

It's cheaper in Russia

There are numerous medical opportunities to lure Indian students



Prof Mikhail Kalinkin, Rector, Tver State Medical Academy



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Russian educational institutes are looking at India with renewed interest. Some are even contemplating tying up with their Indian counterparts. Says Milkina Elena Vladimirovna, Deputy Head, Institute of International Educational Programmes, Tomsk Polytechnic University, part of a delegation of Russian educators who were in the Capital recently, "We are in the advanced stage of negotiation with Anna University in India." With 5150 students, India ranks fourth among all the countries sending students to Russia and 94 per cent of the Indian students there study medicine. Here is an exclusive interview with Prof Mikhail Kalinkin, Rector,

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Tver State Medical Academy, a front-ranking medical institute in Russia, which has the largest number of Indian students among all educational institutions there.

What are the advantages of studying medical science in Russia? Medical schools in Russia offer effective and up-to-date education with indispensable deep theoretical basis. Also, one of the most distinguished features of our medical education is a full every day student-to-patient contact at all clinical classes. This provides a unique opportunity for students and newly graduated doctors to be well skilled in modern diagnostic and treatment approaches.

For an outsider, training, travelling and living in Russia can provide a priceless life experience. The period of

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ELIGIBILITY TO STUDY MEDICINE

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time that students spend abroad can tremendously widen their mental horizons. It is worth mentioning that apart from academic studies, in Russian universities attention is also paid to social, extracurricular activities.

What is also important is that the Government of the Russian Federation strictly regulates the cost of education in Russian medical schools. The expenses paid by students' families are very reasonable and much more affordable, especially in comparison to the universities of the US, western and eastern Europe, Australia or New Zealand.

What are the prospects of global employability once you complete your medical degree? The Tver State Medical Academy is recognised by the UN agencies for health and education. Our graduates work in hospitals, departments of health, medical schools, international and non-government organisa-

tions of more than 70 countries all over the world. We are proud that our graduates are able to pass one of the toughest and recognised exams in the world — the USMLE, getting 99 per cent in their first effort.

What is the fee structure? Is it less than what one would pay at the home country (India)? The fee structure includes the tuition fees, hostel fees, insurance and other related services. It is significantly less than fees at Indian medical schools.

What is the cost of living for a student? The cost of living for a student varies from city to city and depends on individual lifestyle. In Tver, it can fall within the range of \$150-300 per month. If a student prefers to rent a flat he should be ready to pay about \$500 per month.

What are the eligibility criteria? According to Medical Council of India rules, the

minimum qualifications for Indian students for admission to Russian medical universities recognised by the Medical Council of India (including Tver State Medical Academy) is 10+2 pass with a minimum of 50 per cent marks in physics, chemistry and biology. It is 40 per cent in the case of SC/ST. The minimum age of the student should be 17 years. Students should be ready to pass three interviews in biology, chemistry, English or Russian (as per their choice).

What is the medium of instruction? Is it necessary for a student to learn Russian? What is the duration of the course?

Both English and Russian can be the mediums of instruction. Preventing possible misunderstanding, I would like to emphasise that it is possible to study in English, but those who choose English should realise that it is impossible to imagine medical education without practical work with patients. Therefore, it is important for students to learn Russian to communicate with Russian-speaking patients at clinical courses during the last three years of their education. Anyway, living in a Russian-speaking environment, having Russian friends makes the process of mastering the language very easy and comfortable.

For the MBBS course, the duration is 5.8 years in English medium and 6.8 years in Russian medium. For the MS and MD course, the duration is two years, for PhD it is three years.

What are the prospects for higher studies?

After receiving the degree, our graduates are able to work as doctors, public health practitioners; be employed in the pharmaceutical industry or pursue a scientific or educational career.

Can one start practice in Russia on the basis of the degree earned?

Yes, we have many examples where our foreign graduates, including Indians, did stay back in Russia for clinical residency.

What is the visa procedure?

First of all, every student has to obtain an official invitation from the Tver State Medical Academy. This invitation is issued by the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs. With the invitation letter, a student can apply for his student visa to the local Russian Embassy. We and our official partners in India always assist student to obtain visas.

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