

New Zealand Medical Students' Association

Guide to Graduation

Edition 3 2025: Guide to Trainee Intern



nzmsa

Guide to Graduation: Guide to Trainee Intern

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Disclaimer:

The document is written as a guide for students only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this document, NZMSA cannot be held responsible for any errors and omissions. We recommend referring to relevant parties for further information and queries.

What is the TI grant?

The Medical Trainee Intern grant is a payment of \$26,756 (GST exempt) per student per 12 months internship. You can only receive the grant once. It is not a salary hence it is not taxed. The TI grant is designed to acknowledge the contribution that TIs make to our healthcare system. Its purpose is to be used for course fees and/or course costs that are “over and above normal course costs, eg: air fares and additional accommodation when on placement”. Find out more [here](#).

How do I get it?

The exact payment is arranged by each medical school through the Tertiary Education Commission. Typically you will be required to fill in a form(s) at the end of 5th year/over the summer holidays so make sure to check your emails over this time.

It's important to note that you **won't receive the TI grant until 3-4 weeks** into your TI year, but if you are receiving grant payments, **you will receive it while on elective**, so ensure you have enough saved to keep you going till then.

TI Grant payment schedule

All undergraduate students at the University of Auckland (UoA) will have their TI grant paid to them in **fortnightly instalments**. **All undergraduate students at the University of Otago** will have their TI grant paid to them in **monthly instalments**.

The exact amount will depend on if you are an Otago or Auckland student due to the slightly different lengths of the TI year. Unfortunately, the TI grant does count as income if it is paid to you in instalments because it means you are earning over the weekly income “cap” of \$270.10, therefore making you ineligible for student allowance: [How income affects Student Allowance - StudyLink](#). However, you are still eligible for weekly living costs (which will be added to your loan) if you need additional income. The benefit of this is that there are no restrictions on what you put your TI grant towards.

For **postgraduate students**, you can choose between receiving the TI grant as **a lump sum or in instalments**. [Medical Trainee Intern Grant | Tertiary Education Commission](#). If you receive it as a lump sum, it still counts as income but only the remaining amount of your TI grant after you have paid for expenses such as course fees and/or course costs “over and above normal course costs, eg: air fares and additional accommodation when on placement”. [Income - StudyLink](#). Therefore, postgraduate students can continue to receive student allowance as long as, after the above expenses, their weekly income remains under the Studylink weekly income cap.

EFTS extension form

If you have used up your seven Equivalent Full-Time Student (EFTS) years prior to starting Trainee Intern. You will need to submit [this form](#) to studylink so that they pay for your course fees. You can find how many EFTS you have used on My Studylink.

Scholarships

[MAS Here for Good Scholarship](#)

[Otago Scholarships](#)

[Auckland ACMA Elective scholarship](#)

[Medworld Institute Scholarships](#)

[Perpetual Guardian](#)

University of Auckland Elective Scholarships

[W W Phillipps Award in Medicine](#)

[New Zealand Medical Women's Association Elective Award](#)

[Dr Newton Wickham CBE Elective Award in Pacific Island Health](#)

[Henry and Marjorie Isaacs Scholarship](#)

Investing 101: Your shortcut to getting ahead!

The following is a sponsored segment by MAS and investment is optional.

So, you want to start investing but don't know where to begin? Don't worry, investing isn't just for finance pros or people with loads of cash. Thanks to online platforms and tools, anyone (yes, even you!) can start growing their money, whether it's to help save for your elective or buy your first home. The team at MAS, the New Zealand-owned insurance and investment mutual, has provided some useful guidance to help you get started.

Let's break it down, step by step:

1. You might already be an investor

If you have a KiwiSaver account or another retirement fund, you're already investing, surprise! KiwiSaver isn't just a savings account. Many schemes, like the MAS KiwiSaver Scheme, actively invest your money. This means there's a real person, an investment manager, who is making decisions about which investments they're buying or selling for you. Make sure your fund matches your goals and comfort with risk. Try the KiwiSaver Calculator to see how your money could grow.

2. Start small, start now

You don't need a fortune to get started. Platforms like Sharesies or Hatch let you invest small amounts. MAS Investment Funds lets you start with as little as \$500, and a MAS Adviser can help you get going.

3. Make your money match your values

Want your investments to reflect what matters to you? The MAS KiwiSaver Scheme restricts investment in companies with principal business activities in fossil fuels, weapons and tobacco. This is complemented by integrating environmental, social and governance considerations into investment decisions. Learn more about our responsible investing.

4. Compound returns = Magic!

Compound returns mean you earn returns on your returns, like a snowball getting bigger as it rolls. Therefore, the earlier you start adding to your KiwiSaver savings, the more powerful your compounding returns will become. This could make a huge difference to your balance when it comes time to buy your first house or retire.

5. Stay steady through market changes

Investing isn't always smooth sailing. Markets rise and fall, so it's important to know your comfort with risk. Are you adventurous or more cautious? Don't panic if things dip, selling at a low locks in losses. Stay cool and think long-term. For tips on weathering market ups and downs, check out our article about share market volatility. You can also use the MAS Fund Finder to help you find a fund that matches your attitude to investment risk.

6. Spread your investments wisely

It can be a good idea to spread your bets by diversifying your investments. Some investments may not produce the returns you desire, while others may succeed beyond your expectations. Diversification helps you balance out the bad with the good to help protect and grow your capital.

7. Ask for help

Everyone's situation is different. Chat with a pro, like a MAS Adviser. You can contact MAS online or call us on 0800 800 627.

For more articles to help you learn about investing and growing your money, head to the MAS Content Hub.

Medical Funds Management Limited is the issuer and manager of the MAS KiwiSaver Scheme, the MAS Retirement Savings Scheme and MAS Investment Funds. The Product Disclosure Statement for each Scheme is available at mas.co.nz.

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Protect what matters today,
plan for what matters
tomorrow.



**Book a chat with
a MAS Adviser at
mas.co.nz/students**

Medical Funds Management Limited is the issuer of
MAS Investment Funds and the MAS KiwiSaver Scheme.
A copy of the PDS for each Scheme is available at mas.co.nz.

Secure your
belongings and
your future with us.

**Chat with us today to find the right
insurance and investments options for you.**

Note: you may have to do some administrative work for the university under whom you are doing your elective on top of elective administrative work for your home university. Factor in some extra time for this prior to your elective.

‘Overseas study’ Studylink form

If you are heading overseas for your elective and are receiving a student allowance and/or living costs, you must complete the ‘Overseas Study’ form to ensure your payments continue while you are overseas.

University of Auckland - you may be sent this form as part of your elective information. **We recommend getting on top of this early as your university will need to sign it off as well.**

See [this link](#) for information on this - see the subsection “Going Overseas as Part of your Course” > “Studying While Overseas”.

ACE references and overseas electives

If you’re completing an elective overseas during the period where you must collect ACE references, it’s important to note if the country’s medical system is recognised by the Medical Council of New Zealand so you can gain a reference from your elective ([Comparable health system criteria | Medical Council](#)). If not, you may still be able to gain a reference from your elective if your supervisor holds a current practising certificate and holds a vocational scope of practice with either the New Zealand Medical Council, Australian Medical Council, General Medical Council (GMC) or Irish Medical Councils. If none of these are relevant, then you **will not** be able to acquire an eligible reference on elective. This is most significant for **those completing an elective prior to July - when ACE applications are usually due.**

If you do not have three Aotearoa/New Zealand runs/placements prior to July, consider prioritising your elective to be in a country with a comparable health system. Alternatively, you can request a reference from the 2nd half of your 5th year placements. Although this is not ACE's preference for a reference, it will not negatively impact on your application i.e cause lower ACE scoring. Further information about ACE can be found in the next chapter of [this Guide](#).

Insurance

You will need two types of insurance for your overseas elective; medical indemnity and travel insurance.

1. Medical indemnity insurance

This is to cover you while you are on placement, this is the same as when you are on placement in New Zealand. Many indemnity insurance companies offer free insurance to medical students. You can email them to request an indemnity insurance certificate and check if your elective country is covered by them while you are away. Some places e.g. Australia require you to obtain local indemnity insurance. This is free and you can sign up via [Students | MIPS Indemnity Insurance](#)

[NZMII](#)

[MPS](#)

[Medicus](#)

2. Travel insurance

While not compulsory, we highly recommend this to cover your personal items, medical treatment and travel changes. This needs to be purchased prior to leaving NZ. [Here is an independent comparison of different travel insurance companies in New Zealand](#).

University of Auckland - offers travel insurance through their 360 International programme. Details are provided with your elective information emails. See [this link](#) for more details.

University of Otago - Offers discounted Health and Travel insurance through Student Safe. Check your Moodle or contact the university for more details on this.

Additional tips and tricks:

University tips

1. When booking flights back to Aotearoa/New Zealand, be aware of time differences, and when your next run starts. You may have to leave your elective slightly early to ensure you're back to attend the first day of your next run.
2. **University of Auckland** - you can move your vacations to before or after your elective, but you should inform the university of this as it will impact your elective report and CSR deadlines.
3. When planning your elective, reach out to as many places as you are interested in. This will help ensure you have a back up option in case one of your plans fall through

Immigration tips

1. Book flights as early as possible. Many people get caught out by the increase in prices, especially if you're travelling far away!
2. Ensure that, should you need a visa, this is organised well in advance of your elective.
3. Check for any changing travel requirements for countries that don't require a visa. For example, the UK has recently implemented an ETA that must be completed for New Zealanders going to the UK.

Health and wellbeing tips

1. See your GP before you travel for any vaccines, medication refills or medical notes you may need. They may also recommend other things such as malaria prophylaxis or other treatment for common travellers' illnesses.
2. Students on elective in the same country often link up, so try to find out who may be going to the same place as you! This can be a great comfort when you're far from home.

Introducing the NZMSA Elective Database

Planning your elective can be a big job, even if you don't count the admin mahi that comes with it. To help you plan your elective, NZMSA has put together the NZMSA Elective Database. This is a collection of experiences of people who have already completed their elective doing a number of things around the world. It includes some information about what they did, how they organised and any advice they have to offer.

Use it to connect to elective programmes around the world or just as a bit of inspiration!

Access the NZMSA Elective Database [here](#).

Professional support to become the best doctor you can be

Medical Protection is about more than just providing indemnity.

Our advisers are experienced medical doctors in New Zealand who understand what it is like to practice medicine in the real world. They are available 24 hours a day to help and advise you for any emergency matters.

MPS is 100% member owned without private shareholders making a profit from your subscriptions.



Discretionary cover - allowing us flexibility to assist you in even the most unusual circumstances.

Occurrence based cover - meaning you are indemnified for not only your time in membership, but even after you leave. There is no tail cover required and we provide free Nose Cover for anyone wanting to join, or rejoin MPS.

Electives - MPS provides complimentary cover for students doing electives, anywhere in the world.

Group Schemes - To enable continuity of cover, please ensure that MPS is the preferred indemnity supplier when you start work in the hospital. If not, do not tick the box, but instead please advise your HR Department that you wish to stay with MPS.

Counselling - MPS takes your wellbeing seriously and provides up to six complimentary sessions.

The MPS Foundation - Research funding initiative for MPS members.

0800 2255 677 (CALL MPS)
advice@medicalprotection.org

medicalprotection.org/nz

Free
membership
for PGY1s

medicalprotection.org/nz
Always there for you

Medical
Protection



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Indemnity Insurance for Trainee Interns

As a Trainee Intern, you're stepping into medicine with new responsibilities. NZMII offers RMO level cover to Trainee Interns to make sure you're supported every step of the way. If a complaint is made, your legal team will work on your behalf, not your employers or other medical professionals.

What am I covered for?

- Medical malpractice proceedings, meeting all costs and liabilities up to \$2 million.
- Penalties and costs awarded and legal costs and expenses incurred in the course of an investigation brought against you.
- Legal advice about patient complaints, police statements, and coroner or ACC reports.
- Actions brought against you when you are no longer a TI provided these are related to your TI medical duties or functions.

Important note: Reference should be made to the policy wording held by the NZMII. As with any insurance cover, the above statements are subject to the terms, conditions and exclusions of the relevant policy.

What does it cost?

Trainee Interns are entitled to **FREE** NZMII Indemnity Insurance.

Apply now



nzmii.co.nz

ACE application information will be covered in depth in the first issue of Guide to Graduation, releasing in March 2026. However, reading through this and getting started early is a good idea as it will take some of the pressure off closer to the application due date.

The Crucial Info

- ACE is the process by which graduating medical students are placed into jobs for PGY1 across the country.
- The ACE program uses 3 categories to prioritise applicants. Graduates from NZ medical schools who are NZ or Australian citizens are category 1. NZ Graduates without NZ citizenship or permanent residency are considered category 3.
- Graduates need to complete their ACE application online. You will first need to create a profile on the ACE website. You can create a profile and log in here <https://rmo.acenz.net.nz/Profile/Login>
- You can apply to work at a minimum of 6 different hospitals/districts
- You need 3 references for your ACE application, and all 3 references (preferably all from your TI care placements) must be complete for your application to be accepted. If you have your elective in quarters 1 & 2 next year, you can opt to use a reference from your fifth year, but you will need to get in contact with ACE to request this. Use the algorithm on [pages 3-4](#) to determine who you can ask to be your reference.
- Ensure your CV is up to date and write a personalised cover letter for each hospital to improve how the hospitals you will apply to

- ACE develops an ACE score based on aspects of your application including your
 1. Academic transcript
 2. Year 4 or 5 distinctions of commendations
 3. Publications and presentations
 4. Other degrees
 5. Prizes, awards or scholarships
 6. References

This score does get passed onto the hospitals to apply to, but each hospital uses this score differently when assessing your application. We recommend getting in touch with the hospitals your applying to in order to find out what they value in their applicants.

Read the specific criteria for the hospital that you want to apply for. Each hospital uses a different combination of criteria to rank applicants. More details [here](#)

To find out more information about the ACE process head to [ACE Resources](#)

What do I actually need to do (Step-by-step)?

1. Set up an ACE profile via [ACE RMO Website](#). This will open around March 2025
2. Request 3 clinical supervisors to be an ACE reference. You can then send them a reference request via your ACE portal for them to complete.
3. It's best to let your supervisor know early on in the run that you would like a reference from them. This means they won't be surprised at the end of the run when you bring it up. Don't worry if you have to send a few follow up emails in order to get them to complete your reference. You can reassure them that it won't take more than 5-10 minutes to complete.
4. Update your CV - don't underestimate the power of a well written CV.

5. Please ensure that your contact details (email address & phone number) are correct as this will be your means of communication throughout your ACE application process.
6. You can access CV templates from the [ACE website](#) as well as Auckland [University MyCDES](#) or [Job search & making applications, Career Development Centre, University of Otago, New Zealand](#)
7. Write targeted cover letters - tailor your cover letter to each hospital you're applying to. To find out more about the hospitals you can apply to, click [this link](#).
8. Compile all the required key documents for your application
 - CV
 - Cover letter(s)
 - Official Academic Transcript - make sure you have authorised your university to release this on your behalf. They should send you an email at the end of 5th year.
 - Citizenship/ Residency documents (certified copies-signed by a Justice of the Peace or similar.)
 - Passport/ Birth certificate (certified copies-signed by a Justice of the Peace or similar. There is no expiry date on previously signed documents)
9. Submit application - **please note there is NO submit button. As long as your ACE application is complete by this date and time it will automatically be eligible for the next stage of the process. They will send you a confirmation email at the end of the day.**

Unsure of Where to Apply to?

Not sure where you want to apply to work in PGY1? Each hospital has something different to offer as well as a unique experience in the part of the country you will be working in. ACE will be hosting the ACE RMO roadshow through a series of webinars during May next year. These are a great way to hear what each hospital has to offer, as well as ask them any questions. The webinars in previous years are available on [ACE's youtube channel](#) for you to watch. However, be aware that content in the webinar may be different to what will be presented in 2026, and we recommend that you watch those before finalising your employer preferences.

Already know where you'd like to apply to? Reach out to the hospital's RMO unit while putting together your ACE application to put yourself on your radar and perhaps get a tour of the hospital. You can find the contact details for each hospital's RMO unit [here](#).

PS: We highly recommend you exploring the ACE website early on in the year, because it's full of useful information regarding each hospital, and the application process.

Note some hospitals require an INTERVIEW to apply at, and so its vital that you recognise these early as some take place prior to ACE application due date.

RNZCGPs



**The Royal New Zealand
College of General Practitioners**
Te Whare Tohu Rata o Aotearoa



Division of Rural Hospital Medicine
NEW ZEALAND

Te Whare Taiwhenua

General Practice and Rural Hospital Medicine: Specialists at the heart of our Communities

If you're looking for a medical career that's as rewarding as it is diverse and you can make a real difference every day, consider specialising as a GP or rural hospital doctor.

General practice

As a GP you'll often be the first contact point for medical advice, support and care within your community. You'll build lasting relationships with your patients and through vital continuity of care you'll see the difference you make to their health and wellbeing over time.

No two days are the same in general practice. One day you might be helping a new mum, supporting a patient with a chronic condition or diagnosing something unexpected. The next, you could be working alongside your multi-disciplinary team, leading community initiatives or mentoring students just like yourself.

There is scope to gain and use practical skills in minor surgery and women's health as well as a broad range of special interests to enhance your generalist career.

Specialising as a GP means:

- **You'll be part of your patients' lives:** Getting to know your patients, their families and communities – not just their symptoms.
- **You'll have variety every day:** General practice allows you to use your full scope of knowledge and skills and keeps you learning.
- **You'll have impact:** The work you do in primary care helps keep people well, not just treat them when they're sick.

Learn more about a career in general practice: [Specialise as a general practitioner | RNZCGP](#)



Dr Melissa Austen, GP

Rural Hospital Medicine

If you thrive in challenge and love variety, rural hospital medicine could be your perfect fit. A rural hospital is not a general practice. It delivers responsive secondary care to the rural community it serves.

You'll always be in demand and have your pick of where to live and work - next to the golden beaches in Northland or the maunga of Central Otago. The flexibility of your work means you can spend more time exploring the outdoors right outside your door.

You'll be a skilled all-rounder: Able to think on your feet, manage a broad range of conditions and use your full skillset and ready to help people in both primary and secondary care.

You'll be an important part of your community: Rural medicine connects you to people who may live off the beaten track and be geographically isolated, whose access to health care can be difficult.

You'll lead with purpose: You'll work with other medical specialities and community services to help people manage their health.

Discover the mahi of rural hospital doctors: [Specialise in rural hospital medicine | RNZCGP](#)



Dr Liam Watson, rural hospital doctor

Can't decide? Do both!

Our Dual Fellowship pathway lets you train in both general practice and rural hospital medicine. You'll gain a wide set of complementary skills and the freedom to work across urban and rural settings – or both. Learn more about Dual Fellowship:

[Dual Fellowship | RNZCGP](#)

Supporting you

When you join our College, you'll belong to a regional Faculty connecting you with your local peers. You'll attend social events to build long-lasting friendships and learning opportunities to keep your skills sharp and up to date.

Our Chapters are made up of groups with like-minded interests or associations that bring them together for a common cause. Read more about the College Faculties and Chapters: [Faculties and chapters | RNZCGP](#)

If you identify as Māori or have Māori whakapapa, Te Akoranga a Māui, the College's Māori representative group provide pastoral care for registrars, support, whanaungatanga and guidance on clinical and cultural matters.

Read more about Te Akoranga a Māui: [Te Akoranga a Māui | RNZCGP](#)

Shape the future of health in Aotearoa

A career as a GP or rural hospital doctor isn't just a job. It's a calling to serve, connect and make health care accessible for every New Zealander, no matter who or where they are.

Visit rnzcgp.org.nz to learn more and start your journey.



Community, Challenge and Big Skies: Rural Health is Calling

by Hauora Taiwhenua

Among the career paths available to healthcare graduates, there's a road less travelled yet full of opportunity, challenge, community and purpose in the most beautiful regions of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Rural health is a life-long adventure where no two hours are the same. It's also a sector in huge need of healthcare professionals who want to make a difference. Of 195 rural practices, more than half have opportunities for general practitioners.

Deep Connections and the Thrill of Genuine Medicine

Among the bush and beaches of the Coromandel, Dr Fiona Bolden has been a rural GP since 1996. She says it's a challenging and profoundly satisfying career, with a deep connection to the community. "Rural communities are genuine communities, and rural medicine is genuine medicine. The role of a rural GP offers an array of clinical scenarios, encompassing the entire spectrum of medical practice. Anticipating what will come next is a constant thrill."

Plus, as Dr Bolden points out, the connection to the natural environment is genuine too. “The wilderness is your playground, just outside your doorstep. Raising children with a strong bond to the outdoors is something really special.”

Communities in Need

Francis Bradley, a first-year doctor at Whangārei Hospital, chose rural health after spending a day at work with his father, a rural GP: “I saw the mutual love and respect between my father and the people he cared for. What a privilege to be so intimately connected to the community.’



Dr Fiona Bolden, rural GP & Hauora Taiwhenua Chair

Raised in Kaitiāia, Francis saw the need in rural areas. “Contributing in a place of need is really important for me and rural Māori communities are in desperate need.”

To anyone considering a career in rural health, Francis says: “If you love people, community, learning and expanding your clinical skills, and you want to live a balanced life with friends, whānau, beach, and beautiful mother Earth or Tangaroa, you definitely won’t regret it!



From Birth to Palliative

With more than two decades in healthcare, Gemma Hutton is a nurse practitioner at Twizel Medical Centre and loves working in remote rural communities.

“I love the connection and relationships you build with whānau from birth to palliative. The autonomy of the work. How I have been able to use all of my skills and grow them. I have never stopped growing and learning in this role.”

Autonomy, Variety and Being Valued

Estelle Arundell, a sixth-year Otago University medical student, grew up in South Canterbury. She is aiming for qualifications in rural hospital medicine and rural general practice. The daughter of two rural GPs, Estelle is currently on placement in her hometown of Fairlie. “I have known these people all my life and it has been a meaningful experience to be part of their care. The Fairlie medical centre offers a lot of services and I have been able to develop a wide number of skills.”

To anyone considering a future in rural health, Estelle says: “You feel very valued in a rural community. You see great variety and learn so much from your patients. The scope of practice is wider and you have more autonomy. The sense of community more than makes up for not living in an urban centre. If you enjoy continuity of care, centred on a holistic model, as well as a challenge, then rural health is for you.



**Hauora
Taiwhenua**
Rural Health
Network

Thinking Ahead to Employment

In the second half of your Trainee Intern year, you'll have to start thinking about organising some of the admin things ahead of employment. Now's a good time to start to get familiar with these ahead of making these decisions next year.

Unions

What is a union?

A union is a professional collective body which aims to represent the rights and interests of its members e.g RMOs by advocating for their needs at a high level. They can also help employees on a personal level by providing advice and information about work-related issues.

How much does it cost to join a union?

- **STONZ**

Free for Trainee Interns but costs \$241.50 for a PGY1 House Officer, and \$483 for PGY2 onwards. You can pay this directly on their website or you can authorise it to be deducted from your pay. You can also make monthly payments of \$40.25 or \$20.13.

- **RDA**

Free for Trainee Interns but costs \$480 per year or \$40 per month. You can pay this directly via bank transfer or credit card (only if paying annually). You can also have the cost deducted from payroll however RDA don't recommend this option because they have reported that payroll can be quite slow to begin payments which can cause issues when moving around for training.

MCNZ

For New Zealand medical graduates, the processes of applying for registration and for a practising certificate are combined (although separate fees are payable for each). Firstly, you must register as a medical professional with the Medical Council and secondly apply for a practising certificate. Details will be provided to you in September 2024.

The main thing to note is that you need to **pay both of these fees in T1 year**. You can apply to have this fully refunded through your paycheck but you will have to have this money upfront before you start!

There are two separate fees:

- Registration application (when you make the application with the Council)
\$367.39 (GST inclusive)
- Practising certificate (once your application is approved)

The practising certificate fee can range from **\$464 to \$1,160**. This is dependent on which cycle and date you fall under, the cycle you fall into depends on your birth date. There are four practising certificate cycles dates for each year (February, May, August, and November).

For a full list of up to date fees, please refer to the [MCNZ website](#).

WHY JOIN NZRDA?

NZRDA is the union which proudly represents the interests of all resident medical officers, including:

- Trainee Interns
- Registrars
- Clinical Students
- Dental Health Surgeons
- House Officers
- GPEP Trainees

Since 1985, NZRDA has protected and advanced the interests of RMOs through collective bargaining, fearless advocacy, and strategic engagement at all levels of the health system. Joining NZRDA connects you to a proud history of improving RMO working conditions and a clear strategy to improve the future of medicine.



WHY JOIN THE RDA AS A TI?

While you're not yet employed as an RMO, you're fast approaching graduation and starting work as a doctor. Joining the RDA as a TI ensures you're informed and supported as you make this transition. It's important to understand your collective agreement, the issues facing RMOs, and the work being done to improve your future working conditions. As a TI member, you'll have access to:

1. **Union information and updates** — about collective agreement processes and employment matters affecting all RMOs. You'll receive both TI-specific and RMO newsletters, giving you an idea of the work we do, any changes happening, and the issues affecting RMOs.
2. **Confidential advice and support** — Access professional guidance on work-related matters, including with Universities and Professional Practice Committees.
3. **Representation** — Your interests are represented as a key part of the RMO workforce.
4. **Free indemnity insurance** — through NZMII.
5. **Grants and scholarships** — through the NZRDA Education Trust.
6. **Resources, training and guidance** — to help you prepare you for starting work as a house officer in your PGY1 year.
7. **Pre-employment advice** — on the RDA collective agreement prior to starting work as a PGY1, including help with leave, relocation expenses, rosters and more.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

We believe every doctor can play a part in leaving their workplace better than they found it, and as a TI, you can join with the RDA in achieving this goal. The RDA provides a strong and highly respected voice across the healthcare system, with recent advocacy on a variety of issues including:

- The development of a **national RMO unit (the RDSS)** that oversees each of the regional units and ensures terms and conditions are consistently complied with across the country;
- Developing a **national Federation of Medical Training** to create more efficient and better-supported vocational training pathways in New Zealand;
- Securing **guaranteed employment as an SMO** for RMOs upon completion of their training.

**AS A TRAINEE INTERN,
YOUR MEMBERSHIP WITH
THE NZRDA IS FREE.**



CONTACT US

Phone Number
(09) 526 0280

Email
ask@nzrda.org.nz



**GROW
YOUR
FUTURE
WITH US**

Join us now at STONZ.CO.NZ

HE WĀ WHAKANUI ITS A TIME OF CELEBRATION

Heading into your final year of med school is a huge milestone on your journey to becoming a Doctor so congratulations on getting to this point! As a Trainee Intern, it's an exciting time to hone your clinical skills before starting work in the Hospitals and it's also an important time to get all your 'life admin' ticked off before starting as a PGY1.

This is an exciting time for you but can also sometimes feel overwhelming and stressful; there are a lot of things to think about in your final year and union membership is just one. Our advice is to be as organised as possible before starting as a House Officer, so that when you start, you can focus on being a doctor and not all that annoying paperwork. To help, our team has developed a checklist of all the things you need to consider in your final year. **[STONZ website](#)** also has heaps of helpful info, FAQs, Quick Links and Resources specifically for TIs to make your life a bit easier.

We understand that moving from Trainee Intern to House Officer can be a huge change, so being part of a network that will support you and your career not only now, but well into the future is invaluable. Unions are key for pushing continued improvements to things like remuneration, training and working conditions. STONZ provides advocacy for any doctor who wants to manage their career and training pathway effectively. We don't believe in a one size fits all approach, so if you're considering a specialist career, you need a union that advocates with specialties in mind.

Membership is free for TIs, and if you're a union member as a TI, we can help you navigate the application process, and provide support and advocacy if required around the employment process and any work-related concerns. If you're looking for a union that is truly run by RMOs for RMOs, consider joining the STONZ team. We would be absolutely privileged to be part of your journey and to be part of the network that will support you not just at the start, but also well into the future, wherever this takes you.

You don't have to be a member to get in touch, so make sure you contact us or reach out to one of our friendly delegates if you have any questions. You can check out some of our recent **advocacy** and **media** efforts on our **website**.

We wish you all the very best for a great TI year, and look forward to seeing you around the hospitals!

Ngā mihi nui,

Jordan Tewhaiti-Smith, Emma Littlehales, Alastair Hercus, Briana Northey, Darren Ritchie, Carmella Catlow, Chantelle Petterson & Dale Andrew.

If you can't find the answer you're looking for, don't hesitate to contact us support@stonz.co.nz or give us a call on 03 745 9258.



**Check out our TI
Checklist here!**



Doing the mahi with
you, and for you

stonz.co.nz



As a TI you are responsible for up to approx $\frac{1}{3}$ of the workload of your House Officer, although this can vary by run and location. Remember, you are a student first and foremost. You still need all decisions to be made by a doctor and you are also allowed to prioritise your study when needed. This can feel overwhelming at times, but here are some helpful tips.

Checklist for TI Year experience

- Get a feel for discharge summaries of medical and surgical specialties
Top tip: Ask your HOs if they have a template they use
- Join a House Officer for a long day on Gen Med and Gen Surg
Top tip: House officers have different after hours roles so it's good to join them on a House Officer long day to get a feel for what these jobs are.
- Ask to hold the phone for the HO! This can be scary but very worthwhile.
- Bloods, bloods, bloods
- Take all the opportunities you can this year
Top tip: See if you can try using USS machine for bloods and IVL
- Practice prescribing
Top tip: Know where to look for local prescribing guidelines and ask what common PRN medications are prescribed and how to prescribe them
- Procedural skills
- Try and attempt under supervision (or watch) procedures such as urinary catheters, NG tubes, casting, local anaesthetics, simple suturing, basic airway management, chest drains etc.
Top tip: Take all the opportunities to be hands on and get involved :)

Tips from past T1s

Thomas, Hawkes Bay: “Hand on heart, T1 is the best year of medical school as it puts you in a unique position where you’re still a student but can also take on a higher level of responsibility within your team. It’s a stepping stone in your medical career that not many other medical schools around the world offer. My biggest advice for soon to be T1s is to immerse yourself fully in your team and to take on every opportunity. It is the last time you can practise your procedural and/or house officer administrative skills (such as discharge summaries and ordering tests) without the stress of actually needing to know how to do them. That being said, don’t forget to enjoy the year, get stuck into old/new hobbies, spend time with people you value, and make the most of the time you have outside of the hospital!”

Max, Christchurch Hospital: T1 is an incredible year, a time to enjoy the freedom, fewer assignments, and the privilege of being a student one last time, but there are a few things that can make that transition smoother. Finances can be challenging, as you won’t receive your T1 grant or student loan payments until a few weeks into T1, leaving up to a month without any income. Save up enough to cover your medical registration in September next year (around \$1000), and the period between T1 and your house officer year. Planning a rough budget for your grant will make a big difference. Remember to be a student, not a scribe; T1 may be your last chance to scrub in, practise paediatrics, or refine procedural skills, and the techniques you learn now may stay with you for life. Don’t avoid the skills you find difficult, keep practising, and they’ll soon become enjoyable and rewarding. Expect to have less free time too; your schedule will resemble that of a full-time job, so plan ahead and consider dropping part-time work. Despite the challenges, T1 is a brilliant, fulfilling year, and if it doesn’t feel perfect all the time, that’s completely normal. Everyone says PGY1 is even better and you’re nearly there.

Te Rato, Gisborne Hospital: “T1 is an excellent year for working on clinical reasoning. I would challenge you to think about what is going on for your patients, come up with a differential and/or planned investigations and management, and suggest it to your team. Even if it's not perfect, there won't be many times where you are fully supported with minimal responsibilities, so take a chance and make some mistakes - better now than when you are a doctor.”

Ashley, Middlemore Hospital: “People really mean it when they say that T1 is the best year of medical school. You've essentially done all the attachments in previous years, but this time round you get a chance to cement that learning, practice those skills and start to learn the job too. Don't forget that you're also there as a student primarily. Learn how to do discharge summaries, but don't spend all your time doing them, and if you get sent home early, take it. This may be the last time you can do this. Enjoy your last year of medical and make the most of your time outside placement, it's a good chance to ensure you have life outside of medicine and prevent burnout when you start working”

Georgia, North Shore Hospital: “There are two things that stand out for me that I would have wanted to know going into T1 year. First would be to learn the house officer jobs. It not only makes me feel less anxious about working next year, but really makes me feel like a part of the team which helps me enjoy the job. Second would be to make the most of your elective if you can. Either a specialty that you love or an experience that you won't forget! T1 year can be tough, i.e. Long case, the best thing I did was pick an elective that reminded me why I love medicine and made me excited about my future.”

Liv, New Plymouth Hospital: “T1 is a great year to put into practice everything you've learnt over the last 4 years. Take all the opportunities to get hands-on experience and contribute to your team. Don't forget that first and foremost you are a student, so if you need time to complete assignments or study it's okay to ask for that time.”

Maia, Hawkes Bay Hospital: “T1 is about refining your knowledge and skills, and take opportunities that will benefit you and re-evaluate if you aren't learning or

practising your skills. Take opportunities to do as many houseie things as possible. Follow them around and do as much as your role allows you to do - IV Lines, bloods, history/examinations/reviews etc. Be helpful. Do at least one-two long days per run! Especially if they're not compulsory. You feel most like a house officer when you're running around with the houseie like headless chickens lol. Your time as a TI is precious. You're skilled and knowledgeable enough to be a house officer but without as many responsibilities. Use it wisely!"

Lizzie, Christchurch Hospital: Think about getting your ACE references completed as early as possible! Follow up consultants on filling them out so you aren't chasing your tail near the deadline. A good way to go about it is if you ask for a reference in the final week of your run (perfect time for them to have seen you working, plus you have a whole week for them to be reminded by you to fill it out!). If you ask them on your last day, they may forget to fill it out and then you can spend the next few weeks trying to chase them via fruitless emails that they may not reply to, all the while forgetting who you actually are! If you are sent home early, GO HOME! It is the last opportunity for you to do this – embrace it! You will be working in a hospital for the rest of your life, so you might as well enjoy your responsibility-free time while it lasts. If you enjoy being in theatre, make the most of being able to spend time there – there are more limited opportunities in House Officer years depending on where you work, so enjoy it while you can.

Helpful apps and websites

- [NZMSA Guide to Graduations](#)
- Empiric app
- Auckland RMO handbook app
- Marshall and Rudy On Call book
- Calgary guides website
- Mind the bleep website
- NZF website
- MD calc app
- Script app
- ClinicalPrep for Long Case especially
- Christchurch Campus 'Clinical Skills' app
- Hospice New Zealand's palliative care guide website
- [Wellington ICU notes](#)/Tripp notes

Med school has its ups and downs, especially as a TI when responsibilities ramp up and you're preparing to enter the world as a doctor. You'll spend your days taking care of others, making looking after yourself one of your highest priorities. There are a variety of resources available to you - from in person, to online, professional to peer support. It can be difficult to reach out and you may feel whakamā about doing so. But remember, your hauora is important and deserves to be looked after.

University and clinical placement support

Your Peers

We're all in this together so some useful people to lean on could be those around you. Those on placement with you are likely having similar experiences and could provide some great support to one another.

Your Clinical Team

There's some really supportive doctors and supervisors out there. Many of whom were TIs not too long ago. Each member of the team, from House Officer to Consultant will have different things to offer and could help support you along the run.

Your class reps and student reps

Need to address an issue to a higher level? No matter how big or small, your class reps are there to help out! Reach out to your student reps, including those who are a part of NZMSA. We are always here to support, provide more resources or point you in the right direction.

NZMSA is currently handing over our roles to the new executive but you can always email vpworkforce@nzmsa.org.nz and we will put you in touch with the right person if we can't answer your questions.

Clinical Site Coordinators

Depending on what site you're based at, there is often a clinical site coordinator. These staff are a great point of contact if you're needing support or wanting to raise issues about site-specific things.

Student Counsellors

Some campuses have free counsellors available for medical students to utilise as much as you'd like. Reach out to them if you're requiring someone to talk to.

- **Wellington** - studentcounsellor.uow@otago.ac.nz
- **Christchurch** - Contact Associate Dean of Student Affairs - they subsidise up to \$900 for counselling costs. Link for more information [here](#).
- **Dunedin** - Contact [Student Affairs or Student Health](#) at the University of Otago for access to counsellors, psychologists and psychiatrists.
- **Auckland** - The University of Auckland provides support in the form of [short-term counselling services](#) that are available for free.

Māori Support Staff

Campuses have Māori support staff that you're able to contact if you need support.

- Wellington - Eru Pomare Centre
- Christchurch - MIHI
- Dunedin - Kōhatu
- Auckland - [Tuākana](#)

Student Support Advisors

Auckland University

Available for Auckland students, the Student Support advisors are a fantastic resource. No matter what your problem is, they are here to work with you to help out. Daniel Heke is the student support advisor for FMHS. fmhssupport@auckland.ac.nz.

Further information about different Auckland specific support services (academic, financial and personal well-being) available via [this website](#).

Otago University

Each campus (Dunedin, Christchurch and Wellington) have student affairs administrators you can get in touch with. They're there to help with any issues that arise or if you're needing support.

Personal Wellbeing

Puawaitanga

Free over the phone counselling services free for all university students to access.
<https://puawaitanga.nz/> or call them on 0800 782 999

MAS

Members of MAS are eligible to receive a set number of [free EAP counselling services](#).

1737

[Free helpline](#) providing free 24/7 phone and text support from a trained counsellor.

Depression NZ

Free [online](#) and over the phone support - text 4202 or call 0800 111 757

Small Steps

Free online resources to help manage stress, anxiety and depression.

The Lowdown

<https://www.thelowdown.co.nz/> or free text 5626

A space created with rangatahi for rangatahi. Here you can learn, express and engage around your hauora (wellbeing), identity, culture and mental health.

MAS Āki Wellbeing Hub

Free for all MAS members [here](#).

Mental Health Foundation New Zealand

They have a wide range of resources, articles and links to further support services available through [their website](#).

Guide to Graduation:
Edition 1 2026: Guide to Employment

Stay tuned in March 2026 for everything you need to know about the ACE application process in detail!

