



Registration of Overseas-trained Healthcare Professionals in the UK

Marie-Andrée Jacob, Priyasha Saksena, Amrita Limbu
University of Leeds

Immigration policies, medical professional regulations, and fitness to practise requirements pose several challenges to overseas-trained health professionals in the UK. These challenges pertain not only to the entry of such workers onto the medical registers, but also extend to securing employment, career advancement, and workplace experiences. For example, research findings indicate that international medical graduates or doctors with primary medical qualifications from outside the UK are subject to less favourable evaluations in recruitment, assessments, and career progression compared to UK medical graduates.ⁱ The limited prospects of securing positions often compel many overseas-trained and qualified professionals to accept roles in less desirable locations, geographical areas, and less attractive specialities.ⁱⁱ Visa and immigration requirements and restrictions on remaining in the UK further exacerbate the uncertainties and financial challenges faced by overseas-trained professionals.

The project *Making it to the Registers: Documenting Migrant Carers' Experiences of Registration and Fitness to Practise* aims to offer an account of some of the lived experiences of migrant and refugee health professionals in the UK. The project focuses on how nurses and doctors trained overseas experience the challenging process of obtaining professional registration in the UK.

Making it to the Registers will collaborate with cultural institutions such as the Leeds Playhouse and the Yarn digital community archives platform, to produce, share, and preserve a variety of unheard voices and original insights by migrant health professionals on their experiences of registration in the UK. These experiences will be presented in a variety of formats, including:

- A digital archive of community stories documenting the experiences of overseas-trained health professionals,
- A digitised collection of objects that signify registration to overseas-trained healthcare professionals, curated by Brotherton Special Collections, University of Leeds,
- A youth theatre production at the Leeds Playhouse, which is the UK's first Theatre of Sanctuary, based on the theme of international movement of healthcare workers, and
- An oral history archive of the twenty-five years of activity of our project partner, the British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (BAPIO), on behalf of overseas-trained healthcare professionals, including litigation, campaigning, and lobbying with public bodies.

Through these different streams, our project aims to contribute to academic, policy, and public understandings of how the regulatory tools of the medical professions are experienced by overseas-trained healthcare workers and the activists that support them. By doing so, the project will provide insights for the reform of professional regulation more broadly.

BAPIO is an ideal project partner in this endeavour. BAPIO has been supporting international medical graduates since 1996, monitoring, highlighting, and addressing the difficulties faced by doctors and advocating for positive systems to support healthcare workers. It actively promotes the diversity, equality, and inclusion of all healthcare professionals and has carried out several campaigns against discrimination in education, training, and career progression of overseas-trained health professionals.

The initial phase of the project will involve archival research to understand how professional regulators and institutional bodies historically have influenced, regulated, and enacted the entry of migrant healthcare workers to the UK medical workforce for the past 80 years, going back to the time of the Second World War. This will be followed by the interview phase, during which we will meet with overseas-trained health professionals who have moved to the UK to investigate their experiences of navigating the UK medical regulatory requirements.

If you are interested in sharing your experiences with us, please contact us at makingregisters@leeds.ac.uk.

Please also contact us if you have historical papers/documents that represent your experiences of medical registration in the UK and would like to share them with us.

Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), [Making it to the Registers](#) is a collaboration between the University of Leeds and the University of Bedfordshire. The project team includes Professor Marie-Andrée Jacob (Principal Investigator, University of Leeds), Professor Nasreen Ali (Co-Investigator, University of Bedfordshire), Dr Priyasha Saksena (Co-Investigator, University of Leeds), Dr Amrita Limbu (Research Fellow, University of Leeds), and Dr Bismillah Sehar (Senior Research Fellow, University of Bedfordshire).

ⁱ Wolf et al (2016) *Fair Training Pathways for All: Understanding Experiences of Progression*, General Medical Council; Valero-Sanchez, I, McKimm, J, and Green, R (2017) A helping hand for international medical graduates, *BMJ* 359: j5230.

ⁱⁱ BAPIO (2021) *Bridging the Gap: Tackling Differential Attainment in the Medical Profession*, British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin.