

Training

It takes 11 years to train as a general practitioner. To become fully qualified you need to:

1. Go to either University of Otago or University of Auckland.
2. Complete the Health Sciences First Year programme at Otago or the first year of the Bachelor of Health Sciences or Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Science at Auckland (one year).
3. Be admitted to Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB) degree, on the basis of exam results, University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT) score and an interview. There are also admission schemes for rural and Maori and Pacific Island students.
4. Complete a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB) degree at Otago or Auckland (five years). This includes study at university and clinical experience in hospitals. The last year is spent as a paid trainee intern at a hospital.
5. Work under supervision as a house officer (junior doctor) in a hospital (two years).
6. Do training and examinations to become a Fellow of the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (three years) while working as a GP Registrar.

Personal Qualities

To be an general practitioner you need to:

- be good at diagnosis of the cause of health problems
- be thorough
- have an understanding of human anatomy
- know about many diseases and illnesses
- understand injuries
- know about many medicines and treatments
- communicate clearly
- like working with people
- be compassionate and empathetic
- stay up-to-date with new research and techniques
- a high achiever

Information collated by NZIRH
Where to go for more information:

www.rnzcgp.org.nz
www.careers.govt.nz
www.kiaorahauora.co.nz

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November, 2019

Doctor (General Practitioner)



General Practitioner (GP)

General practitioners work with people from all ages, cultures, backgrounds and lifestyles in the community. They provide primary health care through diagnosis and treatment of health problems.

Where do they work?

Most general practitioners work in medical practices in the community. Some own their own practice and others work as a locum filling in for other doctors when they are away. General practitioners who own or part-own a medical practice need to have business management skills.

Some general practitioners may also be employed by a district health board to work in public hospitals.

The Ministry of Health makes extra payments to graduates who elect to work in areas that are hard to staff like rural areas.

Some rural general practitioners become involved in a PRIME team (Primary Response in Medical Emergency)

What do they do?

General practitioners may:

- examine their patients
- diagnose the causes of their patients' health problems
- give patients laboratory forms for blood, urine or other tests
- give advice on prevention of illnesses
- perform minor surgery
- prescribe medicines
- refer patients to other health professionals for treatment or further investigation
- work with Accident Compensation Corporation when a patient has an injury
- help doctors preparing for their general practitioner exams

Getting work

Due to an aging and growing population with a high proportion of general practitioners nearing retirement age, there is a shortage of general practitioners, especially in rural areas, thus the chance of being employed is good.

Working conditions

Being a general practitioner is very rewarding and well-paid. More challenging aspects to this career include:

- being required to work long and irregular hours
- having to be on call
- having contact with unpleasant diseases and bodily fluids

General practitioners may travel within New Zealand or to other countries for conferences to keep their knowledge up to date.

