



OBJECTIVES

The Melbourne Medical School ('the School'), in the Faculty of Medicine Dentistry and Health Sciences, is committed to providing all Doctor of Medicine students with the opportunity to gain experience in a rural health setting during their course. This policy details how the School will provide rural training opportunities and how it will meet its contractual obligations with the Department of Health regarding rural training for Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) students.

BACKGROUND

The Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Programme 2016-2018 agreement between The University of Melbourne and the federal Department of Health mandates that all Australian medical students must have an opportunity to undertake a structured rural placement. At least 50% of CSP students must complete a rural training experience of at least four consecutive weeks during their course. The rural placement must be located in an ASGC-RA 2-5 region (<http://www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/publishing.nsf/Content/RA-intro>).

GUIDELINES

All CSP students enrolled in the Doctor of Medicine (including those who are New Zealand Citizens and those in Bonded Medical Places) are expected to undertake a rural placement during their course. CSP students based at the Rural Clinical School will automatically satisfy the four-week rural placement expectation.

Priority will be placed on ensuring that as many CSP students as possible are allocated to rural placements for the General Practice term in the subject Principles of Clinical Practice 3 in order to ensure that the School meets the 50% target.

Students who do not undertake a rural term during PCP3 will have the option of undertaking a rural Scholarly Selective project or a rural Vocational Selective term in MD4. Australian students are otherwise encouraged to undertake a structured elective in a rural setting.

The Melbourne Medical School will be responsible for:

- Providing all domestic students with the opportunity to undertake a structured placement in a rural area (ASGR-RA 2-5) during their course
- Ensuring that at least 50% of CSP students undertake a rural training experience of at least four consecutive weeks
- Reimbursing CSP and Australian Full Fee students for accommodation, and for travel costs for getting to and from their rural GP, Scholarly Selective or Vocational Selective placement, in accordance with the current Travel Reimbursement for Doctor of Medicine students procedure
- Providing an orientation to the rural placement.

EXEMPTION AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

In order to meet Government requirements, the Medical School may allocate students to rural GP placements irrespective of student placement preference. An exemption/appeals process will apply only to those students placed on this basis. These students may apply to the Director of Medical Education, Rural Clinical School, to seek an exemption from undertaking a rural GP placement where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances only. Applications should comprise a one page cover letter outlining the reason, with supporting documentation attached. Verbal appeals will not be considered. Applications will be assessed by the Director and the Rural Clinical School Manager, as per the guidelines for consideration of exceptional and unforeseen circumstances listed below.

Applications for exemption are to be submitted via post or email and addressed to:

Rural Clinical School Manager
The University of Melbourne, Rural Clinical School
Post: 49 Graham Street, Shepparton VIC 3630
Email: Melissa Seymour (mjdobson@unimelb.edu.au)

Students may appeal in writing against a decision made regarding an application for exemption or against an allocation, made under the Doctor of Medicine Four Week Rural Placement Information, within ten (10) working days of the exemption / allocation notification.

Appeals should comprise a one page cover letter outlining the reason for the appeal, with supporting documentation attached. Verbal appeals will not be considered.

Appeals are to be submitted by email to:

The Rural Placement Appeals Committee, Melbourne Medical School
md-enquiries@unimelb.edu.au

The Appeals Committee comprises:

- The Head of the Department of Medical Education;
- A Director of Medical Education (nominated by the Head of Department); and
- The Academic Programs Manager.

An acknowledgement of receipt of the appeal will be emailed to the student within three (3) working days of its receipt. The student will be notified of the outcome of the appeal within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the appeal.

If a student does not believe that the appeal has been adequately considered, they may follow the formal grievance procedures outlined in the University Student Complaints and Grievances Policy (<https://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1066>)

Guidelines for Consideration of Appeals

Acceptable reasons for appeal will be based on genuinely *exceptional and unforeseen* circumstances.

Non-acceptable reasons for appeal may include:

- Care of a family member who is not immediate family, and/or where the primary responsibility for that family member lies elsewhere (e.g. a sick grandparent where parents or other close family members are able to provide care)
- Family connections to a particular hospital or clinical school.
- Illness of a general nature where appropriate treatment is readily available in the rural area
- Other studies (students are not permitted to undertake concurrent studies while enrolled in the MD)
- Lack of a vehicle
- Part-time employment
- Volunteer commitments (excluding defence reservist or emergency activities)
- Leases and mortgages
- Friendship groups