

To Whom It May Concern:

With regards to the treatment of international students, I wish to bring forward a few points. These items relate specifically to the increasing number of international students coming to Australia to pursue a medical degree, of which I am one. I have collaborated with domestic and international students who are my colleagues in the MBBS program at University of Queensland. These are our thoughts:

Practical Issues:

- If these students are trained for the Australian setting, to its standards, it makes sense to use them to fill all 'Doctor shortages'. They should be given priority over other international graduates, because they have been specifically trained to work within our system, and have already demonstrated their commitment by coming here for 4 years and investing ~\$40,000 per annum. If a TAFE-equivalent course in cooking or hair-dressing is an easy road to PR, why are medical graduates being turned away?

Justice Issues:

Running an MBBS with no intern spot at the end of it is like running it with no 4th year. Despite the significant financial contribution international students make to Australian universities, the current situation does not allow them to actually "qualify" as a doctor. Most cannot simply 'Go Home' for intern year, as what country has more internship places than medical graduates?

\*\*\*International students are not fully informed of this before they arrive.

- If international students continue to be mis-treated, future potential international students won't come. This will leave a huge hole in the medical school/university budget, which the government will have to cover unless it wants to cop the flack for training fewer doctors. Also, if Australia becomes less desirable place to attend medical school, the quality of applicants will fall- this means either more money will have to be spent making them competent, or we will have lower-quality medical graduates. This would be both dangerous and a scary headline, which no government would want to be responsible for.

- Australia continues doctor poaching international doctors, from countries with far greater need to fulfil its own doctor shortage. This in and of itself is morally repugnant. To add insult to injury, the doctors who come over to Australia are not trained in this system, and are usually sent to rural and remote places with limited support, where they may have to struggle with language difficulties as well as huge cultural difficulties. All whilst many international medical students who come over to study here are interested in staying, are familiar with our system, have networked and built up contacts and a support system, have already navigated the cultural and linguistic terrain, and are often interested in living and working rurally. Why are we sending these doctors who have invested time and money in training here home, whilst importing others from areas of need?!!

- I also believe there should be an intern spot guaranteed for anyone who passes medical school in the country they are training in. If they are unable to provide this, then there should be caps on the number of places universities are taking in. Maybe

this would be a way of getting them to stop biting off more than they can chew, because they seem unable to do it themselves.

- Personally, I was forced to leave my husband behind in Canada when moving here, as my student visa only allows 20 hrs of work per week for students and partners. That is insufficient income to support living in a major metropolitan area like Brisbane and studying for a professional degree, such as Medicine. This has caused anguish for both of us, and has not given us a positive view of Australian Immigration policy, to say the least. I propose that the restriction on work hours be lifted in the case of professional programs, such as Law, Medicine, Vet medicine, etc.

Thank you for your time and consideration.  
I look forward to the outcome of your inquiry.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Bradshaw