be considered for the programme (see eligibility criteria below).

The following **mandatory** aspects required are included alongside two years of supervised practice, in a GP setting;

1. You attend a two-day induction course at the beginning of your programme,
You will be shown how to undertake a learning needs assessment and how to maintain your learning log.
2. You will attend a further two-day induction course later in your programme.
3. You must undertake at least **twelve** modules of specific Irish College of GPs online courses over your two years on the programme.
4. You will complete two 12-week online courses with University College Dublin that covers a range of topics relevant to general practice.
5. You will complete five short online courses that are provided by the public health service provider in Ireland-Health Service Executive ([HSeLanD](https://www.hse.ie)).
6. You will complete a minimum of 50 hours per year in a GP out of hours service.
7. You will sit the Clinical Knowledge Test (CKT) and an in-person Clinical Competency Test (CCT) within the two-year programme period.

What are the benefits of this programme for candidates?

Following successful completion of this programme, a candidate will be eligible for specialist registration on the Irish Medical Council (IMC). The programme is one of the recognised qualifications under Section 47(1)(f) for registration purposes on the Specialist Division of the Medical Register in Ireland.

Having Specialist Registration with the IMC will allow you to work independently in Ireland and apply for public GP contracts such as; General Medical Services, Contraception Care, Primary Immunisation, Maternity and Infant. Full range of contracts available can be found at HSE National Contracts Office website. <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/gmscontracts/> .

Appendix 1 below outlines insights from previous IMG GP Candidates.

What does “successful completion” mean?

To be eligible to apply for Specialist Registration with the IMC you must be approved by the Irish College of GPs International Medical Graduate Rural GP Programme Progression Committee.

This means you must:

1. complete two years in your GP practice,
2. complete all the mandatory elements of the education programme,
3. undertake the required number of hours in a GP out-of-hours service,

4. pass the Irish College of GPs membership exams (MICGP). These include a written Clinical Knowledge Test (CKT) and an in-person Clinical Competency Test (CCT).

Interested in becoming an IMG Candidate?

Information for GP Candidates

Eligibility criteria

Applicants must meet all the eligibility criteria below to proceed:

1. A primary medical degree from a university / school outside of Ireland
2. A minimum of three years' full time equivalent (FTE) experience working in general practice, the majority of which should be daytime.
3. Employment letters in support of General Practice experience for each post held
4. Post graduate experience in general medicine and paediatrics of a minimum of 3 months in each speciality
5. Internship certificates
6. Proof of medical indemnity for the three years in general practice
7. Current letter of good standing (re: medico-legal cases) from your indemnity organisation
8. Evidence of current medical council/regulatory body registration (Ireland or country of current practice).
9. Current letter of good standing from your medical council/regulatory body.
10. Contact details for two recent clinical referees, who were in a supervisory role and had oversight of their work, and who are aware of the application.
11. A notarised copy of your medical degree, with English translation if required.
12. A notarised copy of your degree transcript, with English translation if required.
13. Achieved an overall band score of 7.0 or greater in the IELTS and minimum score of 6.5 in each of the four domains. The IELTS test taken must be 'Academic' and must have been completed within the last two years. Alternatively, OET: minimum B in all four domains.

Evidence of the above (IELTS/OET cert) is not reqif you are registered with the Irish Medical Council.

14. Evidence of continuous professional development.

Documentary evidence is required for all of the above. Further guidance in relation to the relevant documentation is available in Appendix 2.

Do I need Medical Indemnity?

It is a mandatory requirement, by the IMC, that all doctors working in Ireland have adequate indemnity to cover their clinical practice. Medical Indemnity will be paid by the GP practice for the duration of the IMG GPs two-year programme participation. You will discuss this further with your clinical mentor in advance of starting in your GP practice.

Where will I work?

The Programme team will identify an appropriate GP practice aligned with the practice's identified needs with consideration given to your expressed preferences or requirements. You will be notified of the selected location, following which the practice will contact you directly to initiate discussions regarding the placement.

The IMG GP Programme team does not negotiate contracts or any benefits on behalf of the candidate or the practice.

Who will be my Employer?

You will be employed directly by the GP practice. Once you agree terms of employment, you will sign a contract with your GP practice.

The IMG GP Programme team does not negotiate contracts or any benefits on behalf of the candidate or the practice.

What will my salary be?

Your salary will be commensurate with your experience and will be negotiated and agreed upon directly between you and the GP practice.

Are there any supports in place for my family as part of this programme?

The Programme Team strive to place candidates in locations that can accommodate both the professional and personal needs of IMG GPs and their families. Consideration is given to factors such as a spouse's employment opportunities and children's educational requirements when matching candidates to GP practices.

What are the costs associated with this course?

Applying for the programme is free.

If your application is deemed eligible you will be invited to interview. The Irish College of GPs request a €100 administration fee before you attend for interview. This is non refundable.

If you are offered a place on the programme, the following costs will apply:

- Annual Irish College of GPs Associate [Membership](#) fee - €1,100
- Annual Irish Medical Council fee - €600
- Annual Irish College of GPs online course - €1,500
- Irish College of GPs examinations
 - Core Knowledge Test Module - €800
 - Clinical Competency Test Module - €1,500

How can I apply?

The **IMG GP** must log into their icgp.ie account to complete the [application form](#).

Appendix 1

What do other IMG GPs have to say about their experiences on the programme?

Dr Yasin Rhemtula, IMG GP with over 12 years of experience managing his own practices in South Africa, recently shared his experiences in the College's FORUM magazine.

“On June 20, 2025, I successfully completed the two-year IMG Programme, having passed the Clinical Knowledge Test (CKT) in February and the Clinical Competency Test (CCT) in June. This milestone represents not only the conclusion of a demanding and rewarding period of learning, but also the beginning of my career as a specialist-registered GP in Ireland.

“To future IMG candidates: this is now a robust, supportive and well-structured route to specialist registration. It demands dedication, but the rewards – both professional and personal– are immense “

Read the full article [here](#).

In April 2025, Dr Tatolo Bobo, an IMG GP currently enrolled on the programme spoke on Claire Byrne's RTE radio show about his experiences to date.

“When this programme was introduced, I thought, oh wow – this is a phenomenal programme. I want to stay in Ireland; I love the community here”.

He described the positive feedback received from patients in the rural community of Kenmare, County Kerry. Dr. Bobo has made Kenmare home, with his wife also pursuing the local 4-year GP Training Programme.

Appendix 2

Required documentation

1. Copy of your passport information page
2. All your experience in chronological order, from the date you qualified. Upload the employment letter for each position to corroborate your position held. The letter should be dated, signed and stamped with details of the signatory.
3. Proof of medical indemnity for the three years in general practice. If your home country does not provide medical indemnity certificates, your GP employment letter will suffice.
4. All your post graduate experience in chronological order from the date you qualified – most recent first. Upload your post graduate certificates to corroborate your experience.
5. Letter of good standing from your medical indemnity organization (see point 3).
6. Certificate of your current registration at a medical council or regulatory body.
7. Letter of good standing from this same medical council or regulatory body.
8. You will be asked to provide the names and contact details for 2 clinical referees. Your nominated referees should be someone who worked with you in a senior role and provided oversight of your work. Your nominated referees should not be a colleague, friend or relative.
9. Irish Medical Council registration certificate.
10. A notarised copy of your medical degree, with English translation if required.
11. A notarised copy of their degree transcript, with English translation if required.
12. Evidence that you have achieved an overall band score of 7.0 or greater in the IELTS and minimum score of 6.5 in each of the four domains. The IELTS test taken must be 'Academic' and must have been completed within the last two years. Alternatively, OET: minimum B in all four domains.

You are not required to provide the above (IELTS/OET cert) if you are registered with the Irish Medical Council.

All documents must be in PDF format and under 3MB in size. All documentation must be presented at the time of the application.

Additional documents that cannot be uploaded to the online application must be sent to the programme email address: imguralprogramme@icgp.ie.