



Working in Norway

Through many years thousands of foreign doctors have been working in Norway. Due to chronic shortage of doctors, the country has been quite eager to attract doctors from abroad, mainly specialist doctors, to fill vacant positions in the constantly expanding health care sector.

Especially, of course, Norway has attracted doctors from the neighbouring countries, Denmark and Sweden, who have similar languages and culture. Long time before the existence of the EU, the Nordic countries had a common job market, and relevant university and speciality degrees and authorisations were accepted without greater problems.

Same, same

In general the health care systems in Scandinavia are quite alike. Almost every patient doctor contact is in the public sector. There are only a few private clinics and small specialized hospitals. During the last years the activity in the private sector has risen due to changes in the political environment and the well-known chronic economical crisis in the health care sector. But Norway has, due to its relative prosperousness, given, so far, patients and healthcare workers relatively good conditions. The years ahead will, without doubt, become far tougher for all. Many structural reforms have taken place during the last few years, where small hospitals and units were closed and a more centralized structure regarding specialist care has been established. Furthermore centralization at the management and political level has taken place and budgets are being tightened. All in all this development has reduced the growth in demand for healthcare personnel, including doctors. Nevertheless, there are still quite good changes to get a job, especially in more remote areas. In general there is no unemployment for healthcare personnel, whereas in many professions there is a shortage.

Country

The majority of the 4 million Norwegians live in the five biggest cities in this vast country. However, so far, national policy targets at the population of the most remote areas, including the need for hospitals there. Of course, this increases the demand for doctors, but it is often quite difficult to get a doctor to stay for a longer time at a permanent base because of the isolation, both personal and professional.

On the other hand, this is a great possibility to experience places you would never go to, and for sure never would live in, if it was not for this reason. And the nature gives good opportunities to recreate after many years in an overcrowded and polluted world.

Training

Like in most other countries, there is an 18 month internship after university and doctor (medical) school. After this, one can start specialisation. Most of the basic specialisations demand about four years of work in the core field, i.e. anaesthesia and then one year in another speciality as a supplementary training. Beside this, there are several obligatory courses relevant for the speciality. At least 18 months of the



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speciality training should take place at a university clinic. To become sub-specialised, one needs of course more training.

There are very good possibilities for funding of the theoretical specialist training. Relevant working experience from the home country should be taken into consideration when applying for a speciality in Norway. However, many colleagues have had considerable problems during the last years, due to paranoia in the Norwegian Medical Association. So a very good advice is, to start the procedure before arrival or in the very beginning of your Norwegian adventure.

At many hospitals and counties, they can offer you an apartment to rent, kindergarten or maybe a career opportunity for a partner.

Working conditions

The weekly working hours are a minimum of 38 hours, but often amount to 40–45 as an average over time. If you work more, one will get paid extra or it is possible to have a paid leave. So the working hours are much more pleasant than in many other European countries. Five week holidays and a lot of public holidays should give you a good opportunity to become familiar with the country and its people.

The salary starts approximately at €40,000 and a consultant can earn up to €100,000. There are furthermore good possibilities to increase this salary with extra work at both public and private clinics.

This relatively good salary is, however balanced by the world's highest living costs and a quite high personal income tax, at around 50%. This is partly compensated by a 15% tax reduction for foreigners the first four years of their stay in the country.

At last, the people, your future colleagues, are very pleasant. There is not a very hierarchic organization in Norwegian hospitals, which are profiting from the country's egalitarian way of life. You will have the chance to profit as well if you dare....

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www.norway.no

The official website for the Norwegian public sector. In English. Information in general about the country, tax and social security.

www.legeforeningen.no

The Norwegian medical association. Largely in Norwegian. Information about vacant positions, training and legal matters.

www.jobbnor.no

Vacant positions in the public sector.

www.goinginternational.org

Going International Career Guide