

Student Questions

What is the Flinders South Australia Rural Medical (SARM) Program and where is it located?

Flinders University is committed to positively impacting communities and holds a vital role in medical education, research and clinical education in rural and regional South Australia. To further cement that commitment, Flinders are introducing the South Australia Rural Medical (SARM) Program.

The four-year graduate entry course has been designed for aspiring rural medical professionals, offering the Doctor of Medicine (MD) program in South Australian rural locations. The SARM Program seeks applicants who want to be part of making a difference in rural healthcare. Students will study the MD entirely in a rural South Australian location and live within the communities where they will work and study. Priority admission is for residents of rural South Australia, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander applicants and applicants from interstate with rural backgrounds. Applicants from non-rural backgrounds who wish to pursue a career in rural medicine are also able to apply.

Students enrolled in the SARM Program will be required to study the entirety of the four-year MD in a rural South Australian location.

As part of the admissions process, prospective students will need to apply and preference to undertake Years 1 and 2 of the Program at one of the following sites.

- Riverland (Renmark and/or Berri)
- Greater Green Triangle (Mount Gambier)

Up to 46 places will be available each year. 23 places will be offered in Mount Gambier and 23 will be offered in the Riverland.

Preferences will be considered but are not guaranteed.

Applicants offered a place in the Program at either location above, will then preference (in first year of the course) to study years 3 and 4 in one of the following rural regions.

- Riverland
- Greater Green Triangle
- Hills Mallee Fleurieu
- Barossa Valley

Preferences will be considered but are not guaranteed.

Students will be required to live in/relocate to the rural location they are allocated. Students may be eligible to receive subsidised accommodation and relocation reimbursement.

Students will be required to live in the region they are offered to attend regular face-to-face teaching.

With up to 46 places available annually, the SARM Program is the gateway to a fulfilling rural medical career.

What support do students get for travelling to the rural regions?

In years 1 and 2, students will be required to live in the region they are offered so they can attend regular face-to-face teaching. This region in years 1 and 2 will be the student's 'home' campus and they will need to find their own accommodation. There is no relocation assistance or subsidised accommodation available for students moving to their home campus. Students needing accommodation are strongly encouraged to contact local real estate agents in preparation.

For students who are allocated to a different rural region in years 3 and 4, a relocation reimbursement will be available. The University offers subsidised accommodation across the regions for clinical placements according to eligibility requirements.

There will likely be some requirement for local travel within a student's allocated rural region for particular learning experiences in years 3 and 4. A mileage subsidy will be available for necessary travel.

What does a typical week look like?

Year 1 and Year 2 – The first two years of the course aims to start to develop the student's basic biomedical knowledge, the application of that knowledge, to demonstrate their ability to make simple decisions about patients, to communicate, to understand the Australian Health Care System, to become a self-regulated learner, a responsible group member and leader, and to demonstrate appropriate professionalism.

Students will participate in a mix of lectures, workshops, tutorials, practical sessions, project work and independent study at their nominated home campus (Mt Gambier or the Riverland).

Year 3 – A typical week includes weekly GP led consulting sessions in the student's allocated GP Practice, as well as weekly face to face and/or online interactive tutorials/workshops, clinical case discussions along with clinical simulation teaching sessions. Students will see a variety of patients in local health settings and hospitals, participate in ward rounds and experience specialist consulting/theatre sessions.

Year 4 - In year four, all MD students undertake six-week rotations in various medical disciplines. Local rural clinicians provide structured teaching during these rotations. Virtual teaching and learning platforms are utilised to support the program.

Learning opportunities are provided through participation at clinical meetings, visits to relevant agencies and observation of experienced practitioners.

This year also includes two weeks (mid-year) of intensive teaching and 2 weeks of Intern shadowing. Year 4 aims for students to develop competency in each of the eleven course learning outcomes, to the level of a graduate ready for commencement of internship and provisional registration as a medical practitioner.

Is there student accommodation available?

In years 1 and 2, students will be required to live in the region they are offered so they can attend regular face-to-face teaching. This region in years 1 and 2 will be the student's 'home' campus and they will need to find their own accommodation.

There is **no** relocation assistance or subsidised accommodation available for students moving to their home campus. Students needing accommodation are strongly encouraged to contact local real estate agents in preparation.

For students who are allocated to a different rural region in years 3 and 4, a relocation reimbursement will be available. The University offers subsidised accommodation across the regions for clinical placements according to eligibility requirements.

How often do students need to travel?

There will be minimal travel required in years 1 and 2, except to the campus and some external sites, such as GP clinics and visits to the local hospital that are deemed necessary for your learning experience.

In years 3 and 4, travel to allocated clinics, hospitals and other health facilities within the region will be required.

Do I need a vehicle?

Yes, it is strongly recommended that students have access to a vehicle in years 1 and 2 and will definitely require a vehicle in years 3 and 4.

Is there childcare available on campus?

No childcare is specifically available on rural campuses however each region has several local childcare facilities.

Is the curriculum and assessment the same for all students across all MD locations?

The curriculum and assessments are the same across the Doctor of Medicine Program based in metropolitan SA and the Doctor of Medicine Program in the Northern Territory (the Northern Territory Medical Program (NTMP)).

How does Flinders ensure quality education in a rural setting?

Students will study an innovative curriculum at Flinders. The Doctor of Medicine program is developed in collaboration with industry and emphasises evidence-based practice — meaning that students gain future-focused knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the workforce, informed by the latest health and medical research. Students will have access to supported learning with a hands-on approach. A considerable amount of the learning is provided through clinical exposure accompanied by formal teaching from a variety of rural academics and clinicians.

Structured learning is undertaken in small groups with peers and includes case-based tutorials, clinical skills workshops, and simulation.

What clinical opportunities are available for students?

The opportunity to learn and consolidate skills aimed at preparing students for Junior Doctor years are provided across years 3 and 4 of the MD program. Students will be immersed in rural general practice, local hospitals, and health services to learn about the approaches to healthcare in context of smaller communities. Supervising doctors will provide students with patient exposure and allow participation in supervised procedural work. The consulting rooms of rural doctors' practices will provide a vital opportunity to observe a wide variety of medical conditions.

What support services does Flinders offer for students in a rural environment?

There are dedicated student support staff on campus and a wide range of support and services available at Flinders to help you succeed. More information is available via the [Support and Services Directory](#)

How do students engage with the local community?

Community relationships form the backbone of the SARM Program. Our staff and students live, work, play and learn in rural communities across South Australia. Flinders are passionate about providing high quality education, research, and health care solutions. For students, one of the most rewarding aspects of the SARM Program is being part of the community that they are learning and living in. Students are encouraged to immerse themselves by exploring the local regions, and through various community engagement events including:

- Sporting Clubs
- Service Club Projects i.e. Rotary, men's shed etc.
- Music/Arts Societies
- Volunteering with Aged Care or in general
- Being present in community i.e. attending local events

Am I eligible for any scholarships?

There are scholarships relevant to rural origin students studying a health discipline:

<https://www.flinders.edu.au/content/dam/documents/colleges/cmph/flinders-rural-health/rural-health-scholarships.pdf>

Other scholarships are also offered by Flinders University that students may be eligible for, please visit the [Scholarships at Flinders](#) page.

What are the facilities like in the SA Rural Medical (SARM) Program?

Flinders University has a large presence in our state's regional areas, including Barossa Valley, Hills Mallee Fleurieu, Riverland and Greater Green Triangle. Campuses provide students with video conference and lecture facilities, consulting rooms, large clinical practice workshop suites and student common facilities to provide students with a comfortable, friendly, and safe working environment.

What opportunities are available for research and innovation in my study?

Advanced Studies (AS) is a compulsory research and scholarship theme integrated across all four years of the MD program. It requires medical students to undertake supervised research activities or identified postgraduate coursework.

Advanced Studies research projects span across many disciplines broadly related to Medicine and are conducted in collaboration with clinical, academic and research staff within and across all Flinders related sites.

What makes the Flinders SA Rural Medical (SARM) Program unique?

Flinders University is a leader in providing medical education and established the first South Australian Rural Clinical School in Renmark in 1997. The SARM Program is the first end to end rural medical program in South Australia. That means, it is the first medical program that students can study their entire degree outside of metropolitan Adelaide.

It is unique because Flinders is the only SA university that offers a program that will have as many students studying outside of metropolitan Adelaide, at the same time as students studying in metropolitan

SA. The Northern Territory Medical Program (NTMP), which has been underway since 2011 has informed the development of the SARM Program. Students will learn with a cohort of students in their local region, across rural SA, and across five regions of the Northern Territory. It is the only medical program taught across the entire Australian Central Corridor.

How can I apply for the Flinders SA Rural Medical (SARM) Program?

Up to 46 places will be available each year. 23 places will be offered in Mount Gambier and 23 offered in the Riverland.

The SARM Program offers Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) and are non-bonded. Non-Bonded Places have no commitments after successful completion of the MD.

Priority entry is given to South Australian rural residents, particularly residents of the regions where the program is offered including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents. South Australians from other locations are strongly encouraged to apply as are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander applicants from anywhere in Australia. Rural residents from other Australian States and Territories and applicants with a strong interest in working rurally following graduation are also eligible to apply.

The program is not available to international applicants.

[Click here](#) for further information on how to apply.

Can I transfer out of the SA Rural Medical Program into the Flinders Medical program run at Metropolitan SA?

No. Due to strict allocation of places in the Doctor of Medicine program, there is no availability to transfer from the SARM Program to the Flinders Medical Program run in metropolitan SA or the Northern Territory Medical Program.

Can I transfer out of the SA Rural Medical Program into other Flinders University courses?

There are formal exit pathways out of the MD under extenuating circumstances.

Is there easy access to hospitals and other healthcare facilities for clinical training?

Yes, you will be immersed in rural general practice, local hospitals, and health services across all our regions to learn about the approaches to health care in the context of smaller communities.

What is the curriculum like? Is it focused on rural health and rural medical practice?

The curriculum and assessments are the same across the Doctor of Medicine Program based in metropolitan South Australia and the Northern Territory Medical Program with a strong emphasis on rural health and rural medical practice.