
A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR PREMED & PREHEALTH STUDENTS

Guide to International Pathways in Medicine

Exploring global routes to becoming a physician

PreMed & PreHealth Advising Program · Northeastern University



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01 • INTRODUCTION

Northeastern University students understand the value of global experience. Throughout their undergraduate careers, students have access to extensive opportunities to work and study abroad. It is natural, then, that as you prepare your application to health graduate programs — particularly medical school — you may begin to consider incorporating international experience or global health into your path as a future provider.

The PreMed & PreHealth Advising Program at Northeastern University primarily supports students applying to Medical, Dental, Physician Assistant, Veterinary Medicine, Optometry, and Podiatry programs in the United States. Our advising staff are experts in U.S.-based application processes. This guide, however, is intended to provide high-level, introductory information for students interested in learning more about international health pathways.

Our goal is not to recommend one path over another, but rather, to equip you with the information needed to have an informed conversation with your [PreHealth advisor](#) about whether — and how — an international pathway fits your goals. We encourage you to review this guide and follow up with your assigned PreHealth advisor with any questions.

02 • CHOOSING YOUR PATH

Four potential pathways are highlighted in this guide. There is no single “right” pathway — the best choice depends on your target practice location, financial situation, timeline, and personal goals. Use these guiding questions to focus your future planning.

1

Where do you want to practice long-term?

This is the most important question to ask yourself as you begin to research potential pathways. Think about ultimately where you will want to be a practitioner and select a pathway that will set you up for success in that country.

2

How do your metrics align?

Health profession programs are competitive regardless of the country in which you apply. Requirements and academic expectations vary by country, particularly for applicants who are not citizens or permanent residents. As you consider where to apply, prioritize programs whose expectations and requirements align well with your qualifications and goals.

3

Do you want geographic flexibility?

If you are unsure about where you'd want to practice, some programs like Atlantic Bridge (Ireland → U.S./EU) prepare students to be licensed in a variety of areas, giving you more time to decide about where you'd want to practice.

4

Do you want to move and live abroad?

Where you attend your health graduate program and complete a residency/internship is often indicative of where you might settle down. Are you looking to move to another country for an extended period of time?

03 • FOUR CORE PATHWAYS

Each pathway below pairs where you attend health graduate school with where you ultimately plan to practice. Explore the combination that best matches your goals.

School Abroad

Practice in the U.S.

Programs to Consider

- Caribbean Medical Schools ([i.e. SGU, Ross/AUC, Saba/GUS](#)): Especially a good option for students whose academic metrics are lower than that of an average applicant accepted to a US medical school. Caribbean programs typically include didactic learning on campus in the Caribbean, followed by clinical training in the US and Canada. For example, at SGU, students spend the first two years of medical school either in Grenada or at Northumbria University in Newcastle, UK and complete last two years in the US, UK, or Canada. Graduates can match in the US Match as an International Medical Graduate (IMG).
- **UQ-Ochsner MD Program**: First two years in Brisbane, Australia at The University of Queensland, then Years 3 & 4 in New Orleans, Louisiana, gaining hands-on clinical experience at Ochsner Health. Can match in the US Match as an IMG and are eligible to practice in Australia.
- **Atlantic Bridge Program**: Attend medical school in Ireland (apply with a common application to multiple programs). Can match in the US Match as an IMG and are eligible to practice in Ireland — although internship [residency] in Ireland is not guaranteed for US citizens.

About 25% of physicians practicing in the US graduated from international medical schools ([AAMC](#)). That said, applying to the US Match as an IMG is historically a bit more competitive — keep this in mind as you research programs.

School Abroad

Practice Abroad

Application processes, academic requirements, program structures, and training timelines vary significantly by country and institution. In many countries, students may enter medical school directly after high school, while others offer graduate-entry pathways for applicants who have completed an undergraduate degree. Medical degree programs commonly range from 4–6 years, depending on the pathway, and are typically followed by country-specific requirements for supervised postgraduate training, licensure, and specialty training. International applicants should carefully research each program's admissions requirements, eligibility criteria, and post-graduation pathways to practice. **Popular Programs (Structure varies greatly by program within designated country)**

- **Australia**: 4–6 year medical degree, 1 year of internship. Could also consider UQ-Ochsner MD Program (flexibility to practice in either the US or Australia).
- **Ireland**: 5–6 year medical degree, 1 year of internship, additional specialty training. Could also consider Atlantic Bridge Program (flexibility to practice in either the US or Ireland).
- **Italy**: 6 year medical degree (includes an internship & thesis).
- **Poland**: 5–6 year medical degree, 1 year of internship.
- **UK/England**: 4–6 year medical degree, 2 year residency (The Foundation Programme), additional specialty training. Could also consider SGU, particularly for their partnership with Northumbria University in Newcastle, UK.

School in the U.S.

Practice Abroad

If you are considering this option, please re-visit the guiding questions earlier in this resource.

If your intentions are to practice medicine abroad, it may make more logistical sense to research the requirements of going to medical school in that country.

If you pursue this option, you would most likely be considered an OTD (overseas trained doctor) in that country and may need to pursue additional schooling or certifications to be licensed to practice there — the US medical degree is not universally recognized.

School in the U.S.

Practice in the U.S.

Many US Medical Schools offer global opportunities as part of their curriculum. While the specific opportunities vary by program, common examples include study abroad opportunities, global health concentrations, clerkships abroad, international conferences, and more.

Examples of medical schools that offer Global Opportunities:

- [AAMC Visiting Student Learning Opportunities™ \(VSLO®\) program](#)
- [NYU](#)
- [Harvard](#)
- [Duke](#)
- [University of Illinois](#)
- [Yale](#)
- [UNC](#)
- [Tulane](#)

04 • ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

→ [PMPH: Global Experience](#)

→ [AMA: IMGs — These 4 tips can help you succeed with Match](#)

→ [US News & World Report: Medical School Abroad — What to Know](#)

→ [World Directory of Medical Schools](#)

05 • CONCLUSION

Ready to talk it through?

Be sure to schedule a meeting with your [PreHealth advisor](#) if you are considering an international pathway to your chosen health profession.