

MEDICAL SCHOOLS OUTCOMES DATABASE

National Data Report 2021

BACKGROUND

The Medical Schools Outcomes Database (MSOD) is an annual national data collection conducted by Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand (Medical Deans). The data are collected through an annual survey administered to final year medical students from all medical schools across Australia. The survey collects information on final year demographics, previous and current education, medical school experiences, rural background, career intentions and future practice location and speciality preferences.

The MSOD project commenced in 2005 and has been run each year, providing a valuable, unique, national resource of comprehensive data and insights on Australian medical final year students. The MSOD currently contains over 36,000 participants and is stored and managed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) on behalf of Medical Deans.

This report does not incorporate the New Zealand data. A similar project is conducted in New Zealand by the Universities of Auckland and Otago, with similar questions and with the support of the New Zealand Ministry of Health. The New Zealand MSOD reports can be found [here](#).

Medical Deans would like to express our thanks to all the final year medical students over the years who have taken time to provide this data and contributed to the development of this resource; to inform and shape the development of informed, evidence-based, and effective medical education and health workforce policy. We also gratefully acknowledge the support of the Australian government for its funding support of the MSOD.

Please note: this survey is intended to capture feedback from students completing their medical school studies. Therefore, for any respondents who repeated their final year, only their latest response is reported and any earlier response has been removed from that year's figures.

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Correction (to Table 7) released May 2022

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides the findings that were captured by the 2020 Medical Schools Outcomes Database (MSOD) survey, with data presented from the 5 years 2016 to 2020.

This survey was administered to final year students in medical schools across Australia towards the end of 2020, with a 46 per cent response rate (1,732 respondents); a lower response rate which schools attribute to a high level of survey and online fatigue for students. Demographic characteristics of the respondents remained broadly similar across the years 2016 to 2020. Typically, the survey has a higher response rate from females and this year was no different with 57 per cent of responses being from females; from a final year cohort where the gender ratio was 53 percent female¹. Compared with 2019, the 2020 final year respondents had an older minimum age and a younger maximum age, with 14 per cent over 30 years old. Around 5 per cent had children and 3 per cent had other dependents; with these figures remaining very consistent since this data started being collected in 2013. The proportion in paid employment during their medical course has increased 10 per cent in the last 5 years, to just under 60 per cent.

Selecting students from, and training in and for rural practice is a key priority for medical schools to improve equity of access to medical education and support the improved geographic distribution of the future medical workforce. Nearly 28 per cent of domestic student respondents considered themselves as coming from a rural background, but only 7 per cent of international students.

At the end of 2020, just under 35 per cent of respondents indicated a preference to practice outside a capital city in their future career; on a par with last year and proportionate to the general population living outside capital cities in Australia². The proportion of domestic students preferring to work in smaller towns or communities remains fairly steady at 5.3 per cent, with that number dropping to 2.6 per cent for international students.

The MSOD confirms findings from other data that students from a rural background express higher levels of desire to practice in rural or regional locations; with 90 per cent of respondents from non-rural backgrounds preferring to work in a capital city or major urban centre versus 56 percent of those from a rural background. The proportions wanting to work in smaller towns (population 10,000 to 24,999) shows the greatest differentiation, at 1 per cent of non-rural respondents versus 13 per cent of rural respondents.

This year's data again confirmed the strong association between rural club membership and a stated preference at the time of graduation for a future practice outside of a capital city, with members of rural clubs 3.6 times more likely to express this preference.

¹ Medical Deans' Student Statistics Snapshot Report 2018-2019 <https://medicaldeans.org.au/md/2020/01/2019-Student-Statistics-Report.pdf>

² Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016, 'National census', viewed 17/08/2021
<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2071.02016?OpenDocument>

The MSOD also indicates that rural-background students indicate a higher interest in Indigenous health being a part of their future medical career (60 per cent versus 46 per cent for non-rural background).

Levels of interest in a career that involved teaching and research have been consistently high over the years, and this year is no different; with 86.2 per cent interested in teaching being part of their future, and 61.4 per cent interested in research. The proportions for domestic and international students are very similar to each other.

Preferences for future practice across the disciplines have remained consistent over the years of the survey. The category of “Adult medicine/internal medicine/physician” has retained the highest preference since 2014. General practice and surgery have consistently been either the 2nd or 3rd preferred choice, with paediatrics and child health, anaesthesia, and emergency medicine remaining the subsequent 3 choices comprising the top 6.

‘Atmosphere/work culture typical of the discipline’ remained the most highly ranked factor in influencing the preferred choice of discipline. ‘Alignment with personal values’ and the ‘Experience of the specialty as a medical student’ have also been consistently highly rated as factors. Along with ‘General medical school experiences’ and the ‘Intellectual content of the specialty’, these five factors have been the highest rated in each survey since 2014.

Levels of satisfaction with the medical program at universities increased, with 76 percent indicating they agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their courses – returning to the levels previously indicated after a drop in this figure in 2019. The percentage dissatisfied or very dissatisfied decreased to 10 per cent. The satisfaction levels for international students were lower, which is a consistent finding, although this data reflected greater satisfaction than previous years.

Similarly, the proportion of students in overall agreement that their basic medical degree was preparing them well for work as an intern increased, to 77 per cent – the highest figure in this data series. The proportion disagreeing or strongly disagreeing also dropped to the lowest level, matching that of 2016.

SECTION 1: MSOD SURVEY RESPONSE RATES

Medical school response rates

In 2020, there were 3,773 final year students across all Australian medical schools of which 46 per cent (or 1,732) responded to the 2019 MSOD survey. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was felt keenly by a number of schools, with students reporting a very high level of online and survey fatigue which schools felt impacted the response rate.

Table 1. Respondents by medical school – All students

School attended	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Australian National University	82	3.6	47	2.2	86	3.9	70	3.4	62	3.6
Bond University	46	2.0	27	1.3	56	2.5	53	2.6	44	2.5
Deakin University	105	4.6	100	4.7	117	5.3	110	5.4	104	6.0
Flinders University	97	4.3	93	4.4	12	0.5	29	1.4	25	1.4
Griffith University	29	1.3	83	3.9	92	4.2	44	2.2	23	1.3
James Cook University	56	2.5	100	4.7	69	3.1	93	4.6	0	0
Monash University	242	10.7	303	14.3	350	15.9	347	17.0	405	23.4
The University of Adelaide	51	2.3	55	2.6	80	3.6	51	2.5	55	3.2
The University of Melbourne	196	8.7	164	7.8	193	8.8	95	4.7	104	6.0
The University of Newcastle/University of New England	54	2.4	73	3.4	99	4.5	135	6.6	121	7.0
The University of New South Wales	126	5.6	124	5.9	130	5.9	80	3.9	97	5.6
The University of Notre Dame (Fremantle)	60	2.7	40	1.9	48	2.2	51	2.5	55	3.2
The University of Notre Dame (Sydney)	81	3.6	51	2.4	53	2.4	48	2.4	39	2.3
The University of Queensland	490	21.7	329	15.5	283	12.9	227	11.1	196	11.3
The University of Sydney	268	11.9	273	12.9	252	11.4	255	12.5	110	6.4
University of Tasmania	81	3.6	86	4.1	97	4.4	74	3.6	85	4.9
The University of Western Australia	81	3.6	91	4.3	131	5.9	152	7.5	138	8.0
Western Sydney University	43	1.9	24	1.1	23	1.0	64	3.1	30	1.7
University of Wollongong	73	3.2	53	2.5	31	1.4	60	2.9	39	2.3
Total	2261	100.0	2116	100.0	2202	100.0	2038	100.0	1732	100.0

Domestic students

1,484 of the respondents (86 per cent) were domestic students; a higher proportion than the cohort in their final year, which comprised just over 83 per cent domestic students.

Table 2. Respondents by medical school – Domestic students only

School attended	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Australian National University	76	4.1	42	2.3	80	4.2	63	3.6	57	3.8
Bond University	46	2.5	27	1.5	56	3.0	53	3.0	44	3.0
Deakin University	100	5.4	98	5.4	115	6.1	104	5.9	98	6.6
Flinders University	76	4.1	86	4.8	10	0.5	26	1.5	24	1.6
Griffith University	28	1.5	82	4.5	91	4.8	41	2.3	18	1.2
James Cook University	56	3.0	90	5.0	60	3.2	80	4.6	0	0
Monash University	207	11.1	255	14.1	276	14.6	286	16.3	338	22.8
The University of Adelaide	45	2.4	53	2.9	64	3.4	45	2.6	50	3.4
The University of Melbourne	181	9.7	152	8.4	174	9.2	86	4.9	95	6.4
The University of Newcastle/University of New England	52	2.8	63	3.5	90	4.8	118	6.7	105	7.1
The University of New South Wales	101	5.4	93	5.1	109	5.8	67	3.8	78	5.3
The University of Notre Dame (Fremantle)	60	3.2	39	2.2	48	2.5	51	2.9	55	3.7
The University of Notre Dame (Sydney)	81	4.4	51	2.8	53	2.8	48	2.7	39	2.6
The University of Queensland	293	15.8	228	12.6	201	10.7	186	10.6	148	10.0
The University of Sydney	213	11.5	223	12.3	201	10.7	194	11.0	89	6.0
University of Tasmania	66	3.6	67	3.7	87	4.6	58	3.3	68	4.6
The University of Western Australia	70	3.8	90	5.0	121	6.4	140	8.0	125	8.4
Western Sydney University	41	2.2	21	1.2	22	1.2	60	3.4	24	1.6
University of Wollongong	67	3.6	49	2.7	29	1.5	52	3.0	29	2.0
Total	1,859	100.0	1,809	100.0	1,887	100.0	1,758	100.0	1,484	100.0

Note: Throughout this Report:

- Domestic students comprise Australian citizens, Australian permanent residents, and New Zealand citizens
- International student figures are only for those enrolled in on-shore medical programs, and do not include students enrolled in Australian medical programs run in other countries.

Table 3 shows those medical schools which had an international student response; noting that not all schools enrol international students.

14 per cent of the respondents, or 248, were international students (enrolled in on-shore medical programs); a lower proportion than the cohort which comprised 16.9 per cent international students.

Table 3. Respondents by medical school – International on-shore students only

School attended	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Australian National University	6	1.5	5	1.6	6	1.9	7	2.5	5	2.0
Deakin University	5	1.2	2	0.7	2	0.6	6	2.1	6	2.4
Flinders University	21	5.2	7	2.3	2	0.6	3	1.1	1	0.4
Griffith University	1	0.2	1	0.3	1	0.3	3	1.1	5	2.0
James Cook University	0	0	10	3.3	9	2.9	13	4.6	0	0
Monash University	35	8.7	48	15.6	74	23.5	61	21.8	67	27.0
The University of Adelaide	6	1.5	2	0.7	16	5.1	6	2.1	5	2.0
The University of Melbourne	15	3.7	12	3.9	19	6.0	9	3.2	9	3.6
The University of Newcastle/University of New England	2	0.5	10	3.3	9	2.9	17	6.1	16	6.5
The University of New South Wales	25	6.2	31	10.1	21	6.7	13	4.6	19	7.7
The University of Notre Dame (Fremantle)	0	0	1	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0
The University of Queensland	197	49.0	101	32.9	82	26.0	41	14.6	48	19.4
The University of Sydney	55	13.7	50	16.3	51	16.2	61	21.8	21	8.5
University of Tasmania	15	3.7	19	6.2	10	3.2	16	5.7	17	6.9
The University of Western Australia	11	2.7	1	0.3	10	3.2	12	4.3	13	5.2
Western Sydney University	2	0.5	3	1.0	1	0.3	4	1.4	6	2.4
University of Wollongong	6	1.5	4	1.3	2	0.6	8	2.9	10	4.0
Total	402	100.0	307	100.0	315	100.0	280	100.0	248	100.0

Note: Those who do not have any international students enrolled are omitted from this Table; i.e. Bond University and University of Notre Dame Australia (Sydney Medical School).

Proportion by medical program length

The sample is fairly representative of the proportions enrolled in 4-year programs, with a stronger response rate from 5-year courses and fewer from those in a 6-year program.

Table 4. Number of final year students across all Australian medical schools, showing course length

State/territory of study	Final year students 2020		MSOD respondents 2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
4-year course	2,244	59.5	996	57.5
5-year course	905	24.0	584	33.7
6-year course	624	16.5	152	8.8
Total	3,773	100.0	1,732	100.0

Source: Student Statistics 2020 and MSOD data

Note: Similar MSOD response rates have been assumed for different length courses at the same medical school, as the responses cannot be distinguished

Respondents by state/territory

This year Victorian schools had a higher response to the survey, and so their students form a majority of respondents. Note: Table 5 and Table 6 refer to the location where students were studying medicine (which may be different to where they identify their primary residence to be).

Table 5. Respondents by state/territory

State/territory of completion	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
VIC	543	24.0	567	26.8	660	30.0	552	27.1	613	35.4
NSW	645	28.5	598	28.3	588	26.7	642	31.5	436	25.2
QLD	621	27.5	539	25.5	500	22.7	417	20.5	263	15.2
WA	141	6.2	131	6.2	179	8.1	203	10.0	193	11.1
TAS	81	3.6	86	4.1	97	4.4	74	3.6	85	4.9
SA	148	6.5	148	7.0	92	4.2	80	3.9	80	4.6
ACT	82	3.6	47	2.2	86	3.9	70	3.4	62	3.6
Total	2261	100.0	2116	100.0	2202	100.0	2038	100.0	1732	100.0

Note: Data for Flinders Medical School in Darwin cannot be separately identified and so responses are included in South Australia

Table 6. Respondents and students: comparison by state/territory

State/territory of study	Final year students in 2020		MSOD respondents in 2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
VIC	956	25.3	613	35.4
NSW	1115	29.6	436	25.2
QLD	835	22.1	263	15.2
SA	284	7.5	193	11.1
TAS	110	2.9	85	4.9
WA	365	9.7	80	4.6
ACT	108	2.9	62	3.6
Total	3773	100.0	1732	100.0

Note: Flinders Darwin Medical School data are included in South Australia figures

SECTION 2: DEMOGRAPHICS

The gender balance of respondents was 57.2 per cent female and 42.7 per cent male with a small number identifying as non-binary or unspecified. This is from a cohort whose gender balance was 52.8 per cent female, 47.2 percent male, and 0.03 per cent identifying as non-binary or unspecified when they commenced medical school.

Table 7. Respondents by gender

Age	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Female	1,153	51.0	1,150	54.3	1,168	53.0	1,100	54.0	990	57.2
Male	1,108	49.0	966	45.7	1,031	46.8	936	45.9	740	42.7
Non-binary / Unspecified		0.0		0.0	3	0.1	2	0.1	2	0.1
Total	2,261	100.0	2,116	100.0	2,202	100.0	2,038	100.0	1,732	100.0

Student age

In 2020, the final year students who responded to the survey were primarily aged between 25 and 29, with nearly 45 per cent within this category – slightly lower than last year. Just over 86 per cent were aged under 30 years old, with only 1.6 per cent over 40 years old. These figures vary little from earlier years, although the already low numbers of students aged 45 and over and aged 35-39 have been gradually decreasing.

Table 8. Respondents by age group

Age	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<25	793	35.1	790	37.4	822	37.4	820	40.2	724	41.8
25-29	1083	48.0	1002	47.4	1069	48.6	952	46.7	770	44.5
30-34	278	12.3	218	10.3	217	9.9	179	8.8	176	10.2
35-39	60	2.7	77	3.6	57	2.6	45	2.2	34	2.0
40-44	28	1.2	16	0.8	22	1.0	30	1.5	21	1.2
45+	15	0.7	10	0.5	13	0.6	12	0.6	7	0.4
Total	2257	100.0	2113	100.0	2200	100.0	2038	100.0	1732	100.0

The median age of respondents remained consistent at 25 years old. The minimum age of the 2020 respondents was 2 years older, and the maximum age substantially lower, than the previous year.

Table 9. Median age of respondents

Age	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Median	25	25	25	25	25
Minimum	20	19	21	19	21
Maximum	55	54	62	58	51

Relationship and dependants

The proportion of respondents identifying as having a partner (i.e., in a relationship or married) is higher this year, with this being the majority for the first time.

Table 10. Partner status

Partner status	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Partnered	1,077	47.6	1,023	48.3	1,033	46.9	943	46.3	891	51.4
Not partnered	1,184	52.4	1,093	51.7	1,169	53.1	1,095	53.7	841	48.6
Total	2,261	100.0	2,116	100.0	2,202	100.0	2,038	100.0	1,732	100.0

Just over 4 per cent of respondents have dependent children, with the numbers varying very little from previous years' data. Similarly, the vast majority have no 'other dependants', with again little change over the years.

Table 11. Number of dependent children and other dependants

Dependants	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Children										
0	2123	94.7	2000	95.1	2088	94.8	1941	95.2	1660	95.8
1	60	2.7	47	2.2	55	2.5	48	2.4	30	1.7
2	32	1.4	38	1.8	44	2.0	33	1.6	30	1.7
3 or more	26	1.2	17	0.8	15	0.7	16	0.8	12	0.7
Total	2241	100.0	2102	100.0	2202	100.0	2038	100.0	1732	100.0
Other dependants										
0	2163	97.5	2044	98.0	2150	97.6	1981	97.2	1687	97.4
1	42	1.9	31	1.5	32	1.5	40	2.0	34	2.0
2	6	0.3	6	0.3	12	0.5	13	0.6	6	0.3
3 or more	8	0.4	4	0.2	8	0.4	4	0.2	5	0.3
Total	2219	100.0	2085	100.0	2202	100.0	2038	100.0	1732	100.0

Country of birth

The proportion of respondents born in Australia continues to remain at around the level of two-thirds of respondents, with Table 12 showing the countries with the highest representation of survey respondents over the last 5 years.

The proportion of students born in Singapore remains consistently high, as it does for those born in India. Canadian students continued to be lower than in 2016 and 2017, and the representation of South African-born students dropped outside the top-10. The proportion of students born in Sri Lanka increased almost a percentage point, and joined the list this year at number 8.

Table 12. Country of birth (top 10)

Birth country	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Australia	1,376	60.9	1,367	64.6	1,446	65.7	1,372	67.3	1,147	66.2
Singapore	111	4.9	92	4.3	104	4.7	93	4.6	89	5.1
India	59	2.6	50	2.4	51	2.3	51	2.5	53	3.1
Canada	88	3.9	77	3.6	54	2.5	56	2.7	43	2.5
New Zealand	55	2.4	46	2.2	43	2.0	54	2.6	42	2.4
Malaysia	62	2.7	56	2.6	72	3.3	50	2.5	39	2.3
China (excl. SARs and Taiwan)	41	1.8	51	2.4	58	2.6	35	1.7	38	2.2
Sri Lanka	33	1.5	27	1.3	15	0.7	23	1.1	34	2.0
United States of America	107	4.7	64	3.0	51	2.3	29	1.4	33	1.9
England	45	2.0	51	2.4	37	1.7	37	1.8	29	1.7
Other	284	12.6	235	11.1	271	12.3	238	11.7	185	10.7
Total	2,261	100.0	2,116	100.0	2,202	100.0	2,038	100.0	1,732	100.0

Sources of income

The majority of respondents relied on family (75 per cent). This proportion continues to gradually increase, as does that indicating Government support (66 per cent), paid employment (59 per cent), and HECS / FEE / OS HELP student loans (56 per cent). The proportion with a scholarship increased to its highest level within this data range, while the use of savings and trust funds dropped a little. The number with a personal loan dropped back significantly, and is half the level seen in 2017.

Table 13. Sources of income for education and/or living expenses for entire medical degree

Income sources	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Family	1586	70.1	1523	71.9	1608	73.0	1502	73.6	1302	75.1
Government	1412	62.4	1351	63.8	1376	62.4	1327	65.1	1136	65.5
Paid employment	1117	49.4	1180	55.7	1176	53.4	1141	55.9	1030	59.4
HECS/FEE/OS HELP loan	978	43.2	1051	49.6	1156	52.4	1123	55.1	975	56.2
Scholarship	640	28.3	612	28.9	578	26.2	502	24.6	505	29.1
Savings/Trust fund	417	18.4	426	20.1	385	17.4	373	18.3	284	16.3
Personal Loan	320	14.1	323	15.2	304	13.8	245	12.0	131	7.5

Note: Participants can select more than one option; hence the total is the count of people who reported at least one income source.

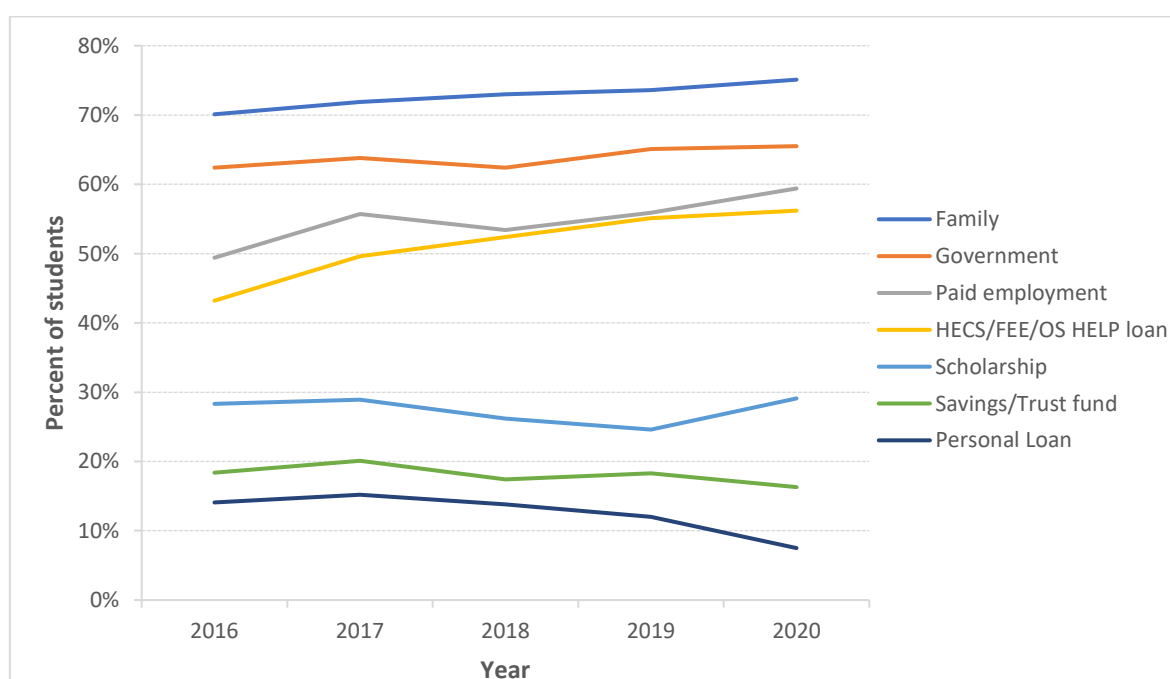


Figure 1. Sources of income for education and/or living expenses for entire medical degree

Rural background

Nearly 25 per cent of the 2020 MSOD respondents considered themselves as coming from a rural background, and nearly the same proportion who finished their final year of secondary schooling in Australia did so in a regional area. For both these indicators, the numbers have remained fairly consistent from 2016 onwards.

Table 14. Respondent considers themselves to come from a rural background

Rural background	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Domestic										
Yes	485	26.1	465	25.7	467	24.7	447	25.4	412	27.8
No	1,373	73.9	1,343	74.3	1,420	75.3	1,311	74.6	1,072	72.2
Total	1,858	100.0	1,808	100.0	1,887	100.0	1,758	100.0	1,484	100.0
International										
Yes	53	13.3	36	11.7	22	7.0	17	6.1	18	7.3
No	345	86.7	271	88.3	293	93.0	263	93.9	230	92.7
Total	398	100.0	307	100.0	315	100.0	280	100.0	248	100.0
All Students										
Yes	538	23.8	501	23.7	489	22.2	464	22.8	430	24.8
No	1,718	76.2	1,614	76.3	17,13	77.8	1,574	77.2	1,302	75.2
Total	2,256	100.0	2,115	100.0	2,202	100.0	2,038	100.0	1,732	100.0

Table 15. Final year of secondary schooling in a regional area

Final year of school in a regional area	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Domestic										
Yes	437	24.5	446	24.9	422	23.6	383	22.6	349	24.2
No	1,344	75.5	1,347	75.1	1,366	76.4	1,308	77.4	1,091	75.8
Total	1,781	100.0	1,793	100.0	1,788	100.0	1,691	100.0	1,440	100.0
International										
Yes	43	22.8	31	11.1	20	22.5	16	25.0	10	17.9
No	146	77.2	249	88.9	69	77.5	48	75.0	46	82.1
Total	189	100.0	280	100.0	89	100.0	64	100.0	56	100.0
All Students										
Yes	480	24.4	477	23.0	442	23.5	399	22.7	359	24.0
No	1,490	75.6	1,596	77.0	1,435	76.5	1,356	77.3	1,137	76.0
Total	1,970	100.0	2,073	100.0	1,877	100.0	1,755	100.0	1,496	100.0

Type of longest prior residential location

The MSOD survey asks participants about the type of location they have lived in the longest if they had lived in Australia for more than 1 year prior to commencing medical school.

Table 16 shows that 70 per cent of those responding lived the longest in a capital city. The data reflects fairly closely that from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' most recent census data (2016) which showed that 66.6 per cent per cent of the population were living in a capital city³. The proportion of students from regional cities dropped slightly, but increased for both smaller towns and small communities.

Table 16. Location where students have lived the longest (for domestic students living in Australia for more than 1 year prior to medical school)

Location of longest residence ⁴	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Capital city	1594	71.4	1483	70.5	1549	70.7	1422	69.8	1214	70.3
Major urban centre	203	9.1	223	10.6	222	10.1	240	11.8	160	9.3
Regional city or large town	194	8.7	161	7.7	178	8.1	181	8.9	136	7.9
Smaller town	118	5.3	112	5.3	113	5.2	84	4.1	98	5.7
Small community	122	5.5	124	5.9	128	5.8	109	5.4	119	6.9
Total	2231	100.0	2103	100.0	2190	100.0	2036	100.0	1727	100.0

3. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016, 'National census', viewed 17/08/2020, <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2071.02016?OpenDocument>

4. Classification: Major urban centre – (>100,000 population size) e.g., Cairns, Geelong, Gold Coast–Tweed Heads, Gosford, Newcastle, Townsville, Wollongong, Wyong; Regional city or large town (25,000 - 99,999 population size) e.g., Alice Springs, Ballarat, Bunbury, Dubbo, Launceston, Mount Gambier; Smaller town (10,000 – 24,999 population size); Small community (<10,000 population size)

SECTION 3: PREVIOUS EDUCATION

Level of previous degree

The numbers of final year students who have completed a degree, diploma, or certificate prior to undertaking their medical studies has remained relatively stable over this period.

Table 17. Highest level of previous degree

Previous degree highest degree level	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Postgraduate degree	144	6.4	133	6.3	156	7.1	125	6.1	101	5.8
Bachelor degree (honours)	321	14.2	294	13.9	317	14.4	312	15.3	230	13.3
Bachelor degree	941	41.6	869	41.1	895	40.6	800	39.3	689	39.8
Graduate diploma/certificate level	56	2.5	52	2.5	56	2.5	42	2.1	40	2.3
Diploma	18	0.8	25	1.2	23	1.0	13	0.6	17	1.0
Certificate	31	1.4	43	2.0	29	1.3	28	1.4	34	2.0
N/A - no prior tertiary qualifications	750	33.2	700	33.1	726	33.0	718	35.2	621	35.9
Total	2,261	100.0	2,116	100.0	2,202	100.0	2,038	100.0	1,732	100.0

Discipline of previous degree

Over half of all respondents who had completed a previous degree had done so in Natural and Physical Sciences, whilst 33 per cent had completed a degree in a health-related discipline. Medical studies (15 per cent), Public Health (4 per cent), Rehabilitation therapies (4 per cent), and Pharmacy (3 per cent) were the most common health-specific degrees completed.

Table 18. Discipline of highest previous degree

Discipline of highest previous degree	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Natural and Physical Sciences	688	46.3	689	49.6	758	52.2	694	53.3	608	55.9
Information Technology	18	1.2	12	0.8	9	0.6	8	0.6	5	0.4
Engineering and Related Technologies	60	4.0	43	3.0	35	2.4	49	3.7	31	2.8
Architecture and Building	2	0.1	2	0.1	2	0.1	1	0.0	2	0.1
Agriculture, Environmental & Related Studies	10	0.6	5	0.3	8	0.5	4	0.3	4	0.3
Health Total	588	39.5	557	40.1	573	39.4	491	37.7	360	33.1
-- Medical studies	240	16.1	240	17.2	240	16.5	210	16.1	164	15.1
-- Complementary Therapies	8	0.5	6	0.4	0	..	2	0.1	0	..
-- Dental Studies	9	0.6	4	0.2	13	0.8	8	0.6	2	0.1
-- Nursing / Midwifery	46	3.0	33	2.3	38	2.6	30	2.3	23	2.1
-- Optical Science	1	0.0	9	0.6	6	0.4	1	0.0	6	0.5
-- Pharmacy	75	5.0	62	4.4	65	4.4	47	3.6	30	2.7
-- Public Health	39	2.6	44	3.1	37	2.5	41	3.1	41	3.7
-- Radiography	12	0.8	17	1.2	20	1.3	18	1.3	10	0.9
-- Rehabilitation Therapies	72	4.8	59	4.2	57	3.9	50	3.8	41	3.7
-- Veterinary Studies	4	0.2	7	0.5	10	0.6	4	0.3	3	0.2
-- Other Health	66	4.4	61	4.3	64	4.4	63	4.8	41	3.7
Education	21	1.4	17	1.2	17	1.1	14	1.0	13	1.1
Management and Commerce	65	4.3	69	4.9	47	3.2	39	3.0	31	2.8
Society and Culture	119	8.0	112	8.0	110	7.5	96	7.3	100	9.2
Creative Arts	48	3.2	39	2.8	34	2.3	33	2.5	35	3.2
Food, Hospitality and Personal Services	5	0.3	6	0.4	7	0.4	7	0.5	9	0.8
Mixed Field Programmes	21	1.4	14	1.0	17	1.1	10	0.7	20	1.8

Notes:

1. Due to the structure of the question, 'Health Total' includes those who ticked a row titled 'Health, please specify' and did not specify an area as well as those who specified at least one health area.
2. Participants can select more than one option.

SECTION 4: MEDICAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Satisfaction with medical program

Final year students were asked about their level of satisfaction with the medical program at their university (Table 19) on a Likert scale of 1 to 5.

Seventy six per cent of respondents indicated they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their medical program in 2020, which is the second highest figure in this data range. The proportion of respondents “dissatisfied” or “highly dissatisfied” dropped this year to 10 per cent. The average level of satisfaction for the 2020 cohort increased to 3.9 while the median level of satisfaction was unchanged at 4 (satisfied).

The level of domestic students “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their medical program in 2020 was slightly higher than the consolidated figure, at 77 percent.

Table 19. Overall level of satisfaction with medical program

Satisfaction	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Domestic Students					
Average satisfaction	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9
Median satisfaction	4	4	4	4	4
Per cent satisfied or very satisfied	76.1	77.7	76.8	72.6	77.2
Per cent unsatisfied or very unsatisfied	9.1	9.5	10.7	12.5	10.0
International Students					
Average satisfaction	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.7
Median satisfaction	4	4	4	4	4
Per cent satisfied or very satisfied	69.2	71.3	68.6	62.5	71.8
Per cent unsatisfied or very unsatisfied	11.2	12.1	11.4	17.1	12.9
All Students					
Average satisfaction	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.9
Median satisfaction	4	4	4	4	4
Per cent satisfied or very satisfied	74.9	76.8	75.6	71.2	76.4
Per cent unsatisfied or very unsatisfied	9.5	9.8	10.8	13.2	10.5

Note: Scale: 1 = Very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4 = Satisfied, 5 = Very satisfied

Preparation for internship

Seventy-seven per cent of respondents in 2020 “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” that their basic medical degree was preparing them well to work as an intern – the highest level within this date range. Six per cent of the cohort said they “Disagreed” or “Strongly Disagreed” with this statement (Table 20), a drop from the last couple of years. The average agreement rose to 4.0, with the median agreement remaining consistent, also at 4.

The level of domestic students who “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” with the statement was slightly higher than the consolidated figure, at 78 per cent.

International students’ who “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” was lower at 71 per cent, with the proportion disagreeing or strongly disagreeing also slightly lower.

**Table 20. Overall level of agreement with the statement
'My Basic Medical Degree is preparing me well to work as an intern'**

Agreement	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Domestic Students					
Average agreement	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.8	4.0
Median agreement	4	4	4	4	4
Per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing	75.6	76.3	74.1	72.0	78.0
Per cent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing	6.0	6.6	7.9	9.3	6.6
International Students					
Average agreement	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.8
Median agreement	4	4	4	4	4
Per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing	70.9	66.1	66.7	61.4	71.0
Per cent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing	9.0	8.1	9.2	14.6	5.6
All Students					
Average agreement	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.8	4.0
Median agreement	4	4	4	4	4
Per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing	74.7	74.8	73.1	70.6	77.0
Per cent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing	6.5	6.8	8.1	10.1	6.5

Note: Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Rural club membership

As part of the medical school experience, students have the opportunity to join rural clubs; student-led groups and networks that promote and develop initiatives on rural and remote health practice.

In 2020, 29 per cent of respondents indicated that they were a member of a rural club. This number has shown a slow but steady drop over the last few years (after a high of 41 percent seen in 2015). It is worth noting that the majority of rural club members (around 58.4 per cent) are not from rural backgrounds. Of those students who did consider themselves from a rural background 49.1 per cent were involved with rural clubs, dropping from 52 per cent the previous year.

Using a binary logistic regression analysis, 2020 data showed that respondents who reported being members of rural clubs were 3.6 times more likely to express a preference to practice outside capital cities than those who were not members (OR 3.6 95%CI 2.9-4.5 $p < 0.001$). This has increased from 3.1 times more likely the previous year.

Domestic students were significantly more likely to be in a rural club than international students; 32 per cent vs 12 percent. The proportions for international students have remained consistent over the years, whilst the drop in overall numbers is due to the falling domestic student membership.

Table 21. Respondent is a member of a rural club

Rural club membership	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Domestic Students										
Yes	815	44.1	763	42.2	676	35.8	583	33.2	478	32.2
No	1,032	55.9	1,046	57.8	1,211	64.2	1,175	66.8	1,006	67.8
Total	1,847	100.0	1,809	100.0	1,887	100.0	1,758	100.0	14,84	100.0
International Students										
Yes	69	17.2	51	16.6	38	12.1	27	9.6	29	11.7
No	333	82.8	256	83.4	277	87.9	253	90.4	219	88.3
Total	402	100.0	307	100.0	315	100.0	280	100.0	248	100.0
All Students										
Yes	884	39.3	814	38.5	714	32.4	610	29.9	507	29.3
No	1,365	60.7	1,302	61.5	1,488	67.6	1,428	70.1	1,225	70.7
Total	2,249	100.0	2,116	100.0	2,202	100.0	2,038	100.0	1,732	100.0

SECTION 5: CAREER INTENTION

Preferred country for future practice

The majority (96 per cent) of 2020 final-year students indicated Australia as their preferred country for future practice. This figure has remained fairly stable, with 2016 having the lowest percentage in this reporting period. The number indicating a preference to work in New Zealand continues to be low. Approximately a quarter of international students intend to work overseas.

Table 22. Preferred country for future practice

Preferred country for future practice	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Domestic Students										
Australia	1,820	97.9	1,778	98.3	1,853	98.2	1,741	99.0	1,475	99.4
New Zealand	13	0.7	13	0.7	10	0.5	4	0.2	4	0.3
Other	26	1.4	18	1.0	24	1.3	13	0.7	5	0.3
Total	1,859	100.0	18,09	100.0	1,887	100.0	1,758	100.0	1,484	100.0
International Students										
Australia	251	62.4	213	69.4	236	74.9	226	80.7	186	75.0
New Zealand	.	.	.	.	4	1.3	1	0.4	1	0.4
Other	151	37.6	94	30.6	75	23.8	53	18.9	61	24.6
Total	402	100.0	307	100.0	315	100.0	280	100.0	248	100.0
All Students										
Australia	2,071	91.6	1,991	94.1	2,089	94.9	1,967	96.5	1,661	95.9
New Zealand	13	0.57	13	0.6	14	0.6	5	0.2	5	0.3
Other	177	7.8	112	5.3	99	4.5	66	3.2	66	3.8
Total	2,261	100.0	2,116	100.0	2,202	100.0	2,038	19.69	1,732	100.0

Preferred state for future practice

Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland continued to be the 3 most preferred states for final year students when considering the location of their intended future practice. WA continues to see an increase, however the proportion choosing 'other country' has fallen slightly.

Table 23. Career intention: first preference of state for future practice

First preference state/territory for future practice	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Domestic Students										
VIC	528	28.4%	543	30.0%	602	31.9%	528	30.0%	548	36.9%
NSW	554	29.8%	514	28.4%	518	27.5%	541	30.8%	369	24.9%
QLD	395	21.2%	395	21.8%	381	20.2%	319	18.1%	218	14.7%
WA	123	6.6%	121	6.7%	153	8.1%	184	10.5%	178	12.0%
SA	102	5.5%	98	5.4%	77	4.1%	70	4.0%	79	5.3%
TAS	49	2.6%	54	3.0%	58	3.1%	41	2.3%	47	3.2%
ACT	47	2.5%	25	1.4%	41	2.2%	36	2.0%	25	1.7%
NT	22	1.2%	28	1.5%	23	1.2%	22	1.3%	11	0.7%
Country other than Australia	39	2.1%	31	1.7%	34	1.8%	17	1.0%	9	0.6%
Total	1859	100.0%	1809	100.0%	1887	100.0%	1758	100.0%	1484	100.0%
International Students										
Country other than Australia	151	37.6%	94	30.6%	79	25.1%	54	19.3%	62	25.0%
NSW	65	16.2%	68	22.1%	65	20.6%	72	25.7%	53	21.4%
VIC	61	15.2%	62	20.2%	75	23.8%	67	23.9%	50	20.2%
QLD	86	21.4%	56	18.2%	56	17.8%	46	16.4%	47	19.0%
WA	13	3.2%	3	1.0%	15	4.8%	19	6.8%	15	6.0%
TAS	8	2.0%	14	4.6%	7	2.2%	10	3.6%	9	3.6%
ACT	8	2.0%	6	2.0%	3	1.0%	6	2.1%	6	2.4%
SA	10	2.5%	3	1.0%	15	4.8%	6	2.1%	6	2.4%
NT		0.0%	1	0.3%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
Total	402	100.0%	307	100.0%	315	100.0%	280	100.0%	248	100.0%
All Students										
VIC	589	26.1%	605	28.6%	677	30.7%	595	29.2%	598	34.5%
NSW	619	27.4%	582	27.5%	583	26.5%	613	30.1%	422	24.4%
QLD	481	21.3%	451	21.3%	437	19.8%	365	17.9%	265	15.3%
WA	136	6.0%	124	5.9%	168	7.6%	203	10.0%	193	11.1%
SA	112	5.0%	101	4.8%	92	4.2%	76	3.7%	85	4.9%
Country other than Australia	190	8.4%	125	5.9%	113	5.1%	71	3.5%	71	4.1%
TAS	57	2.5%	68	3.2%	65	3.0%	51	2.5%	56	3.2%
ACT	55	2.4%	31	1.5%	44	2.0%	42	2.1%	31	1.8%
NT	22	1.0%	29	1.4%	23	1.0%	22	1.1%	11	0.6%
Total	2261	100.0%	2116	100.0%	2202	100.0%	2038	100.0%	1732	100.0%

Note: The varying response rates from students at medical schools in each state/territory will affect these figures

Preferred location for future practice

Of those wishing for a future career working in Australia, the percentage expressing a preference to work outside of capital cities is just under 35 per cent; slightly higher than the proportion of the population reported to be living outside of capital cities⁵, which was 33 per cent in the most recent census available (2016). There has been a small decrease since last year in the preference to work in major urban centres and a slightly higher interest for a future practice in smaller towns.

A slightly lower proportion of international students state a preference to work in a capital city, however they also state a greater preference to work in a major urban centre, with fewer wishing to work in smaller towns or small communities.

**Table 24. Career intention: preference of location for future practice
(for students preferring to practice in Australia)**

First preference region of future practice	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Domestic Students										
Capital city	1158	63.7	1140	64.2	1179	63.7	1132	65.0	969	65.7
Major urban centre	312	17.2	299	16.8	321	17.3	322	18.5	244	16.5
Regional city or large town	230	12.7	230	13.0	248	13.4	201	11.5	176	11.9
Smaller town	89	4.9	75	4.2	79	4.3	61	3.5	64	4.3
Small community	28	1.5	31	1.7	24	1.3	25	1.4	22	1.5
Total	1817	100.0	1775	100.0	1851	100.0	1741	100.0	1475	100.0
International Students										
Capital city	172	68.5	131	61.8	149	63.7	154	68.1	115	62.2
Major urban centre	40	15.9	48	22.6	53	22.6	42	18.6	44	23.8
Regional city or large town	30	12.0	22	10.4	23	9.8	25	11.1	21	11.4
Smaller town	5	2.0	8	3.8	6	2.6	4	1.8	4	2.2
Small community	4	1.6	3	1.4	3	1.3	1	0.4	1	0.5
Total	251	100.0	212	100.0	234	100.0	226	100.0	185	100.0
All Students										
Capital city	1330	64.3	1271	64.0	1328	63.7	1286	65.4	1084	65.3
Major urban centre	352	17.0	347	17.5	374	17.9	364	18.5	288	17.3
Regional city or large town	260	12.6	252	12.7	271	13.0	226	11.5	197	11.9
Smaller town	94	4.5	83	4.2	85	4.1	65	3.3	68	4.1
Small community	32	1.5	34	1.7	27	1.3	26	1.3	23	1.4
Total	2068	100.0	1987	100.0	2085	100.0	1967	100.0	1660	100.0

Note: Major urban centre – (>100,000 population size) e.g., Cairns, Geelong, Gold Coast–Tweed Heads, Gosford, Newcastle, Townsville, Wollongong, Wyong. Regional city or large town (25,000 - 99,999 population size) e.g., Alice Springs, Ballarat, Bunbury, Dubbo, Launceston, Mount Gambier. Smaller town (10,000 – 24,999 population size), Small community (<10,000 population size).

5. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017, <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookup/Media%20Release10>

Preferred location for future practice – by rural background

The 2020 data shows a decline in students from a rural background expressing a preference to work in a capital city, and an increase in their interest to work in a smaller town. This change is particularly marked in international students from a rural background.

The preferences shown by students from a non-rural background show little change, with some movement of preference by domestic students to wanting to work in capital cities rather than major urban centres.

**Table 25. Preferred location of future practice – by rural background
(percentage of those wishing to work in Australia)**

Preference for location of future practice	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Non-rural	Rural	Non-rural	Rural	Non-rural	Rural	Non-rural	Rural	Non-rural	Rural
Domestic Students										
Capital city	75.1	31.6	74.3	34.9	74.6	30.8	74.0	38.9	78.1	33.4
Major urban centre	15.8	21.1	15.3	21.3	16.0	21.5	17.1	22.7	13.9	23.4
Regional city/large town	6.5	30.2	8.0	27.3	7.1	32.5	6.6	25.8	6.3	26.6
Small community	2.0	13.1	1.7	11.6	2.2	10.6	1.9	8.1	0.9	13.2
Smaller town	0.7	4.0	0.7	4.8	0.2	4.6	0.4	4.5	0.8	3.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
International Students										
Capital city	72.8	38.7	65.4	33.3	65.7	38.9	69.7	46.7	65.9	20.0
Major urban centre	16.1	12.9	21.8	29.2	22.7	22.2	18.5	20.0	22.9	33.3
Regional city/large town	8.3	38.7	8.5	25.0	7.9	33.3	9.5	33.3	9.4	33.3
Small community	1.4	6.5	2.7	12.5	2.8	0.0	1.9	0.0	1.8	6.7
Smaller town	1.4	3.2	1.6	0.0	0.9	5.6	0.5	0.0	0.0	6.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
All Students										
Capital city	74.7	32.1	73.2	34.9	73.4	31.1	73.4	39.1	76.4	32.9
Major urban centre	15.8	20.6	16.1	21.7	16.9	21.5	17.3	22.6	15.1	23.8
Regional city or large town	6.7	30.7	8.1	27.1	7.2	32.6	7.0	26.1	6.7	26.8
Small community	1.9	12.7	1.8	11.7	2.2	10.2	1.9	7.8	1.1	12.9
Smaller town	0.8	4.0	0.8	4.6	0.3	4.6	0.4	4.3	0.6	3.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

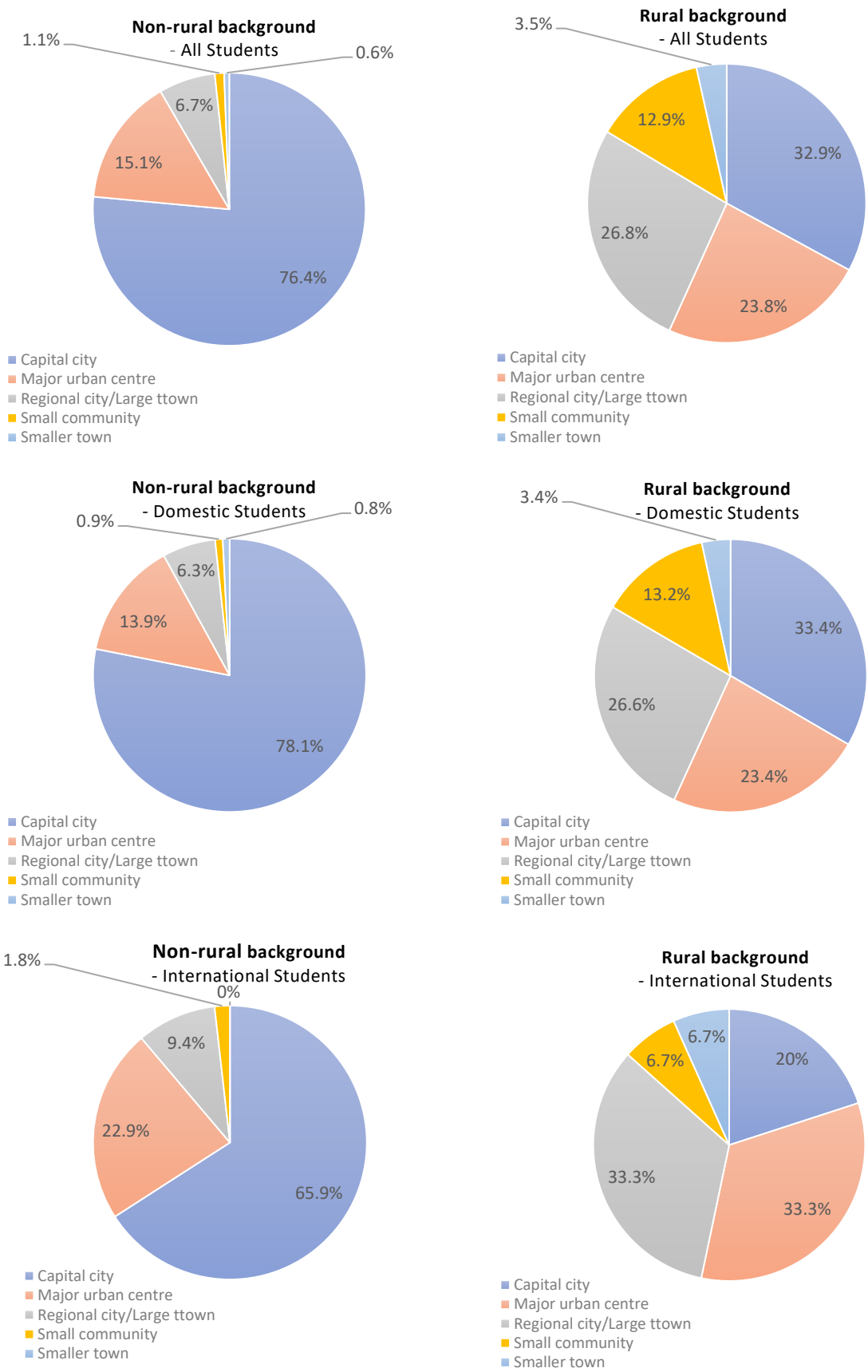


Figure 2. Preferred location for future practice: students from a rural vs non-rural background (wishing to practice in Australia)

Interests for future practice – teaching

A substantial majority of final year medical students were interested in teaching as part of their future medical career (Table 26), with this number remaining at 86 per cent. A very low proportion of respondents indicate they are not interested in teaching, whilst consistently 11 to 12 per cent are undecided.

Table 26. Interest in teaching as part of medical career

Interest in teaching	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Domestic										
Yes	1595	86.3	1559	86.2	1627	86.2	1525	86.7	1287	86.7
No	50	2.7	58	3.2	62	3.3	48	2.7	38	2.6
Undecided	203	11.0	192	10.6	198	10.5	185	10.5	159	10.7
Total	1848	100.0	1809	100.0	1887	100.0	1758	100.0	1484	100.0
International										
Yes	321	79.9	253	82.4	253	80.3	232	82.9	206	83.1
No	19	4.7	8	2.6	17	5.4	9	3.2	9	3.6
Undecided	62	15.4	46	15.0	45	14.3	39	13.9	33	13.3
Total	402	100.0	307	100.0	315	100.0	280	100.0	248	100.0
All Students										
Yes	1916	85.2	1812	85.6	1880	85.4	1757	86.2	1493	86.2
No	69	3.1	66	3.1	79	3.6	57	2.8	47	2.7
Undecided	265	11.8	238	11.2	243	11.0	224	11.0	192	11.1
Total	2250	100.0	2116	100.0	2202	100.0	2038	100.0	1732	100.0

Interests for future practice – research

Sixty-one per cent of respondents in 2020 were interested in research as part of their future medical career. These numbers have remained very stable over this time period.

Table 27. Interest in research as part of medical career

Interest in research	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Domestic Students										
Yes	1160	62.8	1133	62.6	1211	64.2	1112	63.3	915	61.7
No	278	15.0	244	13.5	285	15.1	282	16.0	259	17.5
Undecided	410	22.2	432	23.9	391	20.7	364	20.7	310	20.9
Total	1848	100.0	1809	100.0	1887	100.0	1758	100.0	1484	100.0
International Students										
Yes	240	59.7	191	62.2	206	65.4	169	60.4	149	60.1
No	61	15.2	46	15.0	55	17.5	50	17.9	39	15.7
Undecided	101	25.1	70	22.8	54	17.1	61	21.8	60	24.2
Total	402	100.0	307	100.0	315	100.0	280	100.0	248	100.0
All Students										
Yes	1400	62.2	1324	62.6	1417	64.4	1281	62.9	1064	61.4
No	339	15.1	290	13.7	340	15.4	332	16.3	298	17.2
Undecided	511	22.7	502	23.7	445	20.2	425	20.9	370	21.4
Total	2250	100.0	2116	100.0	2202	100.0	2038	100.0	1732	100.0

Interests for future practice – Indigenous health

Just under half of respondents to the 2020 survey were interested in Indigenous health being a part of their future career; with a marked difference in the responses from domestic and international students. This number continues to grow and is the highest percentage across the reported timeframe, with an increase of over 10 per cent since 2016.

Table 28. Interest in Indigenous health as part of medical career

Interest in Indigenous health	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Domestic Students										
Yes	762	41.2	813	44.9	859	45.5	880	50.1	779	52.5
No	465	25.2	379	21.0	401	21.3	324	18.4	219	14.8
Undecided	621	33.6	617	34.1	627	33.2	554	31.5	486	32.7
Total	1848	100.0	1809	100.0	1887	100.0	1758	100.0	1484	100.0
International Students										
Yes	112	27.9	104	33.9	104	33.0	71	25.4	74	29.8
No	118	29.4	85	27.7	99	31.4	92	32.9	76	30.6
Undecided	172	42.8	118	38.4	112	35.6	117	41.8	98	39.5
Total	402	100.0	307	100.0	315	100.0	280	100.0	248	100.0
All Students										
Yes	874	38.8	917	43.3	963	43.7	951	46.7	853	49.2
No	583	25.9	464	21.9	500	22.7	416	20.4	295	17.0
Undecided	793	35.2	735	34.7	739	33.6	671	32.9	584	33.7
Total	2250	100.0	2116	100.0	2202	100.0	2038	100.0	1732	100.0

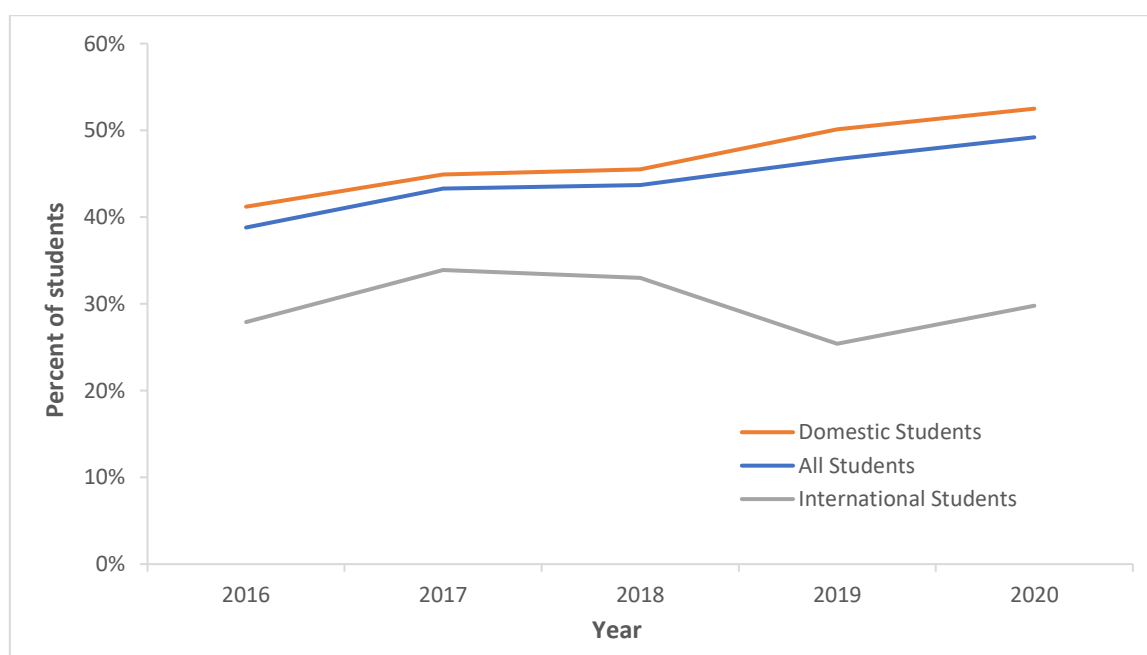


Figure 3. Interest in Indigenous health as part of medical career

Respondents from a rural background were more likely to express interest in Indigenous health than those from a non-rural background. This has been a consistent difference over the years.

Table 29. Interest in Indigenous health by rural background (percentages)

Interest in Indigenous health	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Non-rural	Rural	Non-rural	Rural	Non-rural	Rural	Non-rural	Rural	Non-rural	Rural
Yes	34.7	51.8	41.1	50.7	39.8	57.5	44.0	55.8	45.7	60.0
No	27.4	21.2	23.3	17.6	25.0	14.7	21.6	16.4	18.9	11.4
Undecided	37.9	27.0	35.6	31.7	35.2	27.8	34.4	27.8	35.4	28.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

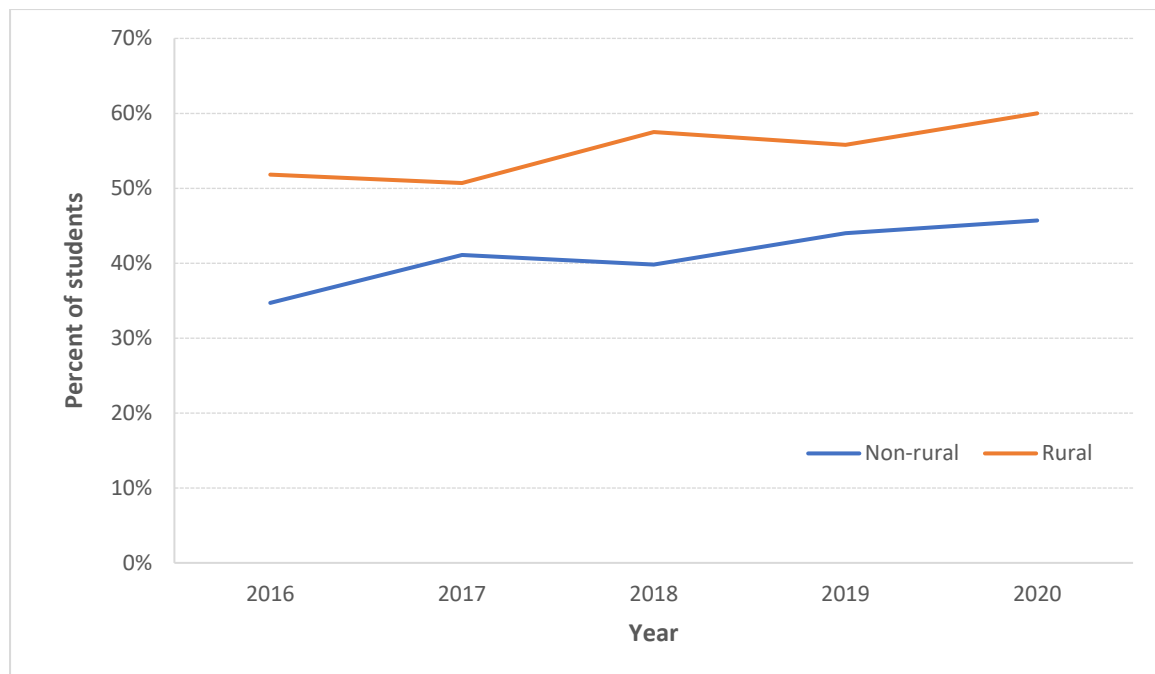


Figure 4. Interest in Indigenous health by rural background

Preferred specialty of future practice

“Adult Medicine/ Internal Medicine/ Physician” continues to be the most preferred specialty of future practice for final year students (Table 30), remaining at 20 per cent. General Practice remains second most preferred, increasing nearly a percentage point to 16.1, with Surgery still third on 13.1. These 3 disciplines have remained the most commonly preferred specialties of future practice since 2014; with Paediatrics and Child Health, Anaesthesia, and Emergency Medicine being consistently the other 3 to comprise the top 6. In the last 5 years, the same 12 specialties have comprised the top 12 preferences.

Whilst remaining 4th ranked, the levels of interest in Anaesthesia has dropped from 11.1 per cent to 9.6 per cent. The preference for Psychiatry has increased 1.5 percentage points, and both pathology and public health have moved up the ranking, to 13th and 14th places from 16th and 20th last year.

Within the international student responses, there was stronger interest in Adult / Internal Medicine/ Physician, however the top listed specialties closely mirrored the domestic and total proportions. It is worth noting that only international student respondents included medical administration as a preference.

Table 30. First preference of specialty for future practice – All students

First preference specialty of future practice	2016			2017			2018			2019			2020		
	<i>n</i>	%	Rank	<i>n</i>	%	Rank	<i>n</i>	%	Rank	<i>n</i>	%	Rank	<i>n</i>	%	Rank
Adult Medicine/ Internal Medicine/ Physician	428	19.3	1	385	18.5	1	415	19.1	1	386	19.9	1	326	19.9	1
General Practice	356	16.1	2	343	16.5	2	332	15.3	3	294	15.2	2	264	16.1	2
Surgery	342	15.4	3	312	15	3	335	15.5	2	268	13.9	3	215	13.1	3
Anaesthesia	221	10	4	226	10.9	4	198	9.1	5	214	11.1	4	158	9.6	4
Emergency Medicine	206	9.3	6	179	8.6	6	174	8	6	157	8.1	6	147	9	5
Paediatrics and Child Health	219	9.9	5	187	9	5	204	9.4	4	171	8.8	5	128	7.8	6
Obstetrics and Gynaecology	148	6.7	7	135	6.5	7	155	7.1	7	121	6.3	7	107	6.5	7
Psychiatry	74	3.3	8	83	4	8	96	4.4	8	94	4.9	8	105	6.4	8
Intensive Care Medicine	53	2.4	9	54	2.6	9	71	3.3	9	65	3.4	9	40	2.4	9
Radiology	38	1.7	11	42	2	11	36	1.7	11	29	1.5	12	36	2.2	10
Dermatology	24	1.1	12	25	1.2	12	21	1	12	38	2	10	34	2.1	11
Ophthalmology	41	1.8	10	43	2.1	10	49	2.3	10	30	1.6	11	26	1.6	12
Pathology	10	0.5	15	7	0.3	17	11	0.5	14	5	0.3	16	15	0.9	13
Public Health Medicine	7	0.3	17	9	0.4	16	7	0.3	19	4	0.2	20	11	0.7	14
Palliative Medicine	13	0.6	13	11	0.5	13	16	0.7	13	17	0.9	13	9	0.5	15
Sport and Exercise Medicine	10	0.5	16	11	0.5	14	11	0.5	15	16	0.8	14	5	0.3	16
Addiction Medicine	2	0.1	19	4	0.2	19	1	0	22	4	0.2	18	4	0.2	17
Medical Administration	2	0.1	20	3	0.1	20	3	0.1	21	5	0.3	15	3	0.2	18
Radiation Oncology	2	0.1	21	6	0.3	18	10	0.5	16	5	0.3	17	3	0.2	18
Rehabilitation Medicine	6	0.3	18	2	0.1	23	5	0.2	20	2	0.1	23	2	0.1	20
Sexual Health Medicine	2	0.1	22	3	0.1	21	9	0.4	17	4	0.2	21	2	0.1	20
Non-Specialist Hospital Practice	11	0.5	14	9	0.4	15	7	0.3	18	2	0.1	22	1	0.1	22
Occupational and Environmental Medicine	1	0	23	0	0	24	1	0	23	..	..	24	..	..	..
Pain Medicine	1	0	24	2	0.1	22	1	0	24	4	0.2	19	..	..	..
Total	2217	100	..	2081	100	..	2168	100	..	1935	100	..	1641	100	..

Table 31. First preference of specialty for future practice – Domestic students

First preference specialty of future practice	2016			2017			2018			2019			2020		
	<i>n</i>	%	Rank	<i>n</i>	%	Rank	<i>n</i>	%	Rank	<i>n</i>	%	Rank	<i>n</i>	%	Rank
Adult Medicine/ Internal Medicine/ Physician	342	18.8	1	328	18.4	1	346	18.6	1	319	19.1	1	260	18.5	1
General Practice	308	16.9	2	297	16.7	2	288	15.5	2	264	15.8	2	233	16.5	2
Surgery	279	15.3	3	258	14.5	3	277	14.9	3	233	14	3	186	13.2	3
Anaesthesia	184	10.1	5	205	11.5	4	176	9.5	5	193	11.6	4	144	10.2	4
Emergency Medicine	159	8.7	6	152	8.5	6	146	7.9	6	129	7.7	6	119	8.5	5
Paediatrics and Child Health	187	10.3	4	153	8.6	5	184	9.9	4	152	9.1	5	113	8	6
Obstetrics and Gynaecology	127	7	7	120	6.7	7	138	7.4	7	108	6.5	7	95	6.7	7
Psychiatry	59	3.2	8	72	4	8	81	4.4	8	82	4.9	8	94	6.7	8
Intensive Care Medicine	47	2.6	9	48	2.7	9	61	3.3	9	54	3.2	9	34	2.4	9
Radiology	27	1.5	11	37	2.1	10	29	1.6	11	22	1.3	12	31	2.2	10
Dermatology	19	1	12	22	1.2	12	18	1	12	32	1.9	10	30	2.1	11
Ophthalmology	36	2	10	33	1.9	11	42	2.3	10	28	1.7	11	23	1.6	12
Pathology	5	0.3	17	6	0.3	17	10	0.5	14	3	0.2	19	11	0.8	13
Public Health Medicine	7	0.4	15	9	0.5	13	7	0.4	17	3	0.2	20	10	0.7	14
Palliative Medicine	11	0.6	13	8	0.4	15	14	0.8	13	12	0.7	14	8	0.6	15
Sport and Exercise Medicine	8	0.4	14	9	0.5	14	10	0.5	15	14	0.8	13	5	0.4	16
Addiction Medicine	1	0.1	21	4	0.2	18	1	0.1	22	4	0.2	16	4	0.3	17
Radiation Oncology	1	0.1	23	4	0.2	19	7	0.4	18	4	0.2	17	3	0.2	18
Rehabilitation Medicine	3	0.2	18	1	0.1	23	5	0.3	20	1	0.1	23	2	0.1	19
Sexual Health Medicine	2	0.1	20	3	0.2	21	9	0.5	16	4	0.2	18	2	0.1	19
Non-Specialist Hospital Practice	5	0.3	16	6	0.3	16	5	0.3	19	2	0.1	21	1	0.1	21
Medical Administration	2	0.1	19	3	0.2	20	3	0.2	21	5	0.3	15	..	..	..
Occupational and Environmental Medicine	1	0.1	22	..	..	..	1	0.1	23	..	..	..	..	..	..
Pain Medicine	..	..	..	1	0.1	22	..	..	..	2	0.1	22	..	..	..
Total	1820	100	..	1779	100	..	1858	100	..	1670	100	..	1408	100	..

Table 32. First preference of specialty for future practice – International students

First preference specialty of future practice	2016			2017			2018			2019			2020		
	n	%	Rank	n	%	Rank	n	%	Rank	n	%	Rank	n	%	Rank
Adult Medicine/ Internal Medicine/ Physician	86	21.7	1	57	18.9	1	69	22.3	1	67	25.3	1	66	28.3	1
General Practice	48	12.1	3	46	15.2	3	44	14.2	3	30	11.3	3	31	13.3	2
Surgery	63	15.9	2	54	17.9	2	58	18.7	2	35	13.2	2	29	12.4	3
Emergency Medicine	47	11.8	4	27	8.9	5	28	9	4	28	10.6	4	28	12	4
Paediatrics and Child Health	32	8.1	6	34	11.3	4	20	6.5	6	19	7.2	6	15	6.4	5
Anaesthesia	37	9.3	5	21	7	6	22	7.1	5	21	7.9	5	14	6	6
Obstetrics and Gynaecology	21	5.3	7	15	5	7	17	5.5	7	13	4.9	7	12	5.2	7
Psychiatry	15	3.8	8	11	3.6	8	15	4.8	8	12	4.5	8	11	4.7	8
Intensive Care Medicine	6	1.5	10	6	2	10	10	3.2	9	11	4.2	9	6	2.6	9
Radiology	11	2.8	9	5	1.7	11	7	2.3	11	7	2.6	10	5	2.1	10
Dermatology	5	1.3	12	3	1	12	3	1	12	6	2.3	11	4	1.7	11
Pathology	5	1.3	14	1	0.3	18	1	0.3	17	2	0.8	15	4	1.7	12
Medical Administration	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	1.3	13
Ophthalmology	5	1.3	13	10	3.3	9	7	2.3	10	2	0.8	13	3	1.3	14
Palliative Medicine	2	0.5	16	3	1	14	2	0.6	15	5	1.9	12	1	0.4	15
Public Health Medicine	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	0.4	17	1	0.4	16
Addiction Medicine	1	0.3	18	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Non-Specialist Hospital Practice	6	1.5	11	3	1	13	2	0.6	14	..	..	..	..	..	..
Pain Medicine	1	0.3	19	1	0.3	17	1	0.3	16	2	0.8	14	..	..	..
Radiation Oncology	1	0.3	20	2	0.7	15	3	1	13	1	0.4	18	..	..	..
Rehabilitation Medicine	3	0.8	15	1	0.3	19	..	..	..	1	0.4	19	..	..	..
Sport and Exercise Medicine	2	0.5	17	2	0.7	16	1	0.3	18	2	0.8	16	..	..	..
Total	397	100	..	302	100	..	310	100	..	265	100	..	233	100	..

Factors influencing specialty choice for future practice

Table 33 shows the score and rank of various factors that respondents say influenced their interest in their most preferred specialty. The final year medical students were asked to rank each factor from a scale of 1 – “Not at all” influential, to 5 – “A great deal” of influence.

The consistently highest ranked influencing factor across the previous 5 years was that of “Atmosphere/ work culture” and continues to score very highly at 4.17.

The least influential factors were “financial costs of medical school education and/or debt” (1.73) which is ranked the lowest, as it was last year, with the other factors relating to finance (such as litigation/insurance costs, and costs of vocational training) also continue to rank very low.

Overall, there continues to be very little change in the ranking of these factors.

Table 33. Factors influencing choice of most preferred area of medicine

Factors influencing choice of most preferred area of medicine	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Atmosphere/work culture typical of the discipline	4.09	1	4.14	1	4.12	1	4.15	1	4.17	1
Alignment with personal values	4.04	3	4.09	2	4.11	2	4.13	2	4.17	2
Experience of specialty as a medical student	4.05	2	4.08	3	4.09	3	4.04	3	4.03	3
General medical school experiences	3.96	5	3.96	5	3.97	5	3.94	5	3.99	4
Intellectual content of the specialty	3.98	4	4.01	4	4.02	4	4.00	4	3.98	5
Influence of consultants/mentors	3.94	6	3.90	6	3.92	6	3.91	6	3.90	6
Self-appraisal of own skills/aptitudes	3.80	7	3.76	7	3.81	7	3.77	7	3.85	7
Opportunity for procedural work	3.69	8	3.71	8	3.70	8	3.70	8	3.58	8
Perceived opportunity to work flexible hours	3.43	10	3.45	10	3.49	9	3.51	9	3.55	9
Type of patients typical of the discipline	3.49	9	3.47	9	3.48	10	3.39	11	3.47	10
Perceived amount of working hours	3.27	13	3.34	11	3.37	11	3.42	10	3.47	11
Perceived job security	3.32	11	3.30	12	3.35	12	3.38	12	3.38	12
Perceived career advancement prospects	3.28	12	3.29	13	3.34	13	3.37	13	3.33	13
Self-appraisal of own domestic circumstances	3.18	15	3.19	15	3.23	15	3.24	15	3.32	14
Availability of a vocational training placement	3.19	14	3.20	14	3.25	14	3.27	14	3.25	15
Number of years required to complete training	2.87	18	2.87	18	2.94	18	2.97	18	3.04	16
Opportunity for research and /or teaching	3.02	16	3.00	16	3.04	16	2.97	17	2.99	17
Geographical location of most preferred specialty	2.96	17	2.98	17	2.97	17	3.00	16	2.93	18
Perceived financial prospects	2.49	19	2.52	19	2.59	19	2.60	19	2.54	19
Perceived prestige of the discipline	2.26	20	2.19	20	2.24	20	2.19	20	2.11	20
Risk of litigation and associated insurance costs	2.06	21	2.02	21	2.06	21	1.98	21	2.02	21
Influence of parents/relatives	1.91	22	1.85	22	1.92	22	1.85	22	1.82	22
Financial costs of vocational training	1.82	25	1.81	25	1.87	23	1.79	24	1.76	23
Influence of partner's occupation	1.85	24	1.82	23	1.86	25	1.82	23	1.75	24
Financial costs of medical school education and/or debt	1.85	23	1.81	24	1.86	24	1.78	25	1.73	25

Note: Scale: 1 = Not at all to 5 = A great deal. = (of influence)

SECTION 6: INTERNSHIP

Accepted internships by state

Final year students were asked to indicate in which state or territory they had accepted an internship position. It should be noted that the time of year in which schools administer the survey would have a bearing on whether students had been offered an internship, as does the response rates from students across the different states/territories; thus, the responses presented in the table below do not reflect the final number of internship positions accepted for the 2020 cohort nor are they necessarily a representative sample.

Table 34. Internship acceptance by state/territory

Intern acceptance by state/territory	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
VIC	518	25.0	552	28.4	618	28.8	507	25.3	556	32.7
NSW	569	27.5	520	26.7	587	27.4	625	31.2	412	24.2
QLD	506	24.4	461	23.7	466	21.7	404	20.2	294	17.3
WA	128	6.2	125	6.4	177	8.3	204	10.2	193	11.4
SA	101	4.9	105	5.4	96	4.5	83	4.1	85	5.0
TAS	65	3.1	71	3.7	75	3.5	65	3.2	66	3.9
ACT	79	3.8	30	1.5	65	3.0	57	2.8	35	2.1
NT	22	1.1	26	1.3	19	0.9	23	1.1	15	0.9
Country other than Australia	83	4.0	54	2.8	41	1.9	36	1.8	43	2.5
Total	2071	100.0	1944	100.0	2144	100.0	2004	100.0	1699	100.0



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