Report on the National Audit of Applications and Acceptances for Medical Internship and the Late Vacancy Management Process for 2017 Clinical Year
Introduction

Each state and territory undertakes its own intern recruitment process. Applicants for intern positions apply separately to each state and territory where they would like to undertake an internship. Applicants therefore may receive offers from more than one state and territory.

Australian primary medical qualifications are recognised by many countries. This means that medical graduates from Australian universities, including international full fee paying medical graduates, are able to apply for internship/residency programs in countries other than Australia.

To provide consolidated intern recruitment information from the different states and territories, the Australian Health Ministers’ Advisory Council (AHMAC) asked the Health Workforce Principal Committee (HWPC) to oversee the intern data collection and audit process for intern recruitment. HWPC established the National Medical Intern Data Management Working Group (NMIDMWG), as a subcommittee of HWPC, to oversee the data collection and audit process. The Working Group provided oversight to the audit process for 2014, 2015, 2016 intern recruitment and again undertook this function for 2017 intern recruitment.

The Working Group membership includes representatives from all state, territory and Commonwealth Health Departments, the Confederation of Postgraduate Medical Education Councils (CPMEC), state and territory postgraduate medical councils, Australian Medical Students’ Association (AMSA) and the AMA Council of Doctors-in-Training (AMACDT).

While recognising that some applicants apply to overseas jurisdictions and some accept overseas offers the data collection and audit process does not involve sharing of data with overseas jurisdictions or audit of multiple acceptances involving overseas acceptances.

Intern Placement Number

The Intern Placement Number is a unique nine digit number which is generated by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and is provided to medical schools for distribution to final year medical students. Applicants for an intern position are required to provide their IPN as part of the intern recruitment process. The IPN is used as a unique identifier for intern applicants in the audit process.

Audit of Applications

The Audit of Applications was completed in July 2016, before any state/territory or Commonwealth offers had been made. The audit showed that there were 5952 applications for a 2017 internship in Australia by 3741 applicants: 3119 Australian-trained domestic medical graduates, 451 Australian trained international full fee (IFF) paying medical graduates, 118 medical students from Australian Medical Council (AMC) accredited overseas campuses (Monash Malaysia and Oschner), 48 AMC graduates and 5 medical students from NZ medical schools.
Seventy six per cent (2368) of domestic applicants and 39% (176) of Australian trained international IFF medical graduates applied to one jurisdiction only. Further, 18% (571) of domestic medical graduates and 13% (59) of Australian trained IFF medical graduates applied to two jurisdictions. The remainder of applicants applied to between three and eight jurisdictions with 4% (17) Australian trained IFF medical graduates applying to all eight jurisdictions for an intern position. However no Australian domestic medical graduate applied to all eight jurisdictions for a 2017 intern position.

Since 2014 intern recruitment, the total number of Australian domestic applicants has increased each year: 2982 applicants for 2014, 3004 for 2015, 3098 for 2016 recruitment and 3119 for 2017 intern recruitment. Between 2014 and 2017 there has not been a significant change in the number of Australian trained IFF medical graduates applying for an intern position with 448 applying for a 2014 intern position, and 451 applying for a 2017 intern position.

Audit of acceptances
The audit of acceptances process does not prevent applicants receiving multiple offers but aims to clarify and resolve which offer an applicant is truly accepting when two or more offers in different states and territories have been accepted. The audit of acceptances is an important process to ensure that all positions are filled in a timely way and that applicants have maximum opportunities to receive intern offers. Prior to implementation of the audit process it was identified that some applicants receiving multiple offers accepted and held onto multiple offers until they were due to commence the internship. This practice resulted in potentially some applicants not receiving an offer at all because all positions appeared to be filled and then late vacancies occurring in hospitals when applicants holding multiple acceptances failed to commence in the position.

Applicants who had received and accepted an offer were not prevented from receiving offers for positions in other states and territories in subsequent offer rounds.

A total of five audits were completed for 2017 intern recruitment. During the audit process the intern offer process was paused with the offer process resuming once the audit was completed. Once the National Data Manager identified a duplicate acceptance applicants had forty eight hours to advise which position they were accepting and which they were declining. If an applicant was unable to make a decision or failed to respond to the National Data Manager all but the first offer they had received, it was agreed, could be withdrawn by the offering state or territory.

States and territories made their first offers on 11 July 2016. The first Audit of Acceptances was completed in August 2016 with the fifth and final audit completed in November 2016. A total of 177 multiple acceptances were identified and resolved across the five audits of multiple acceptances.

State and Territory Intern positions
A total of 3338 state and territory intern positions were available for 2017. This was an increase of 24 positions from 2016.

Applicants who accepted a state/territory intern position
After completion of the fifth and final audit, 3312(headcount) applicants had accepted a 2017 state or territory intern position, including 3066 domestic medical graduates from Australian universities, 235 international full fee paying medical graduates from on shore Australian universities, 8 international full fee paying medical graduates from Australian Medical Council (AMC) accredited offshore campuses, 2 New Zealand Medical School graduates and 1 AMC graduate.

Commonwealth Medical Internships
The Australian Government funded additional medical internships in 2017 under the Commonwealth Medical Internships (CMI) initiative. A total of 100 interns commenced work in 2017. CMI positions are based in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia. As states and territories guarantee internships for Commonwealth Supported medical graduates, the CMI is available only to full-fee paying international medical graduates from an onshore university who meet all eligibility criteria.

Late Vacancy Management Process
A Late Vacancy Management (LVM) Process was implemented to deal with any late vacancies that arose after the conclusion of intern recruitment. The LVM for 2017 commenced after the close of intern recruitment on 25 November 2016 and
completion of the fifth and final audit. Any vacancies that arose as a result of the resolution of multiple acceptances in the fifth and final audit were filled through the LVM.

The process is facilitated by the National Data Manager and ensures that only those applicants who did not hold an offer for a 2017 intern position received an offer if a vacancy arose. As at 10 March 2017 a total of seventy five (75) applicants had received offers for intern positions across eight jurisdictions through the Late Vacancy Management Process. Of the offers made 12 applicants (1 NZ medical graduate and 11 Australian trained IFF medical graduates) declined the offer they received through the LVM process.

2018 Intern Recruitment
The National Medical Intern Data Management Working Group will oversee the 2018 intern recruitment and audits of applications and acceptances will be undertaken. All states and territories will commence making offers from Monday 10 July 2017. The National Close Date for 2018 Intern Recruitment is Friday 24 November 2017.

For further information contact Tina Hoang the National Audit Data Manager, Datamanager@health.nsw.gov.au

Glossary
AHPRA – Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
AHMAC – Australian Health Ministers’ Advisory Council
AMC – Australian Medical Council
AMSA – Australian Medical Students’ Association
AMACDT – AMA Council of Doctors-in-Training
CMI – Commonwealth Medical Internships
CPMEC – Confederation of Postgraduate Medical Education Councils
HETI – Health Education and Training Institute (NSW)
HWPC – Health Workforce Principal Committee
IPN – Intern Placement Number
LVM – Late Vacancy Management
NMIDMWG – National Medical Intern Data Management Working Group