



Pathway to Licensure Program for Immigrant IMGs in Nova Scotia

Key Findings 2008-2018



This report examines the outcomes of the International Medical Graduate (IMG) Clerkship Program at Dalhousie University over the past 10 years. This unique program opened a new pathway to licensure for immigrant IMGs settled in Nova Scotia. The presented data is only a reflection of the immigrant IMG population settled in the province. The government of Nova Scotia continues to fund two positions each year.

International Medical Graduate (IMG) Clerkship Program

Program Milestones

Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)

- The number of immigrant IMGs moving to Nova Scotia is increasing each year. Since 2016 and 2017, 110 IMGs have been registered at ISANS

Recruitment

- In 2008, 6 candidates submitted applications and all six were interviewed. However, this varied over the years as the program has become increasingly competitive with significant increase in qualified applicants
- Between 2008 and 2018, there have been over 164 applicants for the period (an average of between 14 - 17 qualified applicants each year). On average, half of the qualified applicants have been interviewed
- In 2016, there were 17 applicants and 12 candidates were interviewed compared to 2017 where there were 12 applicants and 9 were interviewed. It is worth noting that despite the decrease of program applicants over the years, the program has increased in popularity with an enhanced pool of qualified applicants

Changes to Admissions Process

- In 2016, CASPer was introduced as an assessment tool for non-cognitive skills and interpersonal characteristics. The main objective of implementing CASPer is to further enhance fairness and objectivity in Dalhousie's Admission selection process (<https://takecasper.com/aboutcasper/>)
- Each year, there have been changes to admission processes were reviewed in accordance to recommendation from members of the IMG Multi-Stakeholder Work Group to streamline access to the pathway to licensure program for immigrant IMGs in Nova Scotia (see appendix for current admissions requirement for 2017/2018)

International Medical Graduate (IMG) Clerkship Program

Retention and Outcome

- As of March 16, 2018, 22 immigrant entrants have received admissions to Dalhousie University International Medical Graduate (IMG) Clerkship Program
- As of June 2018, 18 IMGs have successfully completed all academic requirements of the Clerkship Program, graduated from the Dalhousie Medical Degree Program on time and matched through Canadian Resident Matching Services (CaRMS)
- As of March 16, 2018, 10 IMGs have successfully completed residency program requirements
- As of March 1, 2018, 6 out of 10 IMGs have completed return of service as required by contractual agreement
- 1 IMG is currently completing return of service and 3 program participants did not provide any return of service after completing residency training

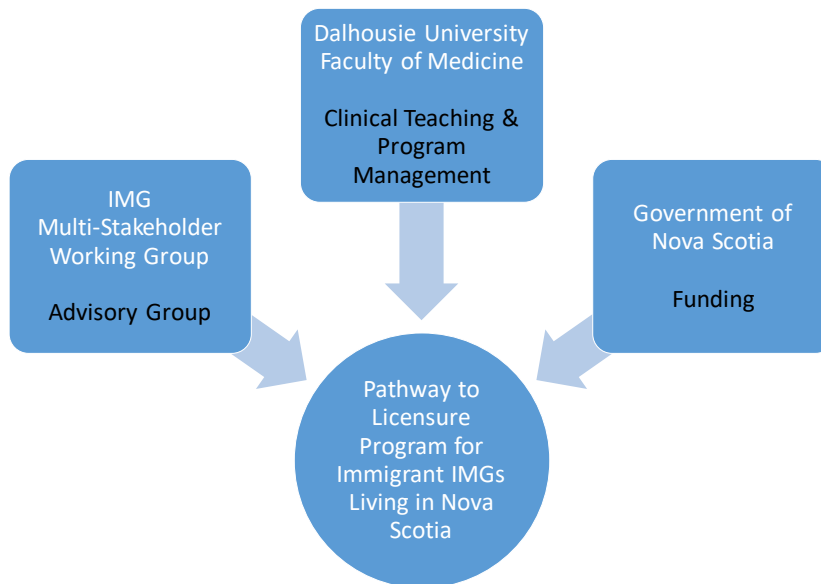


Figure 1: Above is the list of key players of the pathway to licensure program for immigrant IMGs living in Nova Scotia. It should be noted that the IMG Multi-Stakeholder Work Group “Advisory Group” consists of representatives from regulatory bodies and professional associations, Dalhousie University, Government of Nova Scotia, Internationally Trained or Educated Physicians, and Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia staff.

Comprehensive Hands-on Clinical Training



Program Overview

Background & Program Description

In 2008, the Nova Scotia Department of Health & Wellness, and Dalhousie University began a pilot project for IMGs living in Nova Scotia. The proposal for this program came directly out of the provincial IMG Multi-stakeholder Work Group. The program's dual purpose is to provide a pathway to licensure as well as retain immigrant IMGs in the province.

The program provides two immigrant IMGs per year the opportunity to enter third year of the Undergraduate Medical Education Program in the Faculty of Medicine, at Dalhousie University. Upon successful completion of the two clerkship years, participants become Dalhousie graduates and eligible to enter the first round of the Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS). The choices for residency programs are restricted to those identified by Department of Health and Wellness as high need by the province.

The purpose of the program is to retain internationally educated physicians who have chosen Nova Scotia as their new home. Although numerous requests for information are received every year from within Canada and abroad, applicants must have lived in Nova Scotia for one full year prior to application. As a skilled immigrant retention strategy, the IMG Clerkship Program is intended for physicians who obtained their medical degree before immigrating to Canada and as such Canadians who have studied abroad are not eligible.

Choices for residency are restricted to those identified by the Department of Health & Wellness as needed by the province, and the program is fully funded by the government of Nova Scotia. Participants accepted into the program are required to sign a return of service agreement with the Department of Health & Wellness. Following residency, participants provide return of service in a specialty of need in a designated rural community of Nova Scotia. The program therefore directly addresses physician shortages while benefiting the recipients of these positions.

Outcomes

There have been 164 applicants over the past decade. Program requirements have been modified each year in accordance to feedback received from the IMG Multi-stakeholder Work Group as well review by the Faculty of Medicine's Admissions Office. The most updated admission requirements as of June 2018 are outlined in Appendix A. The academic training, practice and licensure benchmarks are illustrated in figure 2.

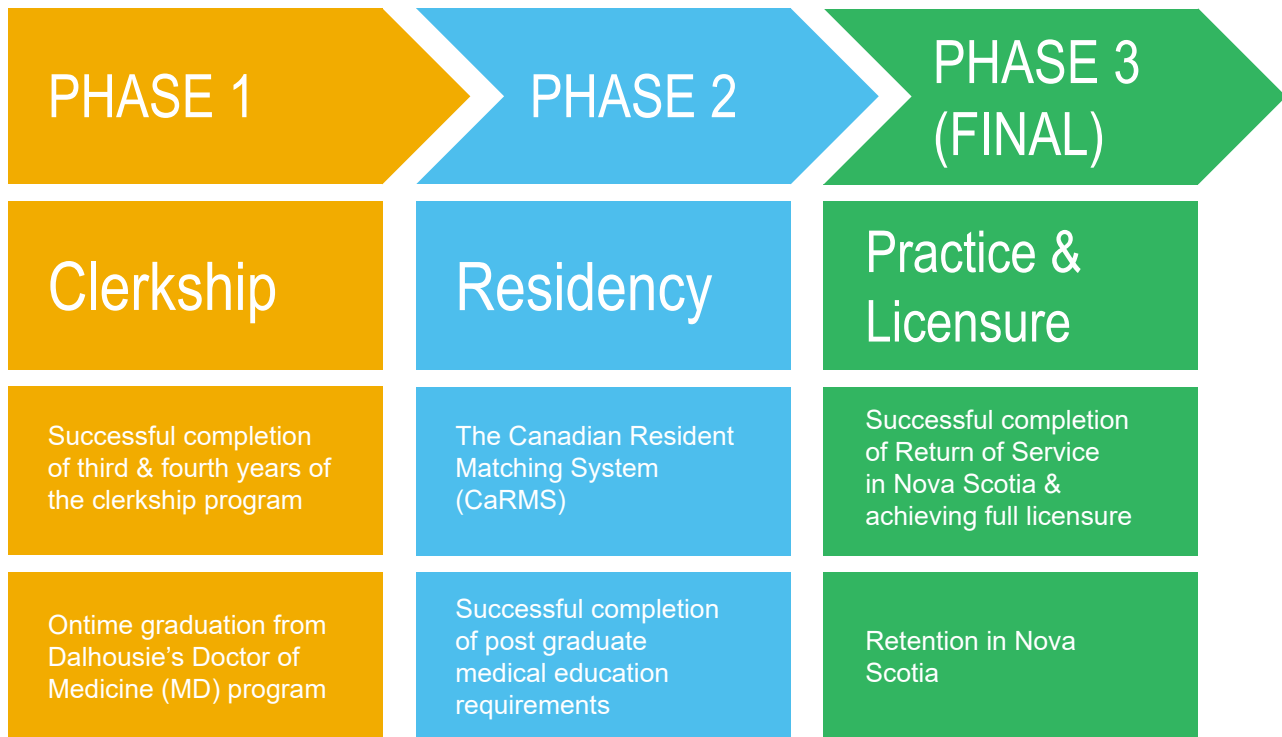


Figure 2: Academic training, practice and licensure benchmarks

Steps to Licensure

Phase 1 - Clerkship

- As of March 2018, there have been 22 immigrant IMGs accepted into the program, two per year since 2008
- To date, no one has terminated or repeated in the clerkship program. As such, every benchmark (possible at their stage in the program) has been met by each of the participants during the clerkship phase of the program. There have been no remediation issues reported during the clerkship years
- The graduation rate from the clerkship phase and CaRMS matching rate are 100%

Phase 2 - Residency Training

- 18 of the 22 program participants have successfully completed the academic requirements of the clerkship program, graduated with a Canadian Medical Degree from Dalhousie University on time and matched through CaRMS
- 8 program participants are currently in residency programs
- 10 program participants have completed residency requirements

The following is a breakdown of CaRMS match from 2010 – 2018:

Residency Matches to date	#	Matched to Dalhousie	Matched out of Province	Currently in Clerkship
Family Medicine	12			
Internal Medicine	3	11	7	4
General Surgery	3			
Total	18		22	

Source: Global Health Office

Phase 3 - Licensure & Return of Service

As is the case with licensure and return of service, the outcomes are significantly higher compared to the total number program participants who have completed return of service:

- 10 program participants have completed residency, all hold either their designation for the Certification in the College of Family Physicians (CCFP) or the Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Canada (FRCPC), and a full/independent license to practice in the province where they practice
- The percentage of on-time program completion rate 8/10 completed residency within the expected timeframe
- 6 of the 10 program participants have completed return of service; 1 participant is currently in return of service
- We currently have 5 participants practicing in Nova Scotia after completion of return of service
- 3 program participants did not provide any return of service after completing residency training



Conclusion

Dalhousie's IMG Clerkship Program continues to contribute to a number of successes over the past years:

- Over the past 10 years, a summary of findings indicates 100% success in meeting all academic training benchmarks available in the clerkship program (phase 1) as of March 1st 2018
- The overall outcome of meeting the benchmark for licensure and return of service are significantly higher, 8 out of 10 participants completed residency training within the expected time-frame. This shows the strength of program participants together with commitment to pave the way towards addressing physician shortages to achieve better health outcomes in Nova Scotia
- Immigrant IMG participant's interest of the program has increased over the period

Each year, new immigrant medical graduates arrive in Nova Scotia from different parts of the globe facing limited options in pathways to licensure and practice. The Government of Nova Scotia and IMG Multi Stakeholder Group have made great strides in the past 10 years by focusing more purposefully on outcomes and addressing the needs of immigrant IMGs in the province. The Dalhousie IMG Clerkship Program is the only comprehensive program in Canada that intends to lead directly into residency and licensure.

“Today, I stand alongside my fellow classmates at the Rebecca Cohn auditorium waiting my turn to receive a degree I worked hard to earn. I applaud the time and effort put forward in creating this program and every effort taken to help immigrant physicians in their homeland – Canada. To say I have no regrets about taking this path would be an understatement, I am where I want to be as a result of this special opportunity.”

Alumni, IMG Clerkship Program

Appendix A

Admission Requirements Dalhousie University International Medical Graduate (IMG) Clerkship Program

The immigrant IMG applicant must meet the following minimum admission requirements:

1. Completed the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination Part I (MCCQE 1)
2. Language Requirement - Submit English language proficiency results
 - The International English Language Testing System (IELTS):
(Required minimum score: 7 in each category) or
 - Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet Based Test (TOEFL iBT):
(Required minimum score: 100)
3. Nova Scotia Residency Status – Please note that only new immigrants to Canada (and residents of Nova Scotia) are eligible for this program. To be eligible as a Nova Scotia resident you MUST present proof of physically living in the province for at least 12 consecutive months (one year) which is calculated from the application deadline (September 1st)
4. Completed the National Collaboration Assessment (NAC) Examination and maintained a passing grade. Please note as of July 1, 2016 the admissions office only accepts NAC results
5. Graduate from an international school or college listed in the World directory of Medical schools - <https://www.wdoms.org/>
6. Admissions requirements are reviewed annually and the admissions requirements from previous years may not apply. Applicants are highly encouraged to monitor the Global Health Office's website for up- to-date information - <https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/core-units/global-health/international-students/img-clerk-program/admission-requirements.html>
7. A detailed description of admissions requirements, application process and timeline contact information are on the Global Health website - <https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/core-units/global-health/international-students/img-clerk-program.html>

Source:

<https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/core-units/global-health/international-students/img-clerk-program.html>



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