

# Canadian Student Resource Guide

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Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine  
**Academic and Career Advising**

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## Introduction

This document contains a brief overview of government regulations and other applicable information relating to visas, residency guidelines and Canadian licensure requirements. Please be aware that this document does not serve as individualized career or legal advice as the requirements of the American and Canadian governments, Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) residency hospital systems and Canadian licensing and certifying agencies change periodically; also, the application of this information is both situation and student dependent. Consequently, it is the responsibility of each individual student that is impacted by this information to contact the appropriate agencies and systems in order to obtain the most up-to-date information regarding the requirements for his or her specific circumstances.

## Pre-clerkship:

- You must continuously maintain your F-1 visa status.
- Contact the MSUCOM Clerkship Office and your Career Advising Advisor as soon as you know that you intend to apply for residency in Canada.
- MSUCOM will reimburse the cost of the USMLE (Step 1, CK and CS), MCCQE1 and NAC-OSCE for Canadian Initiative students who are enrolled in our four-year DO program. In order to receive your reimbursement, a copy of the exam registration and proof of payment must be provided to the Career Services Coordinator. You can only receive reimbursement one time for each examination. Please direct all questions to the Career Services Coordinator at [com.acadvising@msu.edu](mailto:com.acadvising@msu.edu) and phone number 517-884-3893
  - In order to be eligible for exam reimbursement, you must be a part of the Canadian Initiative and submit your documentation within 1-year post-graduation.

## Clerkship Years:

- You must continuously maintain your F-1 visa status throughout your MSUCOM enrollment.
- If you wish to schedule clerkship elective rotations at facilities that have residency programs in Canada, this requires approval from two individual entities (1) a host facility and (2) a sponsoring Canadian medical school. Obtaining such approval can take 6 months or more, so if you are interested in these opportunities begin planning early.

The Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC) [Student Portal](#) is a bilingual information hub and centralized application service for visiting electives for all Canadian faculties of medicine. Services are offered for Canadian and international undergraduate medical students.

## Balancing and Scheduling Clerkship Elective Rotations:

- How should I balance rotations between Canada and the United States so I don't sacrifice my chance to match in either country?
  - Matching in Canada is challenging but not impossible. Be proactive and plan ahead. It can be beneficial to obtain clinical experience as well as strong letters of recommendation (LoRs) from physicians within the Canadian system preferably teaching hospitals or from attendings with medical school affiliations. At the same time, it is also important to not "put all your eggs in one basket" but rather balance your activities between the two countries to ensure that you're prepared for *both* the Canadian and U.S. matches.
- When is the optimal time frame in which to complete rotations in Canada?
  - Work with the MSUCOM Clerkship Office on scheduling logistics and strategies [com.clerkship@msu.edu](mailto:com.clerkship@msu.edu). Also, be sure to research each program's policies and deadlines so that you can schedule accordingly. For example, some programs may restrict participation in elective rotations to 4<sup>th</sup> year students.
- What are some options for scheduling rotations in Canada?
  - [Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada \(AFMC\) portal](#) for visiting electives. Be aware that certain schools will not accept IMGs for any elective rotations. Schools that do take IMGs have drawings so placement is not guaranteed. The process costs approximately \$1000-1500 per elective and you are not guaranteed what specialty you will get. You are also required to carry Canadian malpractice insurance, which can be about \$1000 for 2 weeks.

- **Independent elective.** Perhaps the simplest way to schedule an elective is if you already know or can identify a physician who will allow you to rotate. If you don't personally know a physician, call around to areas that need physicians. Talk to recruiters; let them know you're interested in working there and ask about elective opportunities. However, be forewarned that physicians may require you to work through the Rural Ontario Medical Program (ROMP—see student perspective below). Many regions in Ontario are specifically affiliated with one of the medical schools, so people may refer you to them, however, this can be a dead end. The process of finding a Canadian elective opportunity may take
- What Canadian programs have MSUCOM students rotated at?
  - The most popular Canadian rotation location is Bluewater Sarnia. I pulled a report and listed below is a list of the ones that we have noted in FileMaker for the past 5 years.
    - Jewish General Hospital, Montreal, Quebec
    - Windsor Essex Community Health Centre, Windsor, ON
    - Windsor Regional Hospital, Windsor, ON
    - Eagle Ridge Family Health Centre, Barrie, ON
    - Stouffville Medical Centre, Stouffville, ON
    - University of Toronto, St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto, ON
    - University of Toronto, Sunnybrook Health Science Center, Toronto, ON
    - University of Toronto, North York General Hospital, Toronto, ON
    - Royal Columbian Hospital, New Westminister, ON
    - Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre, Barrie, ON
    - Toronto Western Hospital, Toronto, ON
    - Maple Medical Centre, Vaughan, ON
    - Ross Memorial Hospital, Lindsay, ON
    - Haliburton Highlands Health Services, Minden, ON

### Applying for Residency in Canada:

- You must educate yourself on specific program requirements. You can begin this process now by exploring the [Canadian medical specialty website](#). Please note that if you wish to pursue graduate medical education (GME) programs in Canada, MSUCOM is an “approved” non-Canadian medical school.
- To apply for residency in any Canadian GME program, you must successfully pass two examinations administered by agencies within Canada. Without the completion of these examinations, your application will not be considered. The two exams are the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination Part I (MCCQE1) and the National Assessment Collaboration Examination (NAC).
- Individuals matching to residency with Ontario programs should be aware that completion of a pre-residency program would be required 3 months prior to the start of the residency program, no exceptions. A residency that begins July 1<sup>st</sup>, for example, will have a pre-residency training programs in April. Each program has set their own specific dates. What does this mean to you? You will have to plan your rotations accordingly, so you are able to meet both your residency programs requirements as well as the graduation requirements of MSUCOM.

### Applying for Residency in United States:

- MSUCOM will pay the registration fee for your first attempt only to take USMLE Step 1, Step 2CK, and Step 2CS. (Note: This is applicable only to Canadian Initiative students, up to 1-year post-graduation). As a reminder, regardless of whether you take the USMLE examinations, in order to graduate from MSUCOM, all students must successfully complete the COMLEX Level 1, Level 2CE and Level 2PE examinations.
- [Possible Tuition Reimbursement for Students who match in Michigan](#)
  - If a student has accepted a bona fide offer of permanent, full-time employment in Michigan following graduation from the University, the student may seek a refund of the out-of-state tuition differential paid in any semesters falling completely within the twelve (12) months preceding the date of the student's acceptance of the offer of employment. All requests for this refund must be made within one (1) calendar year of graduation date.

- Falsification of records is prohibited. According to Article 5.01 of the University's General Student Regulations, "No student shall provide false information for the purpose of gaining benefit for oneself or others to any office, agency, or individual acting on behalf of the University." The University reserves the right to audit enrolled or prospective students at any time with regard to eligibility for in-state tuition.

### Understanding the visa process:

- How do J-1 and H-1B visas differ and what are the pros and cons? The Canadian Osteopathic Medical Student Association has [a great resource](#) for determining if a residency in the US is right for you and to help you understand the options for staying or becoming a US resident.
- An F-1 OPT visa covers your first postgraduate residency year. It is your responsibility to contact the [MSU Office for International Students and Scholars \(OISS\)](#) to secure an F-1 OPT visa to cover your first postgraduate residency year. The F-1 OPT can be applied for and sent to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for adjudication 90 days before the completion date of your graduation requirements. For example, a student completes her studies on May 4<sup>th</sup>. The student can and should apply for the F-1 OPT any time after February 5<sup>th</sup>. The student can select an OPT start date anytime between May 5<sup>th</sup> and July 3<sup>rd</sup> (within 60 days of completion date OPT can start, but you can apply 90 days prior to completion. MSUCOM suggests a start date of June 1<sup>st</sup> in case your residency program hosts orientation programs prior to the official start of your residency which is typically around July 1<sup>st</sup>. All of this information is explained in the free D2L course all F-1 OPT applications must review prior to applying. Please follow [this link for more information](#).
- Prior to the second year of your residency training; you must obtain a visa, which will allow you to continue working legally in the United States. Amongst the visas that may be available to you, two of the most commonly applied for include the J-1 visa and the H-1B visa. Regardless of which is obtained, it is your personal responsibility to remain in legal immigration status throughout your residency-training while in the United States.
  - [ECFMG website](#) Reference guide for J1 Visas
  - ECFMG J1 Visa Sponsorship Direct Phone Line:
    - 215-823-2121
  - Every ACGME hospital system handles the visa status of non-citizen resident candidates with its own unique procedures. Due to these important differences, you must contact the appropriate medical education office for the most up-to-date information for that hospital system, as MSUCOM is not able to advise each student as to the dynamic processes adhered to by individual training programs.
  - To identify ACGME programs that offer H1B and/or J1 Visa, log in to the [FREIDA database](#) and type into keyword search. Contact programs of interest to confirm visa availability. In order to be eligible for an H1B visa, passing USMLE Steps 1 and Step 2 CK and CS is required according to the USCIS regulatory material. There have been some applicants who have been able to obtain an H1B with COMLEX Level 1 and Level 2 CE and PE only, but it appears to vary upon the immigration officer adjudicating the petition. The USMLE is not required for J-1 visas.

### Practicing-Physician Years:

#### If you complete residency in the United States and wish to return to Canada to practice:

- The National Practice Guidelines to practice in Canada include the following information:
- The candidate must receive certification by either the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC), if you are a family physician, or from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC), if you are a physician in any specialty other than family medicine.
- Neither the USMLE nor the COMLEX examinations are recognized licensing boards in Canada. As a result, the candidate must complete the examinations of the Medical Council of Canada.
- If you successfully completed an ACGME Family Medicine Residency and passed the American College of Family Medicine certifying board examination, the CFPC may extend certification by reciprocity to practice in Canada.
- If you completed an ACGME approved residency in any other medical specialty, however, according to the National Practice Guidelines, the RCPSC will accept ACGME accredited residencies in the United States as meeting only partial completion of their requirements to practice. In many cases,

specialty residencies in Canada are a year longer than in the United States, and a candidate may be required to participate in an additional year of training, often in the form of a fellowship, before being eligible to take the RCPSC examinations.

- Due to the complexity of this issue, regardless of your area of practice, it is in your best interest to contact the appropriate Canadian specialty college in which you are interested in order to obtain the most accurate and up-to-date information.

### **Helpful Resources:**

The Office of Academic and Career Advising – [com.acadvising@msu.edu](mailto:com.acadvising@msu.edu)

Clerkship Office – [com.clerkship@msu.edu](mailto:com.clerkship@msu.edu)

Office of Registrar Services - [com.osteomedreg@msu.edu](mailto:com.osteomedreg@msu.edu)

[Click here to view and connect with Canadian Mentors](#)