

## The Philippines- a preferred destination for medical education?

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**The Philippines is revolutionising medical education by providing affordable and value-for-money learning options at a fraction of the cost. With yearly tuition prices ranging from \$2,000 to \$6,000, it offers an economically realistic option for ambitious professionals worldwide. Furthermore, its curriculum is matched with US standards, ensuring seamless integration into foreign jobs, particularly in North America. This is supported by a strong network of residency programmes in the United States that aggressively seek the expertise of Philippine medical graduates.**

The global medical education system is currently grappling with several pressing challenges. Foremost among these is the critical shortage of healthcare professionals, a problem which is aggravated by the ever-growing demand for healthcare services. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), projections indicate a shortfall of over 15 million health workers by 2030, underscoring the urgent need for action. In addition to this shortage, there is intense competition for medical school seats, particularly in countries such as the US and Canada. This competition further complicates the task of educating and training an adequate number of medical professionals to meet global healthcare demands. Moreover, the high costs and limited availability of seats in medical colleges, notably in countries like India, drive many aspiring doctors to pursue education abroad. However, concerns persist regarding the quality of education and the challenges associated with passing licensing examinations upon returning home, deterring some from this option.

Furthermore, aspiring healthcare professionals increasingly seek international career opportunities, necessitating educational systems that equip them for seamless transitions and success in diverse global healthcare settings. Ensuring the quality of medical education received internationally is paramount, particularly concerning the preparedness of students to pass licensing exams such as the Foreign Medical Graduate Examination (FMGE) upon their return. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from governments, educational institutions, and healthcare organisations. Collaboration is essential to maintain the accessibility, affordability, and high standards of medical education globally, thereby meeting the escalating demand for healthcare professionals and ensuring quality healthcare delivery worldwide.

## **New opportunities in medical education**

The Philippines is revolutionising medical education by providing affordable and value-for-money learning options at a fraction of the cost. With yearly tuition prices ranging from \$2,000 to \$6,000, it offers an economically realistic option for ambitious professionals worldwide. Furthermore, its curriculum is matched with US standards, ensuring seamless integration into foreign jobs, particularly in North America. This is supported by a strong network of residency programmes in the United States that aggressively seek the expertise of Philippine medical graduates. Similarly, to promote global inclusion, the Philippines has an English-medium curriculum that allows students and staff members to communicate and collaborate effectively. Clinical training is a cornerstone of Philippine medical school, providing students with hands-on exposure in real-world healthcare settings early on, fostering clinical abilities and preparing them for future ambitions. Philippine medical schools are accredited by major international authorities such as Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG), the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER) and WHO, which validates the quality of education and opens openings for graduates all over the world.

## **Is the Philippines becoming a preferred destination for medical education?**

The Philippines is rising as a top destination for medical education for several compelling reasons. Firstly, medical school in the Philippines is far more affordable, with typical yearly tuition expenses ranging from \$2,000 to \$6,000. This cost-effectiveness makes it an appealing alternative for budding physicians looking for a high-quality education without breaking the bank. Furthermore, Philippine medical schools provide curricula that are closely aligned with those in the United States, providing smooth transfers for students aiming to foreign jobs. This alignment is critical since it prepares students for licencing exams such as the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE), allowing them to enter competitive healthcare systems such as the United States.

Furthermore, Philippine medical schools have built a strong network of globally recognised residency programmes, notably in the United States. Graduates from these schools are actively sought after by hospitals and healthcare facilities in the United States for residency programmes, demonstrating their trust in the quality of education and training delivered. Another aspect adding to the Philippines' popularity is its English-medium education system, which attracts a varied group of students from all over the world. This linguistic advantage promotes effective communication and collaboration among students and instructors, which enriches the learning environment.

Plus, Philippine medical education places a high value on clinical training, allowing students to obtain vital hands-on experience in real-world healthcare settings from an early age. This hands-on approach improves students' clinical skills while also providing them with the confidence and preparation they need for their future jobs. Furthermore, Philippine medical schools are accredited by prestigious international authorities such as FAIMER and the WHO, ensuring the quality of education and allowing graduates to seek medical jobs worldwide. Furthermore, recent regulatory reforms, such as House Bill 10145, known as "An Act Providing for a Philippine Medical Act," have paved the way for Indian students and other international students to register and practice medicine in the Philippines.

As part of the Philippine government's support for the medical education system, medical schools are accredited by major international organisations such as the FAIMER and the WHO. Also, a recent amendment to the Philippine Medical Act of 1959 has been approved by the House of Representatives, paving the way for Indian students, including those from foreign, to register and practice medicine in the Philippines.

## **Job opportunities and future prospects**

Medical students in the Philippines and globally are greeted with exciting job prospects in the healthcare field. The WHO projects a significant shortage of healthcare professionals worldwide by 2030, indicating a pressing need for skilled medical personnel. This shortage translates into ample opportunities for medical students, not only locally but also on a global scale.

For those aspiring to practice in North America, particularly in the United States, success in the USMLE is crucial. Philippine medical schools have an impressive track record of preparing students for these exams, with pass rates often exceeding 90 per cent. Consequently, graduates from Philippine medical schools are highly sought after by prestigious hospitals and healthcare institutions in the US for their residency programmes, highlighting numerous job openings within the US healthcare system.

Likewise, the Philippines has garnered recognition for its robust medical education standards, with its medical schools accredited by esteemed international organisations like the FAIMER and the WHO. This accreditation facilitates global recognition and enables graduates to pursue medical careers worldwide, expanding the employment opportunities for Filipino medical students beyond national borders.

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