Considering Applying to an International or Off-Shore Medical School?

Making the decision to apply overseas is tough. Whatever you decide, it is important to research your options carefully so your transition back to the U.S. is as smooth as possible. You should be extremely cautious with schools that have less than a proven record of success. Find out as much information as possible if you are considering a foreign medical school.

Things to consider...

- For what reasons are you considering an International Medical School?
  - International Medical Schools want to know what strengths and attributes you possess. They also want to know if you are adaptable and if you are flexible and can overcome additional difficulties; such as simpler living conditions. The challenges of studying in a foreign environment, being immersed in a different language and culture, trying to secure residencies in the U.S., passing the boards, etc., should also be carefully examined.

- Learn about living costs in the country you are considering.
  - Use our Going Global program to find this information. To access this great resource please create a ScienceWorks account. Here is the ScienceWorks Getting Started Guide any health professions student in any major may create a ScienceWorks account.

- Make sure you are knowledgeable about any post graduate or post residency requirements the school has in place. For example, Duke has a medical school in Singapore and they require 1 year of work in Singapore after residency called paying their bond.

- International Medical School Graduates will need to make sure their programs prepare them to apply for residencies through the National Resident Matching Program

- Does the University accept UT’s Pre-Medical Prerequisites? Double check with the schools you are applying to about this utilize our Prerequisite Resource

- You will need to reference the report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office titled, "Foreign Medical Schools: Education Should Improve Monitoring of Schools That Participate in the Federal Student Loan Program." The Department of Education, which administers the federal student loan program, monitors domestic and foreign schools that seek participation in the program with respect to specific statutory requirements. The report examines the following questions:
  1) What amount of federal student aid loan dollars has been awarded to U.S. students attending foreign medical schools?
  2) What do the data show about the pass rates of international medical graduates on license examinations?
  3) To what extent does the Department of Education monitor foreign medical schools' compliance with the pass rate required to participate in the federal student loan program?
  4) What is known about schools’ performance with regard to the institutional pass rate requirement?
  5) What is known about where international medical graduates have obtained residencies in the U.S. and the types of medicine they practice, and
  6) What is known about discipline and malpractice involving foreign-educated physicians? This is a very useful and important report to reference.
Make sure the school you are considering...

- Is accredited and respected. Look at The World Directory of Medical Schools to investigate the international medical schools you are considering. This directory provides a comprehensive list all of the medical schools in the world, with accurate, up-to-date information, including; accreditation data and university affiliations, on each school.
- Has not been banned from the medical licensing board in the state you would want to practice in.
  - For example California has an unapproved schools list
- Follows Ethical Guidelines: Check out this article.
- Is the School listed on the (FAIMER) Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research’s International Medical Education Directory?
  - Students must graduate from an International Medical School listed in this directory to be eligible for ECFMG certification through The Educational Commission for Foreign Medical School Graduates.
  - ECFMG certification is required to be eligible for the (ACGME) Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education’s accredited residency programs in the U.S., and for licensure in many states.
- Prepares you to take the (USMLE) United States Medical Licensing Exams. If you decide to go to a medical school abroad, you will still have to take the USMLE Step exams in order to return to the U.S. and practice here.

Consider the Pros and Cons...


Quick Links

- Searchable List of International Medical Schools: https://imed.faimer.org/
- AAMC MSAR has Canadian and US Medical Schools listed: https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/requirements/msar/
- California Unapproved Schools list: http://www.mbc.ca.gov/applicant/schools_unapproved.html
- The Educational Commission for Foreign Medical School Graduates (ECFMG): http://www.ecfmg.org/certification/
- USMLE Exam Information: http://www.usmle.org/
- The World Directory of Medical Schools: http://www.wdoms.org/
- National Residency Matching Program: http://www.nrmp.org/
- Foreign Caribbean Schools :http://web.jhu.edu/prepro/health/Applicants/international_schools.html
- Also of interest, see Diaries of a Caribbean Medical Student: http://www.caribbeanmedstudent.com/