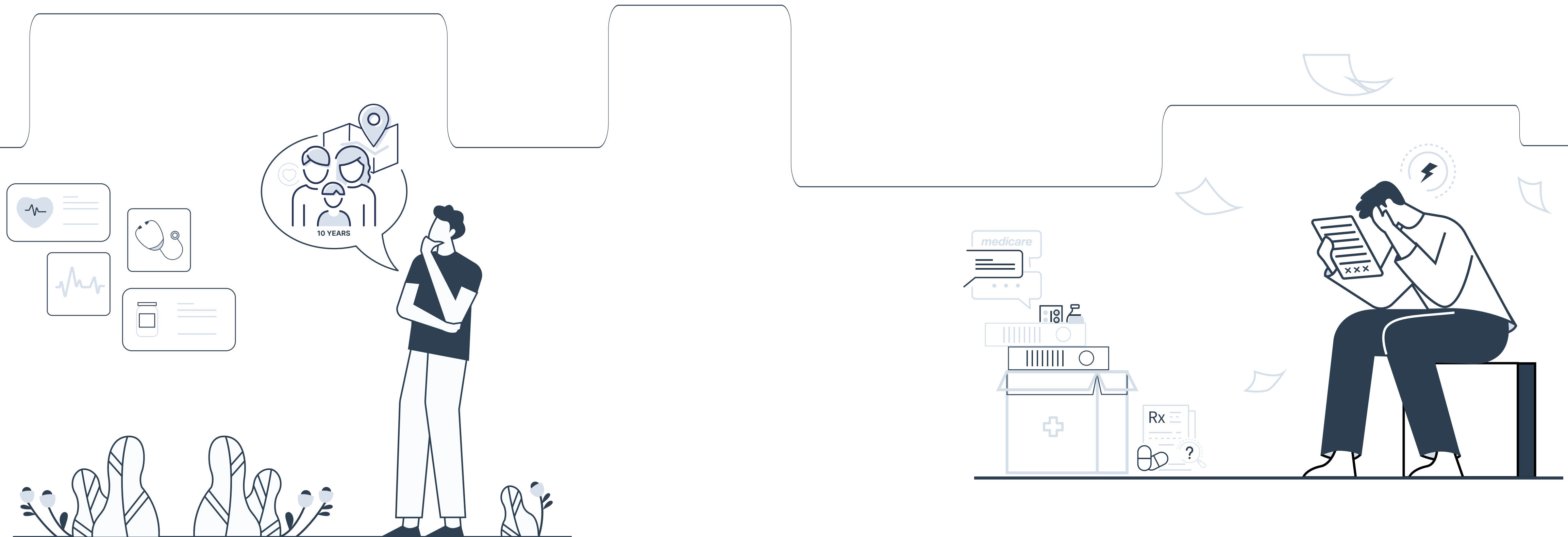


# Improving the journey for international medical graduates

Information booklet: Consultation on personas and journey maps



The Australian Medical Council acknowledges Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Māori Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands the AMC works upon.

We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the ongoing contributions that Indigenous Peoples make to all communities. We acknowledge the government policies and practices that impact on the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples and commit to working together to support healing and positive outcomes.

The AMC is committed to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait and Māori Peoples through its assessment and accreditation processes including equitable access to health services for First Nations Peoples.

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# Why this work matters



**31%** of doctors practising in Australia did their medical training overseas



**56%** of doctors working in general practice did their medical training overseas



International medical graduates play a vital role in **rural and remote** communities

International medical graduates play a critical role in the Australian medical workforce across a range of areas and make important contributions to the communities they serve. They make up more than 30 percent of the medical workforce, represent more than 50 per cent of the General Practice workforce, and are the mainstay of rural and remote health communities and underserved metropolitan communities.

We recognise that the pathways for international medical graduates who are seeking to work as medical practitioners in Australia are complex, bureaucratic, time-consuming, uncertain, expensive and stressful.

The aim of project is to:

- better understand the journeys of international medical graduates and the challenges they face, and
- identify solutions to improve the experiences of international medical graduates who are navigating assessment pathways and entry into the Australian medical workforce.

This work gives voice to international medical graduates and broader stakeholders of health who have generously shared their stories, experiences and expertise with the united goal of improving international medical graduate journeys.

# About the consultation

This information booklet provides background to guide your review and feedback on the draft versions of the personas and journey maps. These have been developed as part of the AMC's [International medical graduate assessment experiences and performance project](#).

We are seeking feedback from international medical graduates and stakeholders who are involved in international medical graduate immigration, assessment, registration and employment.

We want to make sure that the journey maps and personas are representative of the lived experiences of international medical graduates and can be used to make positive changes at both a system and individual level.

The consultation will close on the **5 July 2024**.

Consultation questions focus on the strengths and suggested improvements of the personas and journey maps.

The consultation questions can be completed via an [online survey](#) that will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. You may find it easier to

complete the survey on a computer rather than on your phone because you will need to refer to the images on the [AMC website](#) to answer the survey questions. Navigation between documents on a phone can be difficult.

Alternatively, you may like to join a focus group session (90 mins) to share your feedback on the personas and journey maps. Please email [policy\\_research@amc.org.au](mailto:policy_research@amc.org.au) if you would like to participate in a focus group session.

A report summarising key findings from the consultation will be published on the AMC website.

# About the personas and journey maps

**Personas** are fictitious stories that bring to life a particular group of stakeholders. **Journey maps** show the stages or milestones of the journey.

The personas and journey maps draw on data from a survey of more than 4000 international medical graduates, along with interviews and focus group sessions with international medical graduates and health services people working with international medical graduates.

They provide a visual snapshot of the challenges and solutions in international medical graduate immigration, assessment, registration and employment pathways.

The personas and journey maps are presented as images that you can view via our [website](#).

## Audiences

The aim of this work is to show the contribution of international medical graduates to the Australian health system. The personas and journey maps give voice to international medical graduates who have generously shared their experiences about the challenges and the steps that could be taken to reduce some of the current barriers they experience.

The personas and journey maps are designed for AMC internal stakeholders to help guide improvements in international medical graduate assessment, strategy, policy and accreditation of education provider programs.

The personas and journey maps will also be shared with broader stakeholders of international medical graduate assessment and registration. They provide a holistic picture of system improvements and highlight areas of challenge that the AMC, in collaboration with partner organisations, can work to help resolve.



The value of the personas and journey maps



Provide evidence-based insights into the individual and system solutions needed to resolve some of the long-standing challenges that international medical graduates face.



Bring a human and strength-based perspective and highlight the contributions of international medical graduates despite the challenges.



International medical graduates can see that they are not alone, and that there are system enablers for change.



Help stakeholders to align processes.



Help to prioritise challenges and solutions.



Provide a holistic end-to-end analysis of challenges and possible solutions.



Point to partnerships that can be formed to implement strategies that have shared responsibilities across the sector.

# The personas

International medical graduates are not a homogenous group. They have different motivations for coming to Australia, different lived experiences and face different challenges. We need to appreciate that a wide range of solutions are needed to improve their pathway to becoming medical practitioners in Australia.

One size does not fit all.

We have developed 14 personas to show the different experiences, challenges and what has helped international medical graduates in their journeys. **Click on the image to view the persona card.**



Musa



Lin



Fatimah



Mohamed



Jemma





Hassan



Divya



Luis



Mostafa



Olga



Prisha



Azar



Una



Rohan



# Consultation questions

You can complete the following questions **either** via the [online survey](#) **or** provide your response to these questions in a focus group session. You do not need to complete both the survey and a focus group session.

How **representative** are these personas in describing the different sub-groups of international medical graduates?

How **accurate** are these personas in describing the different sub-groups of international medical graduates?

What could be improved?

Is there any information and/or are there personas that are missing?

How would you and your organisation use these personas to guide your work with international medical graduates?

# Journey maps

The journey maps provide a visual representation of the milestones, challenges, emotions and solutions. They describe seven key milestones and the themes that are common across the experiences of international medical graduates while acknowledging the diversity of individual experiences. The themes include:

- preparing for immigration and working as a medical practitioner
- meeting qualification, training, verification and assessment requirements
- navigating the registration process
- being ready to work in the Australian healthcare system
- working in rural and remote areas and/or underserved metropolitan communities
- working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients and communities and providing culturally-safe care.
- continual professional development.

The challenges and solutions have been mapped to the [Kruk Report \(2024\)](#) showing the relationship between the areas of challenge and

how to resolve them. Given the cross-sectorial nature of the landscape impacting international medical graduates' pathways, many of the solutions will require working with partners and stakeholders.

We have developed a **current state** and a **future state** journey map.

The **current state journey map** focuses on exploring the challenges and emotions of international medical graduates as they navigate pathways to immigration, assessment, registration and work as medical practitioners in Australia. We are interested in exploring how international medical graduates work with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients and communities, and their experiences in rural, remote and underserved metropolitan settings.

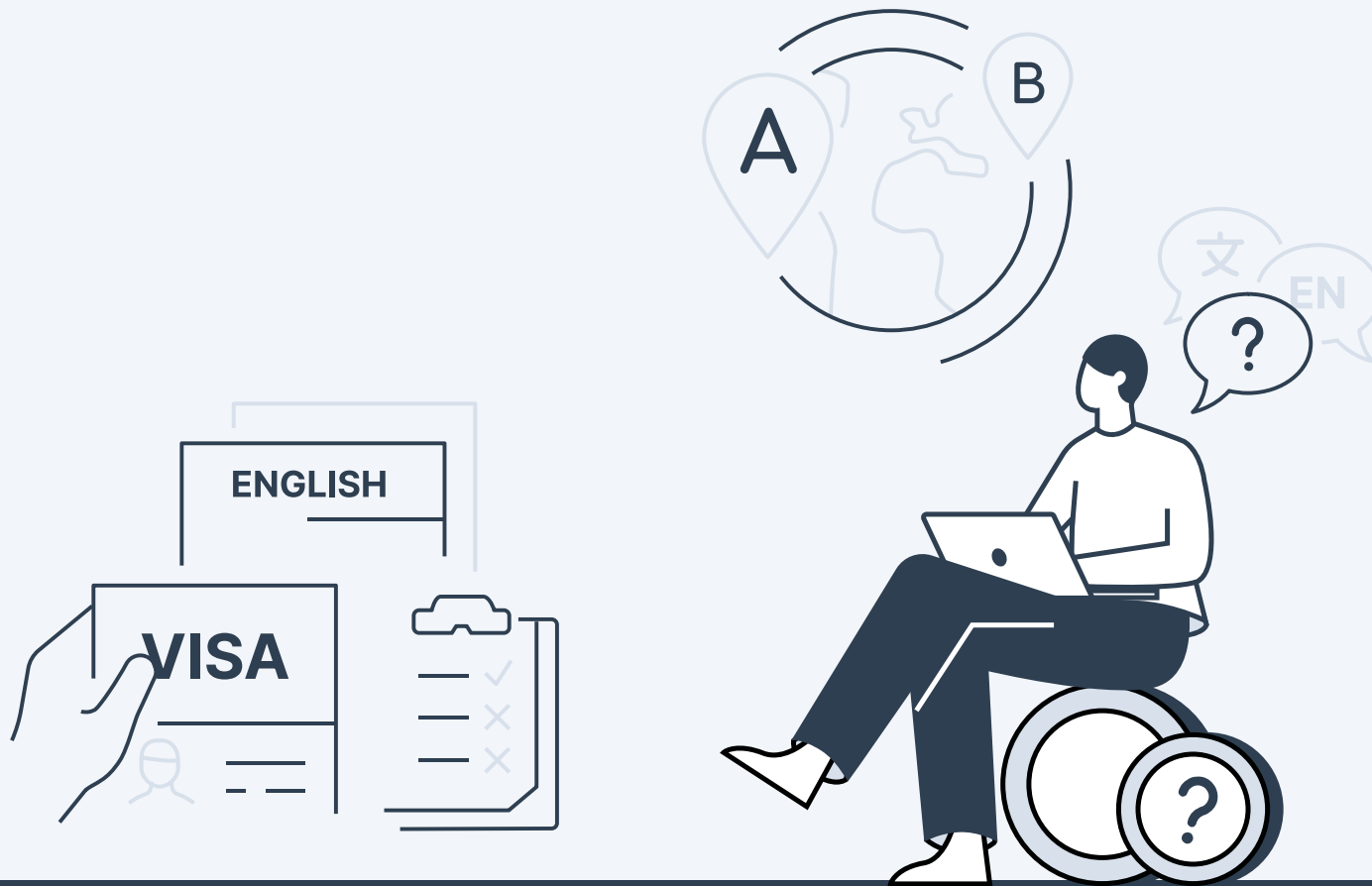
The **future state journey map** revisits all the milestones shown in the current state and focuses on exploring individual and system level solutions to challenges.

**Click on the page to view the full image at full size.**

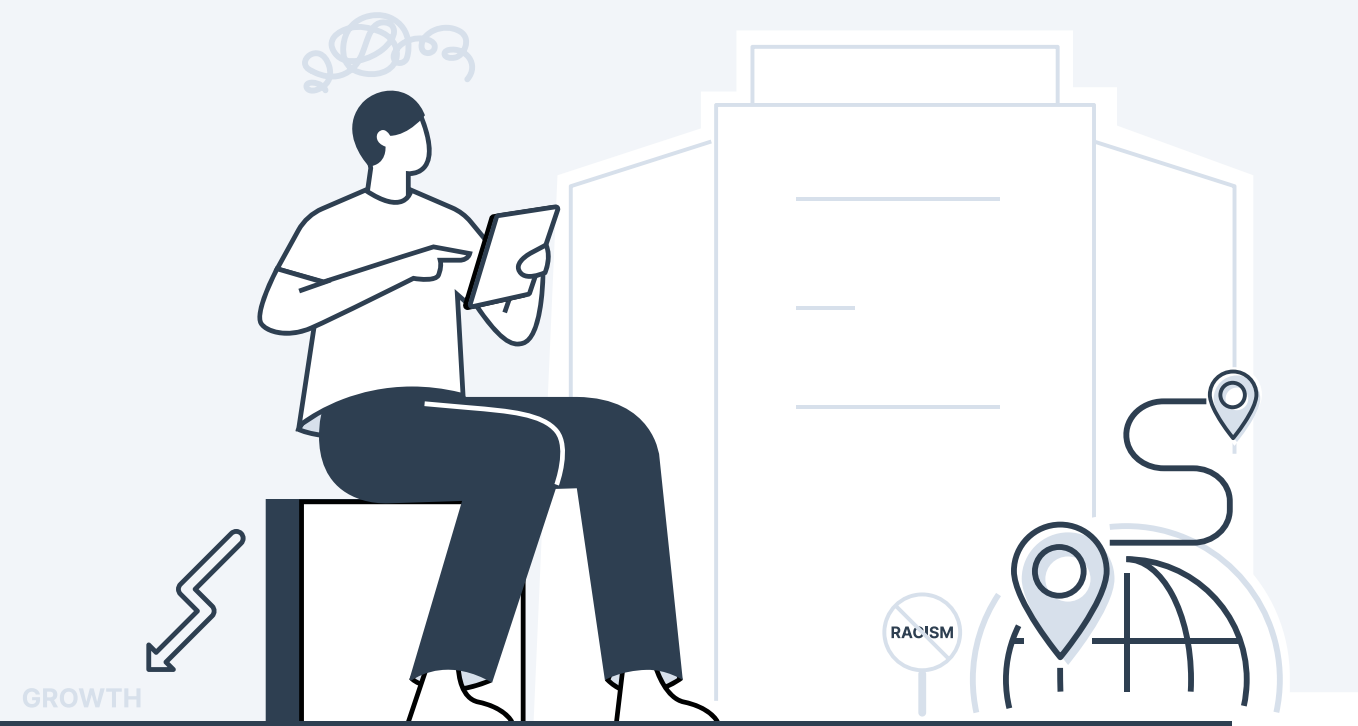


Current state

Preparing for Immigration and Work as a Medical Practitioner in Australia



Navigating Registration Requirements



Challenges

This current state journey map shows the challenges faced by international medical graduates seeking to work as medical practitioners in Australia. Challenges are categorised according to the milestones and show that international medical graduate pathways in Australia are complex, bureaucratic, time consuming, uncertain, expensive and stressful.

All Pathways

High expectations

High expectations about living and working in Australia, without recognising the challenges including the financial and emotional burden of immigration and assessment requirements.

English language standards

Money and effort can be wasted attempting to pass medical assessments when English language skills are the main barrier to passing.

Lack of resources and support

A lack of clear support and online resources to help with understanding the content and format of assessments.

Verifying documents

The need to return to one's country of training to source documents required for document verification or assessment processes is costly, time consuming and inconvenient, especially if there are family dependents. It is not always possible to return to one's country of training, for e.g. refugees.

Lack of clear information

Information is dispersed across many stakeholder websites. It is difficult to get a full picture of what is required and in what order milestones need to be completed. Relying on word-of-mouth advice may mean getting out-of-date information.

Understanding the Australian health system

A lack of experience and exposure to the Australian health system. Being unfamiliar with priority areas such as mental health, Indigenous health, women's and men's health, the Australian health system, digital health, and specific Australian health conditions e.g. skin checks, snake bites, and tropical diseases.

All Pathways

Limited Registration  
Professional stagnation and credential challenges

The process to gain full registration is opaque and full of administrative hurdles. Feeling underutilised, especially when tasked with responsibilities below skill levels due to the "limited" nature of registration. The system does not fully acknowledge or utilise international experience, and the path to full recognition is unnecessarily prolonged and complicated.

Limited Registration  
Quality of supervision

Variable quality of supervision, which impacts on professional development and integration into the medical system. While some have excellent, supportive supervisors who provide guidance and foster growth, others face challenges due to insufficient or inconsistent supervision.

Limited Registration  
Workplace culture and discrimination

Cultural and systemic barriers, including instances of bullying, discrimination, and a lack of proper recognition for competencies. Feeling undervalued or subjected to harsher scrutiny than domestically trained counterparts and experiencing exclusion and marginalisation within teams.

Limited Registration  
The impact of regulatory bodies

Inadequate institutional support and significant obstacles due to complex requirements and perceived inefficiencies of the regulatory system. This leads to feeling undervalued and pressured by regulatory institutions, resulting in stress and anxiety, impacting both work and personal wellbeing.

Limited Registration  
Recency of practice

Maintaining recency of practice in preparation for registration and the difficulty of securing relevant clinical positions in Australia. Having to return to home countries to update clinical skills which creates additional strains on families and finances.

Provisional Registration  
Supervision and integration into the healthcare system

Insufficient induction or orientation and varying levels of supervision. Significantly affects the integration and confidence of international medical graduates.

Provisional Registration  
Navigational challenges within the medical community

Bureaucratic obstacles and occasional discrimination, that affects confidence and professional growth. Having to prove competence beyond the norm despite having equivalent or superior clinical acumen. A lack of respect from colleagues and the local medical community which is made worse when workplace cultures are non-inclusive or when there is bullying or harassment.

Provisional Registration  
Administrative and credentialing hurdles

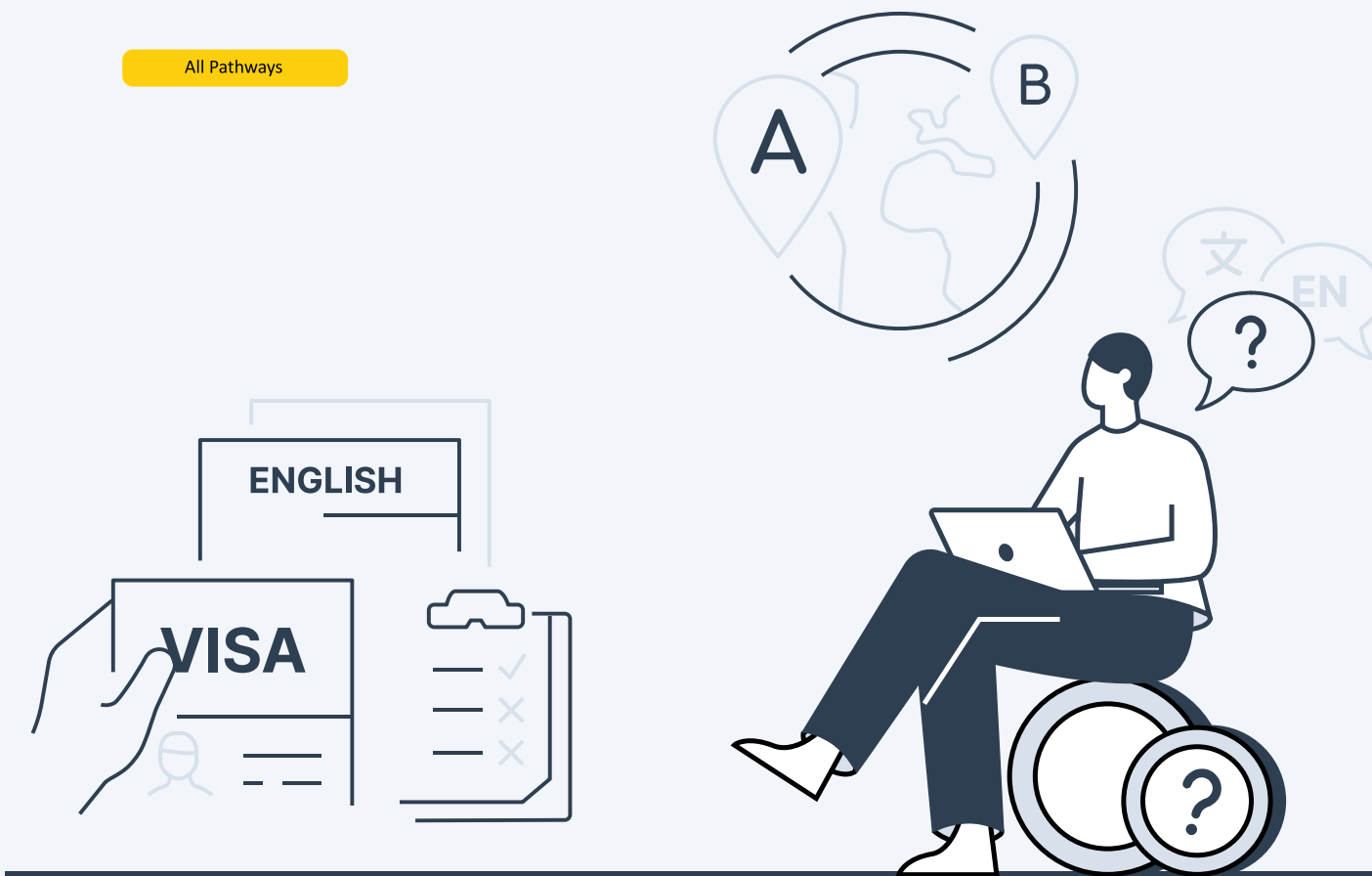
Multiple administrative hurdles, including complex and sometimes inconsistent requirements from regulatory bodies and supervising institutions. A process that is opaque, having to navigate a maze of paperwork and fulfill requirements that feel redundant or poorly aligned with level of expertise.

Provisional Registration  
Workplace dynamics and professional development

Adapting to a new healthcare environment while managing the expectations of roles. Professional development is hindered by limited opportunities for upward mobility due to systemic constraints and visa-dependent employment conditions.

# Future state

## Preparing for Immigration and Work as a Medical Practitioner in Australia



## Navigating Registration Requirements



### Solutions

This future state map shows some solutions which could minimise and resolve the challenges faced by international medical graduates as they attempt to navigate assessment pathways in Australia. The solutions are categorised in terms of strategies individual international medical graduates can undertake. It also sets out system solutions. System solutions are further categorised in terms of alignment with the Kruk Report (2024). System solutions are framed in terms of activity which is within the AMC's remit and to be completed relatively independently within AMC budget (lead); cross sectorial activities for which the AMC would seek partners and joint funding (partner); and activities which other sectors would lead and fund which the AMC would support (support).

- Individual
- System
- Lead
- Partner
- Support
- Kruk Report
- Modified

### Individual

#### Manage Expectations

Anticipate challenges. Talk to others who have successfully navigated processes. Network and reach out to support groups. Review official sites and consult official services so that advice is from authorised sources. Combining information from informal and formal sources will give a clearer picture of how to best navigate processes and avoid time, emotional and money wasting pitfalls.

#### Check English Language Skills

Do English language tests prior to leaving your country of training and prior to doing medical assessments - even if this isn't an assessment requirement. This will help with securing timely employment on arrival in Australia and reduce the money and effort spent attempting to pass medical exams until English standards are met. Communication skills play a big part in all medical assessments. Currently English Language Test results are only valid for 2 years asper Ahpra requirements. Extension options need to be explored so that international medical graduates are not required to resit English tests in Australia.

#### Prepare Documentation Prior to Arriving in Australia

Where possible, check requirements to avoid having to return to your country of training to source required material.

### System

#### Provide Language and Communication Training

Language and communication training programs tailored to the healthcare context should be offered to help in overcoming language barriers and enhancing patient care.

#### Address Visa and Immigration Challenges

Work with immigration authorities to simplify visa processes for international medical graduates, ensuring they and their families have stability and security in Australia.

#### Provide Socio-Cultural Support

Ensure that recruitment is conceived as a whole of family process with support to secure and ensure streamlined access to visas; schooling; partner employment; supportive cultures and communities; and family well-being.

#### Create up-to-date and accessible study resources

Help international medical graduates to navigate the path and avoid time, emotional and money wasting pitfalls with the use of effective technology systems and improved customer service.

#### Establish strategies to deal with document verification in cases where documents cannot be secured from country in training

i.e. refugees.

#### Provide a clear, full picture of end-to-end processes and links to websites

Provide clear information to help international medical graduates better understand how to navigate their path of immigration requirements, assessment, registration and employment as well as reducing the time and money spent and minimising stress.

#### Establish strategies to deal with document verification in cases where documents cannot be secured from country in training

Optimise opportunities for international medical graduates to complete assessment requirement while still in their country of training and to minimise the time and money spent on travel and accommodation to attend in-person assessments.

#### Create up-to-date and accessible study resources

Comprehensive and affordable study resources, similar to those available for USMLE, would be helpful. They should be blueprinted to assessments and show samples of exam format. These resources should be easily accessible and available online.



# Consultation questions

You can complete the following questions **either** via the [online survey](#) **or** provide your response to these questions in a focus group session. You do not need to complete both the survey and a focus group session.

## Current state map

How accurate is the current state map in showing the **challenges** related to the **key milestones in international medical graduate journeys**?

What could be improved?

What ideas do you have about enhancing the navigation and making them more interactive?

## Future state map

How accurate is the future state map in showing the **solutions** related to the **key milestones in international medical graduate journeys** as stated above.

What could be improved? (Specify areas that are missing or areas that could be deleted or changed.)

How would you and your organisation use these journey maps to guide your work with international medical graduates?

# Thank you!

Thank you for supporting this important piece of work. The personas and journey maps have the potential to make a real difference to how we understand and support international medical graduates in their journey to practise medicine in Australia.

If you have any questions please contact [policy\\_research@amc.org.au](mailto:policy_research@amc.org.au)

