



**Medical  
Research  
Institute of  
New Zealand**

**Rangahautia  
Te Ora**

## **Student Handbook**

Doctor of Medicine (MD) programme

## ***Aim of the programme***

Doctor of Medicine (MD) is a 'higher' degree based on original research in a field of medicine. The aim of this course is to allow medical graduates to produce a substantial body of published original research in a field of medicine.

## ***Medical Research Institute of New Zealand***

The MRINZ is an independent medical research institute. The mission of the Medical Research Institute of New Zealand (MRINZ) is to investigate the causes of important public health problems, to use this knowledge to improve the prevention and treatment of diseases, and to provide a base for specialist training in medical research. Our particular focus is on research which has the potential to lead to improvements in clinical management.

The MRINZ has a strong track record of internationally acknowledged research achievement. In its first 10 years of operation, the MRINZ has had over 250 publications, including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, book chapters, major reviews, editorials or commentaries. During this period, 5 medical graduates employed at MRINZ have been awarded a PhD or MD from a New Zealand or United Kingdom university, and a further 6 medical graduates are currently undertaking MD or PhD theses at a New Zealand or United Kingdom university.

## ***Why should you consider taking this course?***

You should consider this course if you:

- are a medical graduate
- are currently engaged in, or wish to be engaged in, original clinical research at MRINZ
- Three years, comprising 2 years of fulltime research, with a further period equivalent to one year of fulltime research comprising pre-research planning, analysis and write-up of the results is sufficient to produce original research at doctoral level. This further period, equivalent to one year of fulltime research may be spent working in a primarily clinical role but involved in preparation prior to the period of fulltime research, e.g. literature review, grant applications, Ethics Committee applications, organising pilot studies and then undertaking analysis and preparation of manuscripts following the period of fulltime research.
- are keen to write journal articles in high quality international medical journals rather than a thesis
- want to be supervised by highly regarded and experienced academics and clinicians who will be closely involved throughout the research process.

- ultimately see yourself working as either a clinician-researcher, a University academic (e.g. Senior Lecturer) or in the private sector (e.g. pharmaceutical company or health device manufacturer).

### ***What do I need to do to complete the MD?***

You need to:

1. Three years, comprising a minimum of 2 years of near fulltime research in which the MRINZ is a major partner. Most commonly you will be employed by MRINZ but for some people the primary employer will be a District Health Board or University.
2. Be sole author or co-author of three original journal articles published in peer-reviewed journals on a single theme.
3. Submit
  - (a) A curriculum vitae.
  - (b) A 5,000 to 20,000 word summary which provides a synthesis of the work, placing it in broad context and producing a coherent set of conclusions.
  - (c) A series of published original work in a field of medicine, including at least three peer-reviewed publications. It is expected that at least two of these will be in international general or specialty medical journals, and in at least two, the candidate will be the first author. An outline of the student's role in each paper is to be included in the thesis.
  - (d) A statutory declaration identifying that the submitted work is original and stating that it has not previously been submitted by the candidate for a university qualification. Where co-authored work is submitted, those parts which are the candidate's own work shall be identified.
  - (e) An electronic copy of the work upon which the application is based. If minor editorial corrections are requested these may be done before a soft bound copy is presented to MRINZ.

### ***How will the MD be assessed?***

The work submitted for MD is examined by three examiners.

- (a) The submitted work shall be submitted to three examiners appointed by the Board on the recommendation of the Director, at least one of whom shall be an overseas expert in the field.

- (b) The supervisors or any member of MRINZ staff shall not be an examiner.
- (c) The examiners shall supply a written report on the thesis, together with a preliminary recommendation for an examination result.

***What qualifications do I need to apply?***

1. MBChB or equivalent
2. Enthusiasm for research
3. Ability to work independently under supervision
4. Fluent spoken and written English

### ***Do I have what it takes to do an MD?***

Staff at MRINZ will be happy to give advice. You can find plenty of general information about what makes good graduate students (and good supervisors) in publications such as the University of Otago PhD handbook (<http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd/handbook/index.html>).

### ***How much will the course cost?***

The course fee is \$2,000 plus GST, paid once only at the end of the course.

### ***Withdrawals***

A candidate can withdraw from the course at any time after consultation with formal supervisors.

### ***Recruitment and enrolment***

Application for the MRINZ MD can be made at any time. Positions are limited depending on the availability of appropriate projects and appropriately qualified supervisors. These issues can be discussed with the Director, MRINZ. Application forms are available from the Postgraduate Student Administrator, MRINZ ([www.mrinz.ac.nz](http://www.mrinz.ac.nz)).

### ***Where do I get more information and registration forms?***

Phone 04 805 0234 or email the Postgraduate Student Administrator, MRINZ [joanna.read@mrinz.ac.nz](mailto:joanna.read@mrinz.ac.nz)

All NZQA External Evaluation Reviews (EERs) and Monitoring Reports are available for students on request.

GE.009 MD Programme SOP is available on SharePoint or via MRINZ Employee Portfolio (MEP).

### ***Getting started with the course***

This will depend on several issues including the nature of your employment (generally with MRINZ) and the research project (funding, Ethics approval etc).

### ***Student support/Supervision***

The MD is fully supervised. The Director, MRINZ will appoint at least two supervisors to oversee the work of the candidate.

- (a) The primary supervisor will in most cases be an appropriately qualified senior member of the academic staff of the MRINZ, holding a higher degree, a significant publication record and with experience supervising doctoral candidates. Occasionally, and where appropriate the primary supervisor may be a similarly qualified employee of another institution directly involved in the research project.
- (b) The secondary supervisor will be an appropriately qualified clinician and/or academic with a significant publication record and with either direct involvement in the research or significant experience in the particular field of the research.

At the first meeting with the primary supervisor, a future meeting schedule will be decided and an initial plan for the completion of the research will be prepared. Where necessary this will include submissions for funding, Ethics Committee approvals, timelines for enrolments and follow-ups of participants, and a plan for publication of study findings. This timeline will be reviewed at subsequent supervisor meetings to ensure deadlines are being met. The supervisor will be expected to report back to the Board of Studies a summary of these assessments. This allows any major issues to be discussed and, if necessary acted upon, by the Board of Studies, avoiding the possibility that a conflict of personalities between student and supervisor might adversely affect the completion of the degree.

Students undertaking the MD programme at MRINZ will generally be employed by MRINZ and, if so, a personal Employment Contract will detail work duties and responsibilities. If not employed by MRINZ, work duties and responsibilities will be negotiated between the primary employer and MRINZ.

The Supervision Diary will have contact details for the Director of MRINZ, Administrator and supervisor(s). An example of the template used for supervision meetings is on the next page.

All intending applicants will be asked to identify any special learning needs at the time of application. MRINZ staff will formulate a plan for helping the student with a special learning need and communicate this to all staff and the student concerned for their feedback.

**RECORD OF FORMAL SUPERVISORY MEETING(S)**

**NAME OF STUDENT:**

**(Please print)**

**PROJECT Title:**

**Principal Supervisor:**

**Additional Supervisor(s):**

**SUMMARY OF PROGRESS since last recorded meeting (to be completed by the student)**

**Training Record** (details of activities since last supervisory meeting - to be completed by student)

**Supervisor’s Report** (Brief details of any problems and how they have been resolved. Detailed information is required only if student progress is unsatisfactory):

**PLAN OF ACTION until next recorded supervisory meeting** (to be briefly itemised by student, discussed with and approved by, supervisor)

**Student’s concerns/problems/comments:**

Signed: ..... (Supervisor) Date: .....

Signed: ..... (Student)      Date: .....

## **Orientation at MRINZ**

The MRINZ has a comprehensive, formal orientation programme for all new staff. In addition, to help you in the first months of your time at MRINZ, we operate a 'buddy' system where one of the MRINZ staff, generally a research fellow, is appointed to 'show you the ropes' – everything from how the Wellington Hospital library (and especially the electronic section) works to where the best coffee shops in Newtown are. This has been operating successfully for the many overseas (and out-of-town) research fellows that have come to MRINZ and it will work for you too!

## **What should I know about clinical trials?**

As this is a fully supervised degree, you won't be expected to run the trial on your own. However it is important to come to grips with what is called 'Clinical Good Practice'. Important documents to read and guide you are:

1. NZ Regulatory guidelines: *Guideline on the Regulation of Therapeutic Products in New Zealand Part 11: Clinical Trials – regulatory approval and good clinical practice requirements Edition 1.0, January 2011*
2. ICH E6 Good Clinical Practice Guidelines - European Medicines Agency's *Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice (CPMP/ICH/135/95)*. (The NZ guidelines are tied to this document)
3. Declaration of Helsinki 2008
4. HRC Guidelines on Ethics in Health Research 2005
5. MOH Operational Standards for Ethics Committees April 2006
6. CCDHB Research Policy
7. MRINZ GCP training manual
8. Good Clinical Practice for Clinical Trials at MRINZ

All of these are included in the second part of this handbook under the heading 'Good Clinical Practice for Clinical Trials at MRINZ'.

## **Health and safety requirements**

These will be specific to the research project that you are working on. These will be detailed in the research protocol (e.g. handling of medicines, performance of specialised testing, and performing interviews in the community) and where necessary, full training provided.

## **Disciplinary Procedures**



MRINZ expects high standards of behaviour, integrity, honesty and confidentiality. MRINZ approaches the rights of participants in medical research very seriously and will not tolerate any breaches of those rights. Disciplinary procedures are detailed in the Employment Contract of MRINZ employees. For candidates not employed by MRINZ, disciplinary matters will be fully discussed with the primary employer and a process negotiated. This notwithstanding, MRINZ reserves the right to terminate a candidate's involvement on a research project if, after due consideration, they are found to be responsible for a significant breach of the rights of a participant in a research project.

### ***Complaints procedures***

All complaints can be directed either to the Programme Director, Education, or to the Director, MRINZ. All complaints will be tabled at the next meeting of the Board of Studies. Depending on the nature of the complaint (e.g. whether it is an academic or work-related matter), the Programme Director, Education or the Director, MRINZ will reply to the complainant in writing with the response of the Board of Studies. If the complaint concerns one or both of these people, the complaint will be automatically referred to the Trust Board, MRINZ. If, despite consideration by the Trust Board, MRINZ, the complaint has not been resolved, then the student may refer the complaint to the NZQA for consideration and resolution. <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/make-a-complaint/make-a-complaint-about-a-provider/>. The decision of the NZQA would be binding on both parties.

When considering complaints, the MRINZ Board of Studies is bound by the principles of natural justice, and in particular must ensure that:

1. all processes are open, transparent and fair;
2. the Board members are unbiased;
3. all parties to the complaint are:
  - advised of the process to be undertaken
  - given the opportunity to comment on issues (a reasonable period of time should be given for the parties to respond);
  - kept informed of the progress of the complaint
  - advised of the outcome of the review
4. conflicts of interest are avoided or appropriately managed
5. reasons are given for any decisions or recommendations made

### ***Academic Review and Appeals***

Once the examiners have reviewed the material submitted for the MD they may recommend that the submitted work:

- (a) be accepted or be accepted with minor editorial corrections, and the degree be awarded.
- (b) be declined with the requirement to undertake further specified research, to be resubmitted for examination.
- (c) be rejected with no right of resubmission.

Where the examiners cannot agree on a result, the Director shall so report and the Board shall arrive at a decision.

- (a) A candidate shall be permitted to revise and resubmit work for examination once only.
- (b) A candidate cannot appeal the decision of the Board of Studies.

## **MRINZ Code of Conduct**

### **1. INTERNET USE**

- Visiting sites or receiving communications that contain material that is obscene, objectionable, or likely to be offensive.
- Gambling
- Soliciting for personal gain or profit
- Making or posting indecent remarks and proposals
- Passing off personal views as representing those of MRINZ
- Any activity that violates New Zealand law and/or the CCDHB or public service code of conduct

### **2. DRESS CODE**

MRINZ is not formal with its dress code, but does expect staff to be tidily presented when at work. Bare midriffs and jandals are not considered to be an appropriate dress attire, particularly when dealing with study patients.

### **3. UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR/CONDUCT**

A breach of any one of the following rules could result in disciplinary action or possible dismissal.

- The use or possession of illegal drugs while on MRINZ/CCDHB premises or on external work-related duties.
- Attending work under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol so that the employee is or may be unable to perform his/her duties satisfactorily or safely.
- Conduct that may bring MRINZ's reputation into disrepute.
- Non-accidental actions that could result in injury to another employee or patient.

- Harassment, bullying or discriminatory behaviour towards any person including sexual harassment.
- *Sexual Harassment* definition: (Worksafe NZ)

*The Human Rights Act 1993 defines sexual harassment as any unwelcome or offensive sexual behaviour that is repeated, or is of such a significant nature to have a harmful effect, or which contains an implied or overt promise of preferential treatment or an implied or overt threat of detrimental treatment. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated at MRINZ.*

- Removing, taking possession of or deliberate misuse of another employee's personal property without that employee's consent.
- Any breach of obligations that apply in respect of Confidential Information, including unauthorised access, disclosure, copying or use of Confidential Information.
- Falsifying any information, records or other documents.
- Failure to comply with any health and safety policies, instructions or guidelines for the workplace.
- Downloading material which is not work-related, e.g. movies, music etc.

#### **4. MEDIA**

The Director is the designated person to talk to media. Staff are not permitted to discuss MRINZ-related work with the media or do interviews, unless the Director (Professor Richard Beasley) has given permission to do so. There will be times he will designate a senior staff member to talk with media.

#### **5. ADVERTISING**

All advertising, particularly material with the MRINZ logo on it, is to be cleared by the Administrative Manager or Director.

#### ***Standard Operating Procedures***

Students are required to be familiar with the MRINZ MD SOP and other SOPs that may be relevant to their role. These will be made available to you.