

# Ministry of Health

## International Medical Graduate Return of Service Program Guidelines (October 2025)

Ontario's International Medical Graduate (IMG) Return of Service (ROS) program is intended to improve access to physician services across Ontario, particularly in areas with limited physician supply. The IMG ROS program offers participants a postgraduate medical training position in return for a commitment to practice medicine in an eligible Ontario community.

An IMG is someone who completed their medical degree outside Canada. To find out the definition of an IMG, please refer to [Eligibility criteria - CaRMS](#)

The Ministry of Health (ministry) IMG ROS guidelines have been developed to provide prospective and current IMG ROS program participants with information about the program, including:

1. how their career choices may impact their participation in the program;
2. their obligations and the penalties for non-compliance; and
3. the options available for participants who are unable to comply with the terms of their ROS agreement.

These guidelines apply to this particular ROS program.

### **What is ROS commitment for an IMG?**

#### **1) Measurement of ROS commitment:**

- Beginning 2026, IMGs who sign the ROS Agreement have a commitment to provide a total of 7,200 hours of clinical practice hours (with a minimum requirement of 120 hours per month) in an eligible community or multiple eligible communities, after graduation of training. This is a change from the prior 5 years, allow greater flexibility / counting of hours.
- An annual attestation is required at the end of each calendar year during the ROS period, to be submitted to the ministry as part of reporting requirements.

## 2) Eligible Services:

### a) OHIP-insured services.

- 7,200 hours (with a minimum of 120 hours per month) of clinical services including documenting, evaluating, consultation, diagnosing, and treating patients.

### b) OHIP-covered virtual care services.

- The ministry recognizes the importance of virtual care and telemedicine services as integral components of clinical care delivery, helping to bridge the gap by connecting patients in rural and remote areas with specialists or primary care providers—without the need for travel.
- Up to 40% of the virtual care services / telemedicine services can be counted as ROS commitment.

### c) Service eligibility based on patient catchment.

- A portion of hours can be counted as ROS commitment if IMGs can demonstrate that a portion of their practice, either through direct patient care or virtual care, is provided to patients residing in eligible communities. The Ministry will accept 50% of the total 7200 hours towards ROS commitment.

### d) Provincial needs-based specialty.

- Due to the specialized nature of certain medical disciplines—such as Public Health and Preventive Medicine or Forensic Pathology—these professionals often serve provincial-level needs. Their expertise is typically applied within specific health units, hospitals, or organizations, yet the impact of their work extends across the entire province. As such, their service locations reflect a broader mandate to support population health and public safety at a provincial scale. ROS participants may submit a inquiry/request for consideration to determine if this provision can apply.

### e) Academic appointments:

- Academic appointments must fulfil a minimum of 4,800 hours of practice in an eligible community.

## 3) Eligible Communities:

- IMG ROS eligible communities are any community in Ontario except the City of Ottawa and the Toronto area (defined as the City of Toronto and neighbouring municipalities of Mississauga, Brampton, Vaughan, Markham, and Pickering).

## Extenuating Circumstances

Circumstances may arise which can make it challenging for participants to fulfill the terms of their ROS agreement, including

- A lack of employment opportunities in a specialty in an eligible community.
- Injury, illness or disability; or
- Maternity/parental leave.

**\*\*Accommodations can be considered if it is a matter of compliance with the *Code* or the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA)*.**

In these instances, the following two options are available:

1. Seek a deferral of ROS; or
2. Repay costs

### Option #1: Deferrals

Deferrals may be granted by the ministry at its discretion for **up to one year at a time**.

During the term of the deferral, the participants will be required to keep the ministry informed of any changes to their circumstances.

Deferrals must be sought and approved prior to the ROS start date, or before there is a break in service or the participant will be in breach of the agreement.

### Required Documentation

Participants requesting a deferral are required to submit documentation to the ministry that substantiates their circumstances at intervals determined by the ministry. The type of documentation required will depend on participants' circumstances.

CIRCUMSTANCES	REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION		
	Medical note**	Job Search History Form	Letter confirming appointment
Employment challenges*		✓	
Illness/injury/disability	✓		
Fellowship appointment			✓
Academic appointment***			✓

Maternity/Paternity leave	✓		
Other	To be determined on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the ministry		

\*Where a participant is facing employment challenges, he or she must show that best efforts were made to obtain employment in an eligible community, without success. The participant must provide a copy of a job search history form which can be obtained from the ministry. The participant must also continue to demonstrate best efforts to apply for jobs in eligible communities and maintain contact with the Health Force Ontario Marketing and Recruitment Agency, as part of Ontario Health, during the deferral period.

\*\*Where a medical note is required, the treating practitioner must conclude that the participant is unable to return service or requires special accommodation due to medical reasons in order to be considered for a deferral.

Participants are required to find employment in their area of specialty completed through the postgraduate medical training in Ontario. Deferrals will not be granted in instances where participants are unable to find employment in their area of completed fellowship training.

## Options #2: Repayment

A participant is in breach of the ROS agreement when he or she does not meet the ROS agreement obligations. This includes but is not limited to individuals in the following scenarios:

1. Those who are unable to return service and are not granted a deferral;
2. Those who do not submit the necessary documentaion when required;
3. Those who do not complete or have failed their postgraduate medical training.

Participants who breach the ROS agreement are required to repay the training and administrative costs incurred by the ministry, plus interest charges if applicable.

**Repayment amount** is calculated by (The training cost per year ***multiply*** by the total number of years or days of postgraduate medical training) + \$4,000 administrative cost.

## **Repayment Notice and Deadline**

Where a repayment amount is owing, Ministry of Health shall issue the participant a notice stating the repayment amount in Canadian currency owing and will refer to the Minister of Finance for payment recovery. Participants receive an invoice from the Ministry of Health and are required to submit payment for the total repayment amount. Participants can make a one-time payment within 30 days or set up a repayment plan with the Ministry of Finance on or after the 31st day.

If the participant does not pay the full repayment amount by the repayment deadline, Ministry of Finance charges interest on the outstanding repayment amount on the following basis:

- Interest will be calculated as compound interest;
- on the last day each of month, at a rate periodically set by the Province of Ontario;
- begins on day Thirty One (31) after the Repayment Deadline.

If the participant fails to make payments on the account, the Ministry of Finance may refer the matter to any person, service or entity, for collection purposes.

If you have any questions about this document, or the ROS program in general, please contact the ministry by email at [PPUProgramOfficer@ontario.ca](mailto:PPUProgramOfficer@ontario.ca)