phn NORTH WESTERN MELBOURNE

An Australian Government Initiative

Beyond the job ad: a practical guide to hiring GPs

Tuesday 27 October 2026

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We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging as well as pay respects to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the session with us today.



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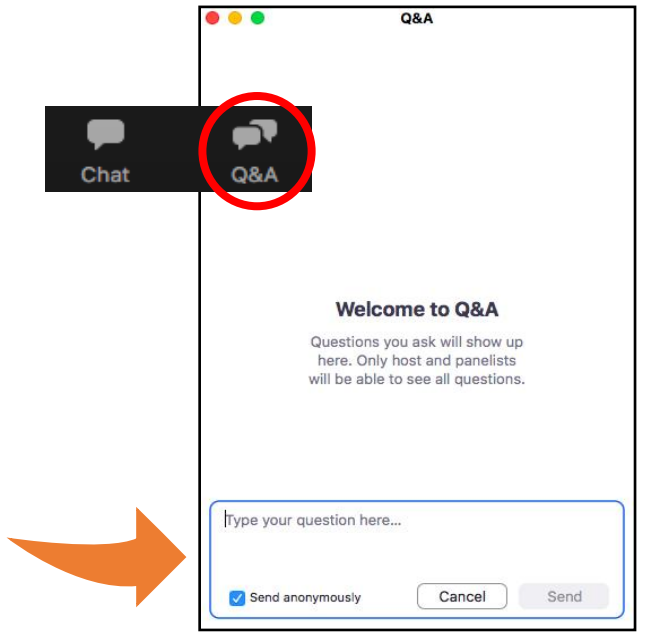
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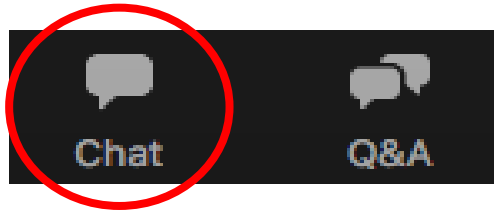


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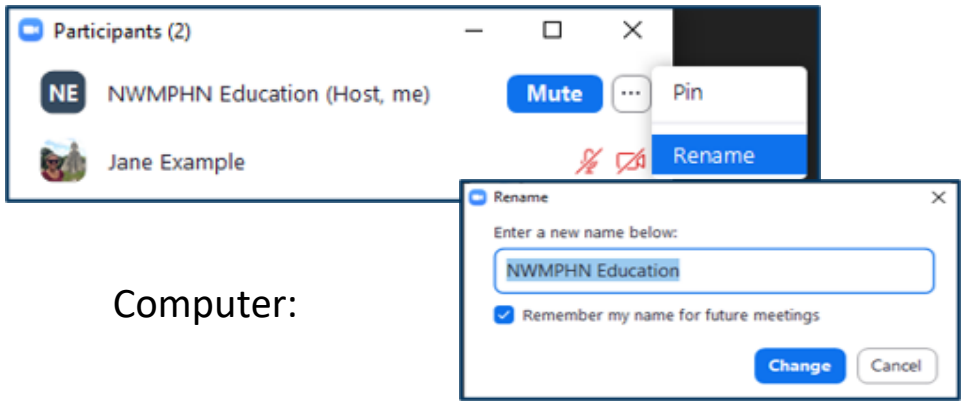


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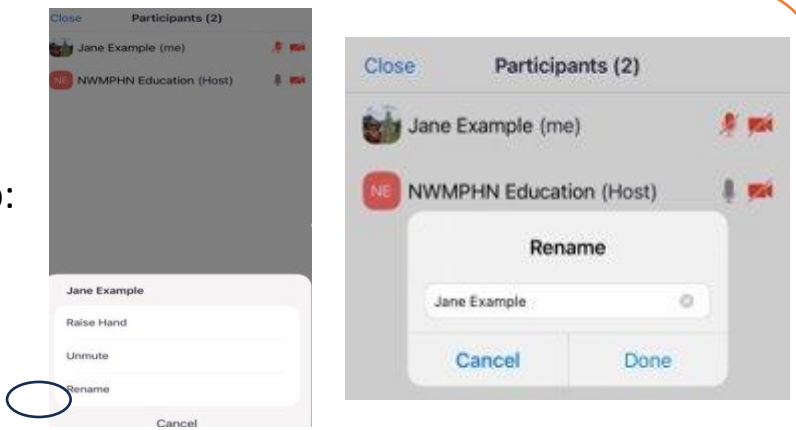
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Speakers

Gemma Gough is a senior practice advisor with Avant Practice Solutions, bringing more than 23 years of healthcare experience across Australia and overseas.

Laura Gass is a Senior HR Consultant with a strong background in the healthcare sector, partnering with medical practices, healthcare leaders and clinical teams to deliver practical, people-focused HR solutions. She has extensive experience supporting healthcare organisations across the full employee lifecycle, including recruitment, workforce planning, employee relations, performance management, engagement and retention. Her experience spans both hospital and healthcare settings, providing trusted HR advice on complex workforce matters, organisational change, leadership coaching and compliance.
With over 7 years of HR experience across healthcare and large-scale organisations, Laura combines commercial HR expertise with a deep understanding of the unique challenges facing healthcare providers, helping practices build engaged, high-performing and compliant workplaces.

Beyond the job ad: a practical guide to hiring GPs

Laura Gass
Senior HR Advisor, Avant Practice Solutions

Gemma Gough
Senior Practice Advisor, Avant Practice Solutions

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Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, Avant acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and their connections to land, sea and community. As a national organisation, we pay our respects to Elders past and present, of the lands on which we gather and work, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



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Agenda

- The complete hiring journey
- Workforce planning and role design
- Employer value proposition
- Role design and advertisement
- Multiple channels and proactive sourcing
  - Registration pathways for overseas-qualified GPs
  - Overseas-qualified GPs: visas and Medicare access
  - Overseas GPs: work rights and Medicare billing access
- Structured selection process
- Offer and contracting
- Onboarding for confidence and connection
- Building retention into recruitment
- Compliance and recruitment risk
- Key takeaways

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Workforce planning and role design for GPs

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1

Forecast patient demand

Look at wait times for appointments, new-patient enquiries, local population growth and planned GP leave or retirements over the next three years.

2

Work out the GP sessions you need

Turn demand into weekly sessions, including after-hours, home and aged-care visits and telehealth. The gap against current GPs is your hiring target.

3

Define the clinical profile

Name the skills the practice is missing, such as women's health, skin checks, chronic disease care or procedures, and whether the GP will supervise registrars.

4

Choose the engagement model

Decide on contractor or employee arrangements, the billing approach, the service fee or pay rate, and the minimum sessions you expect each week.

5

Confirm eligibility before you advertise

Set the fellowship (FRACGP or FACRRM) and Medicare provider number requirements, and check your DPA status if you will consider overseas-trained GPs.



Employer value proposition: why GPs join you

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1 Ask your GPs

Ask current GPs and recent leavers why they stay, why they left and what would keep them.

2 Define the offer

Write down what you give GPs: sessions, fees, support staff, patient mix and room to grow.

3 Back it up

Check every claim holds today, with real figures for billings, nurse support, rooms and mentoring.

4 Use it widely

Carry the same message through your ads, website, interviews, contract and first week.



What GPs weigh up when choosing a practice

Flexible sessions

Choice of days, hours and leave that fit around family life.

Fair earnings

A clear service fee split and help building a patient list.

Strong support

Nurses, reception and billing staff so GPs can focus on care.

Room to grow

Peer support, CPD, teaching and special-interest work.

Advertising: market an opportunity, not a vacancy

Every ad answers: Why this practice? Why this location? Why move my life for it?

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1 Research first

- Review competing GP vacancies in your catchment.
- Compare service fees, guarantees, hours, nurse support, DPA and incentives.
- Find the gap: what you offer that others don't.

2 Create the hook

- Skip the standard "VR GP required" opening.
- Lead with your strongest point of difference.
- Make the first 2–3 lines earn the next 30 seconds.

3 Sell the whole move

- Recruit the GP, but speak to the family.
- Show housing, schools, commute, lifestyle and partner work.
- Use real local photos, video and a current GP's words.

4 Go to the candidate

- Post on recruitGP, SEEK, medical job boards and PHN or college channels.
- Promote on LinkedIn; source passive GPs via referrals and registrars.
- Name a direct contact and reply within two working days.

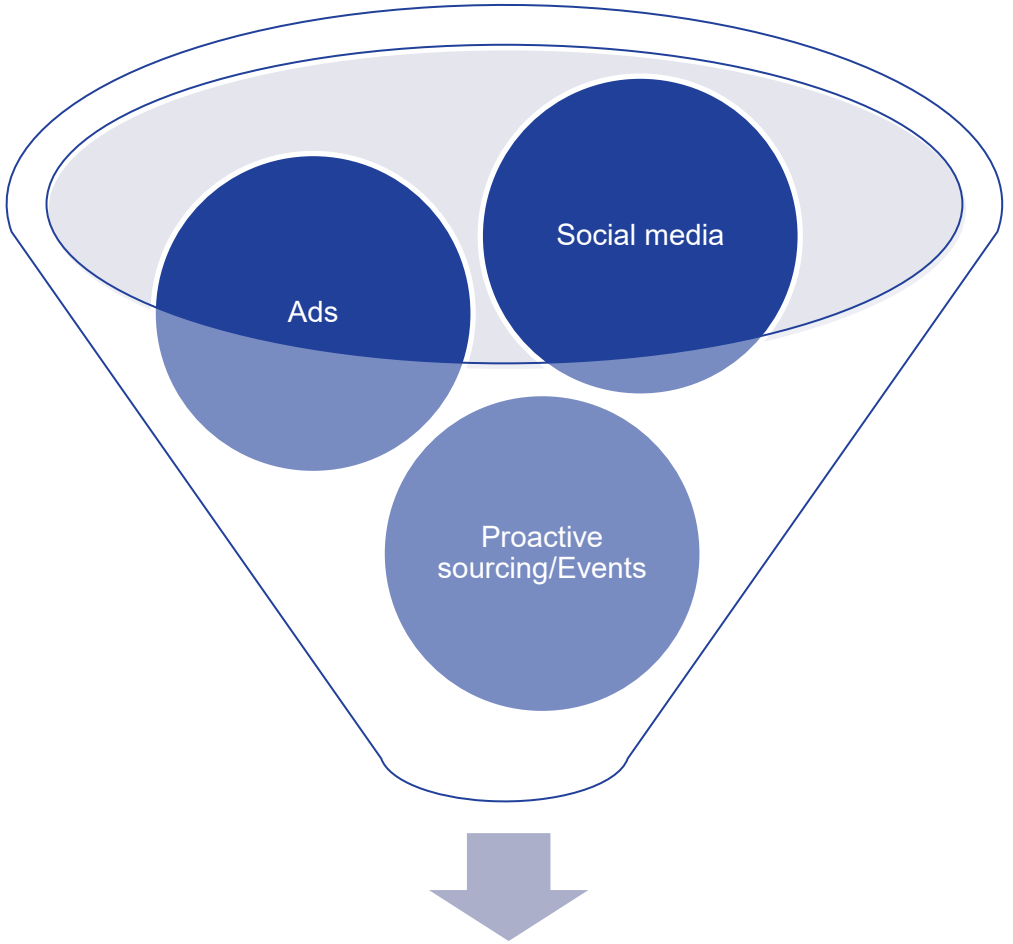


Every GP ad states

The role → Earnings → Eligibility → Support → Culture

Multiple channels and proactive sourcing

- **Advertise where GPs look**
  - Medical job boards, college careers pages and your own website, all with the same ad.
- **Use social media**
  - Post on LinkedIn and GP groups, with photos of your real team and rooms.
- **Ask your network**
  - Offer staff and GPs a referral bonus, and keep in touch with past locums.
- **Train your future GPs**
  - Host registrars so they know your practice before they reach fellowship.
- **Meet GPs in person**
  - Attend GP conferences, university careers nights and local medical events.



Registration pathways for overseas-qualified GPs

Start with: the doctor's primary medical qualification, GP specialist qualification and practice history.

1 Expedited specialist pathway

For SIMGs with a GP specialist qualification on the Medical Board's accepted list.

- Apply directly to Ahpra and the Medical Board.
- Leads to specialist registration.
- 6 months' supervised practice, plus orientation, cultural safety education and workplace-based assessment.

2 Specialist pathway

For overseas-trained GP specialists whose qualification is not on the expedited list.

- RACGP or ACRRM assesses comparability.
- Outcome may be substantially or partially comparable.
- Complete prescribed supervised practice or assessment, then specialist registration.

3 Competent authority pathway

For eligible IMGs assessed by, and with practice in, a recognised competent authority system.

- No AMC examinations required.
- Usually provisional registration first.
- 12 months' supervised practice, then general registration.

4 Standard pathway

For IMGs who do not qualify for the other pathways.

- AMC assessment and examination pathway.
- Limited or provisional registration may apply.
- PESCI may be required for a specific GP position; GP training or fellowship may follow.

Common first steps

Confirm eligibility → **Verify primary source (AMC/ECFMG)** → **Secure a position** → **Register and meet supervision**

Overseas GPs: work rights and Medicare billing access

Two workstreams must align: the GP's right to work in Australia, and eligibility to bill Medicare at the practice location.

Visa and work rights

- **Skills in Demand, subclass 482**
  Common employer-sponsored temporary option; 1–4 years; GP works in the nominated occupation for the sponsor.
- **Employer Nomination Scheme, subclass 186**
  Permanent employer-sponsored pathway where eligibility is met, directly or after temporary sponsorship.
- **Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional, subclass 494**
  Provisional regional visa for up to 5 years, for eligible roles in designated regional Australia.
- **Other skilled, family or permanent visas**
  Some GPs already hold unrestricted work rights or qualify independently; immigration advice confirms the best pathway.

Medicare and provider number

A Medical registration
Hold the appropriate Ahpra and Medical Board registration.

B Check s19AB and DPA
Most overseas-trained GPs need an eligible DPA location, or another exemption or program, to access Medicare benefits.

C Check s19AA
Permanent residents and citizens generally need specialist registration, or an approved s3GA training placement.

D Apply for a provider number
Create PRODA, access HPOS and apply for the initial provider number (or use HW019). Numbers are location-specific.

E Billing can start
Only once the provider number and Medicare eligibility or exemption are approved for that location.

Recruitment check before billing

Registration → Work rights → DPA / s19AB → s19AA → Provider no. → Billing starts

Run a structured selection process

Assess every candidate the same way: eligibility, capability, motivation and practice fit.

1 Screen

- Confirm registration pathway, work rights, s19AB/DPA and start date.
- Desired hours, service fee, location and family needs.

2 Interview

- Same panel, questions and scoring sheet for every candidate.
- Test clinical interests, patient mix, teamwork and cultural safety.

3 Verify

- Check Ahpra registration and conditions, qualifications and indemnity.
- Speak to two recent clinical referees; complete required checks.

4 Decide

- Score against agreed criteria and record the rationale.
- Offer promptly in writing: strong GPs often weigh several offers.



Manage the offer and contracting

Keep momentum after the decision: strong GPs often weigh several offers at once.

1

Align

- Agree sessions, hours and billing split
- Confirm location and start date
- Check DPA/s19AB and provider number timing

2

Offer

- Send a written offer promptly after the decision
- Set out service fee, support and incentives
- Name one contact for questions and negotiation

3

Check

- Ahpra registration and any conditions
- Right to work or visa sponsorship
- Medicare provider number and indemnity

4

Contract

- Use the right agreement: employee or contractor
- Get legal and tax advice on status
- Agree notice, leave and restraint terms

5

Close

- Signed agreement and pre-start checklist
- Book induction, IT access and rosters
- Keep in touch until day one

Candidate experience at every stage

Reply within two working days → **One named contact** → **Update weekly** → **Explain any delays** → **Welcome before day one**

Onboard for connection, recruit for retention

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Onboarding for confidence and connection



82%[1] higher retention of new hires with strong onboarding

- **Before day one:** welcome pack, roster, IT, rooms and provider number ready
- **First week:** clinical and systems induction with a lighter booking load
- **Buddy up:** a named clinical mentor plus a practice contact
- **Settle the family:** help with housing, schools, partner work and local networks
- **Check in:** structured conversations at 30, 60 and 90 days

Building retention into recruitment



30%+[2] of first-year salary lost on a hire that does not work out

- **Hire for fit:** test motivation, location and family fit at selection
- **Be honest early:** show real billings, hours and patient mix before the offer
- **Plan growth:** agree clinical interests, training and fellowship support
- **Keep it fair:** flexible sessions and transparent billing arrangements
- **Listen and act:** stay interviews at 6 and 12 months, exit feedback reviewed

1. Brandon Hall Group, onboarding research for Glassdoor.
2.

Key takeaways

Plan before you post

Agree the sessions, billings and patient mix needed, then design the role.

Sell the opportunity

Lead every ad with your EVP: why this practice, this place and this move.

Use many channels

Mix job boards, networks and direct approaches; reply within two days.

Check eligibility early

Confirm the registration pathway, visa and s19AB/DPA status at first screen.

Select fairly, offer fast

Score every candidate the same way and put a written offer out promptly.

Onboard to retain

A planned first 90 days and family support keep GPs beyond year one.



Need help recruiting a GP? Talk to us.

Gemma Gough
Senior Practice Advisor
Avant Practice Solutions

Phone 03 8548 0369
Email gemma.gough@avant.org.au

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