

BRIDGE Newsletter

INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED MEDICAL DOCTORS (ITMDs)

VOL.5, FALL 2019

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Message from the Co-founder and Program Manager, ITMD Bridging Program, Ryerson University

Ryerson University's Internationally Trained Medical Doctors (ITMD) Bridging Program began in Winter 2015, and since then, has achieved outstanding success. The program is the first of its kind in Canada to help support ITMDs' professional development. With approximately 1,054 applications received to date, 180 ITMDs have been trained by the program with an additional 26 students studying in the 10th Cohort. We are extremely proud of the program's diversity; the ITMD program's graduates represent 44 different countries from around the world. Over 86% of our graduates have successfully transitioned into positions in the non-licensed health sector or are pursuing further studies in higher public health education. The ITMD Bridging Program continues to gain momentum, and we are excited to witness its growth in the coming years.

The ITMD Bridging Program has continued to evolve and improve over the years, based on both students' and stakeholders' feedback, to ensure that we continue to meet the professional needs of ITMDs in Ontario. We have worked very hard to create an innovative program that will provide ITMDs with the skills, knowledge, and experience to help them to achieve their goals. Each component of the program aims to provide ITMDs with tools that will help them become successful in the Canadian healthcare sector.

I feel so privileged to have been able to work with such intelligent, hard-working, and motivated ITMDs through



Dr. Shafi U. Bhuiyan

the bridging program. You are an amazing group of students and it makes me so proud to see the positive impact that you make to your peers and in your communities. Thank you for your passion for learning, professionalism, respectfulness, and positive attitude.

Also, heartiest of thanks to our instructors for their commitment to ensuring the best learning experience for our students. I am extremely grateful for our practicum partners and mentors for providing our students with such enriched learning opportunities, and for their continued support and mentorship. I am confident that our coursework and practicum placements have provided our students with the tools they need to be successful in their future endeavours.

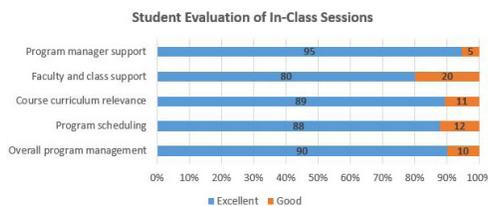
I would also like to sincerely thank The Chang School, our supporting partners, and the Government of Ontario. We are so grateful for your continued support and assistance that has allowed the ITMD Bridging Program to flourish.

Evidence-Based Outcome of ITMD Bridging Program

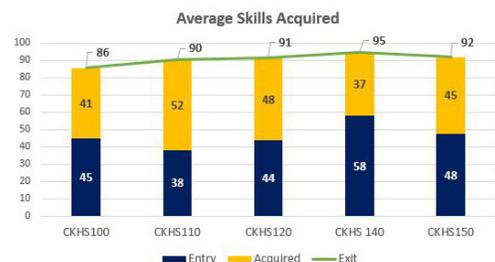
The Internationally Trained Medical Doctors (ITMD) Bridging Program is a professional development hub for immigrant doctors.

While medical knowledge is a common ground for participants, familiarity with diverse cultures, adaptability to a foreign workplace, and acquisition of advance information are some additional skills learned through the ITMD Bridging Program. Participants' previously acquired skills and knowledge are seen to be enhanced by almost double by the end of the in-class sessions. An average of 47% performance quality is boosted up to 91% through added value from the program's course offerings.

Furthermore, the program evaluation of in-class sessions establishes that nearly 88% of participants acknowledge excellent experience from the program's components.



The combination of in-class learning and practicum experience acts as an aided tool to boost the efficacy of every participant. The ITMD Bridging Program has been successful to mitigate challenges for ITMDs in Canada.



ITMD Participants



ITMD Bridging Program: Cohort 10 Orientation (Fall 2019)

**Fall 2019
Cohort 10**

15 countries

**26 participants
(9 males / 17 females)**

Alumni Inspirations



**Ornela Ademovi (from Albania),
Cohort 9**

Learning about the ITMD bridging program occurred amidst such uncertainty about my career in Canada. What a difference it made! I was introduced to a world of skills and opportunities that I would have otherwise needed years to acquire, while learning from the experience of other doctors from around the world, which made me feel I was not alone in my quest. Most importantly, I had the honour of knowing and greatly benefitting from Dr. Shafi Bhuiyan, the program director and a leader in global health, and his great team. His expertise, enthusiasm, and dedication rekindled my long time interest in global health, and helped me envisage with confidence my chances of joining the Canadian healthcare system in the future.



**Rubaica Fidvi (from India),
Cohort 9**

As a graduate of the recently concluded Cohort 9, I have nothing but immense gratitude in my heart for the lifelong friends and mentors I've gained through the ITMD bridging program. We came together as strangers but have, through our shared stories, struggles, and triumphs, become so much more of a family and support network for each other! Under

the exemplary mentorship of Dr. Shafi and the other program instructors, I've had the opportunity to explore alternative careers and have come to realize that it's never too late to change career paths, and that one can always be successful if one dares to dream! I've been working as an employment counsellor with JVS Toronto, but now armed with these insights and an upgraded toolkit, I look forward to exploring my career options in research and management within the mental health sector. I'd like to thank Dr. Shafi and the ITMD team for so passionately supporting internationally trained doctors and giving us the skills and confidence to soar ahead.



**Arun Homenauth (from Guyana),
Cohort 9**

The experience that I had being in the ninth cohort of the Ryerson ITMD bridging program is a time that I cannot sum up into a few sentences, but words such as "grateful", "appreciative", and "real" come to mind.

Prior to Ryerson, I was a foreign trained doctor living in Canada for less than two years with aspirations of pursuing further education. I truly wish that all ITMDs could meet with Dr. Shafi Bhuiyan and his amazing team because of the reality of the struggles we face seeking

further training/employment. The team provided encouragement and support with genuine advice that was never limited to the classroom. Having witnessed the success of previous cohorts as well as fellow classmates, this served as added inspiration, motivation, and a positive outlook.

I have been accepted to the Michener Institute of Education (UHN) Chiropody Program. I don't believe this would have been possible without the lessons from the Ryerson ITMD lecturers and staff. I will continue to represent and support this program and believe it gives ITMDs an opportunity to move forward.



**Gauri Inamdar (from India),
Cohort 8**

I think that the ITMD bridging program is a blessing for foreign medical graduates looking to achieve success and have meaningful alternate careers in healthcare. It is a perfect stepping stone for exploring new and challenging pathways to contribute to the field of medicine. Along with subjects like health research methodology and health informatics, which provide insight into research, the program's multidisciplinary curriculum also provides in-depth knowledge about project management. The compact duration of the program and practicum placement, at leading hospitals

and research centres in Toronto, are its strong points. As part of my practicum, I had the opportunity to work for Ontario HIV Treatment Network's (OHTN) Cohort Study, which resulted into a research job at the OHTN. I greatly appreciate the continuous support and encouragement I received from Dr. Shafi Bhuiyan during this period. I believe that, being a foreign medical graduate himself, Dr. Bhuiyan truly understands the barriers and challenges faced by fellow foreign medical graduates. His visionary leadership and a passion to empower ITMDs, in collaboration with a team of excellent instructors, is the reason this bridging program is such a unique and successful one. I am very fortunate to have such a dedicated mentor and I am proud to be a member of the ITMD family.



Abha Sharma (from India), Cohort 9

After working as an epidemiologist in India for three years, my prime purpose of coming to Canada was to gain expertise in the area of public health. As an ITMD graduate I have successfully evolved in initiating that career by building upon my previous knowledge with up to date technical skills. I can believe that this program is designed to overcome the major issues encountered by international health professionals while introducing themselves to non-licensed healthcare practices such as research methodology and project management.

The program revealed the most unstated aspects of health communication and workplace culture which act as severe barrier in our progress. The co-founder of the ITMD program, Dr. Shafi Bhuiyan, is a remarkable mentor; he strongly believes in our capabilities and understands our hurdles. His positive attitude and vision inculcated immense strength in me, thus I got the opportunity to work as a research intern the Centre for Global Health Research (CGHR) for the Million Death Study in India. It is one of the largest ongoing studies of premature mortality in the world.



Nabila Tasnim (from Bangladesh), Cohort 8

As a proud graduate of the ITMD bridging program, I am privileged to be part of such a unique and diverse program. I think the program is a good starting point, where ITMDs can get remolded, polished, and formed to fit perfectly into the Canadian workplace environment. Through in-class and real-life setting experiences, participants can easily integrate themselves into the Canadian healthcare sector. Having a public health background, I reflect my level of knowledge being accelerated through constant guidance and mentorship of the program's faculty. I had the opportunity to work as research intern at St. Michael's Hospital. This practicum placement was a great learning experience and helped to leverage my career path. None of this would have been possible without Dr. Bhuiyan's visionary leadership; he always inspires us to always move forward.



ITMD Bridging Program: Cohort 1 Orientation - Participants with President and Vice-Chancellor of Ryerson University, Mohamed Lachemi, and Former Dean of The Chang School, Marie Bountrogianni (January 2015)

OUR SUPPORT PARTNERS





ITMD Bridging Program: Summer Mix and Mingle (July 2019)

Remarks at ITMD Bridging Program: Summer Mix and Mingle (July 2019)



Professor Patricia O'Campo, PhD, BSc
Executive Director (Interim),
Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute,
St. Michael's Hospital

Professor Patricia O'Campo, Program Advisory Committee (PAC) member, gave a heartfelt presentation endorsing the ITMD Bridging Program. She spoke about her childhood as an expatriate in Japan and the trials she went through, which is the true reason she is so passionate about the program. Patricia believes that the program is not only inspiring but delivers on the promises it

makes. With the commitment of Dr. Shafi Bhuiyan who leads the program, the transformation that the participants undergo lead to more meaningful lives. The success stories that are shared amongst the ITMDs and the support system created within the trainees motivate other ITMDs and together they work fearlessly to establish a distinguished career path in the Canadian healthcare system.

“ITMD = I - Inspiring, T - Transformational, M - Meaningful, D - Delivers”

Related Events



CSIH CANADIAN SOCIETY FOR
INTERNATIONAL HEALTH
SCSI LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE
DE SANTÉ INTERNATIONALE

Canadian Conference on Global Health

October 17, 2019
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Website: csih.org/en/events/canadian-conference-global-health

**Ryerson
University**

**The Chang School
of Continuing
Education**

**ITMD Bridging Program:
Fifth Year Celebration/Winter Mix and Mingle**
December 3, 2019
Ryerson University
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

ITMD Project Management Forum
December 6, 2019
Ryerson University
Toronto, Ontario, Canada



**Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Handbook Conference:
The 12th International Conference on Maternal and Child Health Handbook**
July 8-10, 2020
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Website: mchhandbook.com



Professional Development Conference for Immigrants (PDCI)
October 6, 2019
Humber College, North Campus
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Website: northstarsuccess.com/pdci



Project Management Forum for ITMDs (July 2019)



Lions Clubs International, District A-711, Ontario, Canada:
Region Chairperson Induction Ceremony (August 2019)

USEFUL LINKS

@ itmds@ryerson.ca

ryerson.ca/ce/itmd

[linkedin.com/groups/12044563](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12044563)

[facebook.com/groups/349476948819065](https://www.facebook.com/groups/349476948819065)