

**The University of Newcastle/University of New England
Bachelor of Medicine – Joint Medical Program (JMP)**

Rural / Remote Admissions Scheme (RRAS) Policy

1. ADMISSIONS

1.1. Application

Applicants wishing to be considered under RRAS are required to:

- a) complete a direct University on-line Bachelor of Medicine-JMP application form, choosing the Rural/Remote Admissions Scheme option, and submit the form by 5.00 pm on the closing date in the year prior to the year in which admission is sought. The closing date for applications will be the on-time closing date (ie, end September) for UAC applications; and
- b) lodge a UAC application with the Universities Admission Centre, which includes a preference for the Bachelor of Medicine - JMP (UAC Code 780000-CSP), by the November UAC closing date for late applications; and
- c) Register with the UMAT Office at ACER to undertake the Undergraduate Medicine and Health Sciences Admission Test (UMAT) by the final closing date for application.

If an applicant does not lodge all three of the applications outlined above, by the respective closing dates, they will not be eligible for consideration.

Candidates who apply to be considered under RRAS are not permitted to also lodge a standard (non-rural) Bachelor of Medicine - JMP direct application. Applicants who are deemed not to satisfy the rural/remote criteria will be advised by mail and their application will be automatically transferred to the standard CSP applicant pool.

To be eligible for admission applicants must satisfy the rural/remote assessment, the academic requirement and the Personal Qualities requirement as specified below.

1.2. Assessment of Rurality

An applicant's rural/remote status will be assessed based on the information provided with the RRAS application.

The information requested includes:

- a) schools attended by the candidate (Kindergarten through to Year 12)
- b) the location of any work experience
- c) higher education details - location
- d) employment history - location
- e) a reference from a rural community leader (supporting and validating the student's rural status)
- f) current and previous residential addresses

Note: additional factors may be taken into consideration where deemed appropriate by the Bachelor of Medicine – JMP Admissions Sub-Committee.

In order to satisfy the rural/remote criteria students would need to provide evidence that they have resided for 5 years, cumulative or consecutively, in a designated rural/remote region from the age of 5 years. The University of Newcastle/University of New England will classify regions as being rural/remote using the RRAS Classification system which is based on the Commonwealth Governments Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas classification (RRMA). The Universities reserve the right to

conduct checks on any documentation provided in support of the RRAS application.

Only Australian citizens and Australian Permanent residents may apply for entry under RRAS (New Zealand citizens are ineligible to apply).

Students who are deemed not to satisfy the rural/remote criteria will be advised by mail and their application will be automatically transferred to the standard CSP applicant pool.

1.3. Academic Requirements

To satisfy the academic requirement, an applicant must:

- a) have achieved a UAI of at least 93.8 in the New South Wales Higher School Certificate or interstate equivalent (or 90.6 for applicants completing their HSC, or equivalent, at a school in a designated rural or remote location); or
- b) have completed at least one full-time year (or equivalent) of approved study at a higher education institution and have achieved results that average at close to credit level for a completed qualification (requirements are slightly higher for incomplete studies).

The determination of academic eligibility will be based on the applicant's most recent study **except** in the case where an applicant has undertaken one or more years of tertiary study and subsequently completes secondary studies. In such a case the applicant's most recent tertiary studies will be used to determine academic eligibility.

1.4. Personal Qualities Requirement

Applicants will be required to have satisfied both stages of the Assessment of Personal Qualities: Undergraduate Medicine and Health Sciences Admission Test (UMAT) and the interview.

To be eligible to be invited to the interview an applicant must achieve a UMAT score at the level determined each year by the JMP Committee for admission under RRAS. The required score will be based on the performance of the RRAS applicant pool in any given year.

1.5. Selection

- a) Only those applicants who satisfy the rural/remote criteria, the assessment of personal qualities requirements and who satisfy the minimum academic requirement will be eligible for consideration for admission to the Bachelor of Medicine - JMP under the RRAS.
- b) RRAS applicants will be ranked for selection in descending order of merit according to their interview rank. Applicants with the same interview rank will be sub-ranked on the basis of their UMAT score.
- c) The JMP Committee will determine how the RRAS places are distributed across the University of Newcastle and University of New England.
- d) Offers will be made to RRAS applicants until the available RRAS places within the Bachelor of Medicine - JMP are filled.

1.6. Personal Health Requirements

As with all applicants who are successful in gaining admission to the Bachelor of Medicine – JMP, RRAS applicants who attend for interview will be provided with a statement concerning recommended levels of personal health and fitness to undertake the program. All commencing students will be required to confirm that they have read and understood this statement. Students will also be asked to provide an infectious disease history and immunisation record.

1.7. Deferment of Admission

Deferment of admission will be for one academic year only. The total number of applicants permitted to defer admission to the Bachelor of Medicine - JMP in any one year will not exceed thirty-two. An applicant who wishes to defer admission must apply to do so in writing prior to the expiry date of the offer of admission. Instructions are provided with the UAC offer.

2. CLINICAL PLACEMENTS

2.1. Introduction

Most courses / units within the Bachelor of Medicine - JMP involve clinical placements and these placements vary in length. Students enrolled in the Bachelor of Medicine – JMP will be required to undertake placements at Clinical School locations away from their university of enrolment. During Year 1 and 2 students are primarily allocated to placements close to their university of enrolment. In Years 3, 4 and 5, students are required to undertake clinical attachments in 'away' locations. Students will be required to spend up to 2 semesters away from their university of enrolment (excluding the Year 3 Health Equity Selective placement). Students may elect to undertake placements of up to 2 years in an 'away' location.

The Bachelor of Medicine – JMP requires students to study in different teaching environments and geographical locations for the following reasons:

- a) All students need to experience health care provision and health issues in a range of geographical environments to ensure that a diverse and comprehensive educational experience is attained.
- b) The Commonwealth Government has developed a number of Rural Health Strategies including rural health education initiatives which aim to improve the access to, and health care of, the Australian community in rural and remote areas. Funding under these educational initiatives is only ensured if the Universities satisfy the conditions of enrolment and rural participation attached to these health initiatives.

2.2. Clinical Schools

The Clinical Schools are:

- The School of Rural Medicine (New England) / The Rural Clinical School (Newcastle) consisting of hospitals at Tamworth, Armidale, Taree, Moree and primary care settings across the Upper Hunter and New England regions
- The Greater Newcastle Clinical School consisting of John Hunter, Newcastle Mater, Belmont, Maitland and James Fletcher Hospitals, the Royal Newcastle Centre and primary care settings in the Lower Hunter region
- The Central Coast Clinical School consisting of Gosford and Wyong Hospitals and primary care settings in the Central Coast region

2.3. Allocation

The Commonwealth government has set guidelines with respect to the placement of medical students in rural locations. To ensure funding Universities must abide by these guidelines.

In summary the guidelines state that:

- a) At least 25% of Commonwealth Supported students enrolled in the Bachelor of Medicine - JMP at University of Newcastle/University of New England must undertake a minimum of 12 months of their clinical learning in a rural setting.

- b) All Commonwealth Supported students must undertake at least 4 weeks of clinical or community based learning in a rural environment.

Students who enter the Bachelor of Medicine - JMP under the RRAS should expect to be allocated to rural clinical and community placements of at least 12 months duration (ie away from their university of enrolment) throughout their enrolment in this program.

All Bachelor of Medicine - JMP students will be given the opportunity to nominate their preferred rural location for clinical attachments in Years 3, 4 & 5. RRAS applicants should be aware that a condition of entry under this scheme is the understanding that RRAS students may be allocated to a rural clinical location based on vacancies and that this will not necessarily reflect their stated preference. In addition, RRAS students may be required to undertake rural attachments of longer than 12 months duration to assist the university to reach rural targets for Commonwealth funding requirements.

Students who are allocated to rural clinical locations within NSW will be eligible to apply for financial support for accommodation and travel to and from the rural location. They may also be eligible for financial reimbursement for placements undertaken at rural locations outside of NSW.

Exemption: Students are able to request exemptions from the extended rural attachment by writing to the Program Convenor, Bachelor of Medicine - JMP. Exemptions will only be granted in extenuating circumstances. Exemptions are not possible with respect to the compulsory 4 week rural attachment which all students are required to undertake.

3. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Students admitted under RRAS will be expected to support and promote rural/remote initiatives undertaken by the School of Medicine and Public Health, University of Newcastle and the School of Rural Medicine, University of New England. Including but not limited to:

- a) Assisting with visits to rural/remote high schools to promote the study of medicine and the practice of medicine in rural areas
- b) Being active members of the University of Newcastle Rural Health Club (*Breathhe*). RRAS students will be required to join *Breathhe* on commencement and continue to renew membership annually until the completion of the Bachelor of Medicine program. RRAS students will be required to participate in at least 2 meetings per year (including the Annual General Meeting if possible) and support/participate in at least one other *breathhe* event each year.