

MT WWAMI TRUST PROGRAM

Are you interested in rural and underserved medicine?

If the answer is YES, consider the Montana WWAMI TRUST program!
The Targeted Rural Underserved Track (TRUST) curriculum is a longitudinal medical school experience in rural and small city underserved communities, with a goal to produce physicians committed to practice in the rural and underserved areas of Montana and the WWAMI region.



During my varied TRUST program rotations, I experienced the only times during medical school where I felt like I was an integral part of the team. My preceptors constantly pushed me to step outside the student role and into the doctor role, especially during WRITE. I experienced the most growth as a clinician during those rotations. TRUST was the best part of medical school for me, and I would absolutely choose this path again!

Tessa Sawyer, E21 Dillon TRUST Scholar, currently applying to FM residency



For me TRUST embodied the reason I went into medicine. I wanted to help people who are underserved, and rural medicine was an area I wanted to try. I love that having completed TRUST was an obvious way on my residency application to show programs who I am and what I stand for. It's a great route to help yourself grow and really stand out. And I am really pleased to have landed a job at my former TRUST site where I know the people and the resources!

Marie Elwood, E2018, former Hardin (OneHealth) TRUST Scholar, returning to OneHealth as a FM provider in July 2025



TRUST does require extra work. You are expected to travel to your site, and sometimes, that is at inconvenient times. However, I would say for me, the benefits far outweighed the challenges and once you get there it is worth any inconvenience. Because I have spent so much time at my site, I had more autonomy than my non-TRUST peers earlier in our education. I have formed good relationships with my TRUST mentors, and I feel very comfortable with them and our patients. I am not afraid to ask questions, and I feel like I have learned so much.

Chelsea Koessel, E-23, Butte TRUST Scholar





Understanding the WWAMI Rural Medicine Program

What is TRUST?

(Targeted Rural UnderServed Track)

TRUST provides Montana WWAMI students with a longitudinal continuity connection between rural/underserved communities, TRUST preceptors and their patients.

With admission through a targeted admissions process, TRUST students are linked to a rural/underserved community. Through UW programs, such as the 12 day First Summer Experience (FSE), Rural and Underserved Opportunities Program (RUOP), and the 21-24 weeks in the WWAMI Rural Integrated Training Program (WRITE), TRUST students form and maintain lasting relationships with their preceptors and community as well as develop clinical skills critical for caring for rural and underserved populations.

The TRUST program trains future physicians to practice in specialties oriented to rural/underserved care in Montana: Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Med/Peds, Psychiatry, General Surgery and OB/GYN.

http://education.uwmedicine.org/somrural/programs/trust

What is WRITE 2.0?

(WWAMI Rural Integrated Track Experience)

WRITE occurs during the Patient Care Phase, when students head to their TRUST sites for 21-24 weeks of clerkship training in a longitudinally integrated fashion.

The length of time and the integrated training approach allows students to fully discern the day-to-day workings of a community and practice and to effectively participate as a member of the healthcare team.

Over the course of the WRITE experience, students provide continuity care for a panel of patients while meeting the clerkship requirements in several different clinical areas for which they receive credit. Students value the one-on-one teaching and hands-on experience offered by WRITE.

http://education.uwmedicine.org/somrural/programs/write

Frequently Asked Questions

Why would I want to participate in the TRUST Program?
The TRUST program is for students who have an interest in a career in rural/underserved medicine. TRUST nurtures the desire to care for underserved populations by matching each TRUST scholar with a rural or underserved community for various educational experiences throughout the medical school years. TRUST scholars participate in many unique learning opportunities, such as experiencing the practice of medicine at their TRUST site, unique TRUST curricular offerings, leadership training and opportunities to attend a variety of national meetings. Students also form a support network with fellow TRUST scholars, both within their state cohort and with the larger UWSOM TRUST scholar cohort.

Do I have to choose a primary care specialty to participate in TRUST?
No. Participation in TRUST does not require you to commit to any specialty. TRUST is for students who are interested in practicing in a rural or underserved community. TRUST scholars are encouraged to choose a specialty oriented to rural/underserved care in Montana: Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Peds, Med/Peds, Psychiatry, General Surgery an OB/GYN. Ultimately, TRUST Scholars can match into any specialty of their choosing, as it is understood that you may not know you are attacted to a specialty until you experience it during training.

Participating in TRUST has been advantageous to graduates regardless of the specialty or career path chosen.

If I am not accepted into the TRUST program, am I still eligible to be considered for the regular UW Montana WWAMI admissions pool?
Yes. Not being accepted to TRUST does not preclude you from being accepted for admission into the regular class. If you decide at any point after applying, that TRUST may not be the best option for your particular needs, you can withdraw your application anytime up until the last afternoon of interviews.



Frequently Asked Questions

Do I get to choose where I will spend my time?
A process matching TRUST scholars and sites will occur. The exact location for your experiences will be determined after reviewing your application and in consultation with you.

We have a specific number of sites available and sites may change from year to year. Therefore, we will make placements based on information available during this matching process. Placements are based on a knowledge of the TRUST teaching sites, and the TRUST scholars' goals and aspirations for their medical education.

If I participate in TRUST does it eliminate the chance to experience big city clinical medicine?
After WRITE, in the Patient Care phase, students have the opportunity to experience learning in large academic and tertiary care hospitals in Seattle and throughout the WWAMI region.

The Explore and Focus Phase allows students to be in Seattle or in the WWAMI region. TRUST Scholars often comment that they have the best of both worlds in regards to learning experiences: the extended longitudinal learning experience of WRITE, which offers one-on-one and hands-on clinical learning and then time in Seattle in the large tertiary referral center with resident teams.

As a TRUST Scholar, do I have any additional payback requirements over a non-TRUST student?
No. All Montana WWAMI students are required to choose a payback or a claw back option through MRPIP (Montana Rural Physician Incentive Program). For students willing to commit to return to the state to practice after residency, they will pay ~$5712/year x4 years and those unsure of committing to return to Montana post residency will be assessed ~2 1/2 times that amount (~$14,280). Amount subject to change. More information can be found at: **https://www.mus.edu/Prepare/Pay/Loans/MRPIP.html**



TRUST Curriculum & General Timeline

TRUST First Summer Experience (FSE) (May-July before first academic year begins)
• TRUST scholars spend 12 days with their TRUST mentor at their TRUST site in the summer before starting medical school.

Foundations Phase Curriculum (first 18 months)
• Maintain contact with site visits during Foundations Phase.
• Establish a mentoring relationship with a Big Sky College faculty mentor in Bozeman.
• Participate in Journal Club and TRUST in Practice Evenings.
• TRUST scholars participate in the Rural/Underserved Opportunities Program (R/UOP) and may complete an Independent Investigative Inquiry (iii3) at their TRUST continuity community. TRUST Scholars participate in a Montana TRUST Leadership Retreat during their first summer.

Patient Care Phase (3rd Year)
• Participate in the Patient Care Phase curriculum including the WRITE experience, as well as the Leadership Retreat during their second summer. In addition to WRITE, TRUST scholars complete the remaining aspect of the Patient Care Phase curriculum in Seattle or throughout the WWAMI region.

TRUST Student Opportunities & Support

Conferences & Leadership opportunities
• TRUST scholars are encouraged to participate in national and regional rural and underserved health conferences at least once during their medical school career, as well as participate in a leadership retreat during both the Foundations Phase and Patient Care Phase. Funding is provided to cover all expenses.

TRUST scholars are supported in career exploration
• Have the option to enroll in a variety of rural/underserved electives in different disciplines
• Explore opportunities for sub-internships at UWSOM affiliated residencies to help prepare for R-1 year
• Receive residency application counseling and support, career counseling, and assistance with residency application

People oftentimes have the perception that the training at a rural, critical access hospital is not as robust as an academic center. In my experience, this could not be further from the truth. I was able to see more patients, perform more procedures, and have more direct one-on-one teaching with my attendings than what I later experienced while at the larger hospitals.

Sam George, E2018, Dillon TRUST Scholar and current R3 EM resident

I recommend applying to the TRUST program for several reasons. Number one being you get way more hands-on experience. For example, I was able to first assist in nearly every surgery I attended, deliver babies and do all kinds of gynecologic and dermatologic procedures in the outpatient clinic. Another reason is that you are able to build strong relationships with your preceptors over the 2+ years that you work with them and therefore they are able to write you strong letters of recommendation. Your non-TRUST classmates typically spend only 6 weeks with each preceptor so they will likely get a more generic letter of recommendation. In TRUST you really get to see the full spectrum of what practicing medicine can be since you will still get plenty of time in Seattle, but you also get to have the unique experience of rural medicine, and you might love it!! I also think it makes your residency application more unique by showing you know how to care for patients in both urban and rural environments.

Rjika (Weis) Lottes, E22, Livingston TRUST Scholar







Montana WWAMI Rural Programs Trust

Like many of you, I read up all about WWAMI and TRUST long before I could even think about applying, and when the time came to decide on TRUST I really hesitated. Rumors swirled about the need to have grown up in a tiny town or sign some sort of binding agreement on specialties long before classes even started. None of that is true, though you probably ought to know a little about what rural medicine actually looks like and why you're a good fit. I'm a Missoula kid, born in Seattle, and couldn't be happier with my opportunity to be a part of TRUST — more hands on learning, more personal care relationships, earlier exposure, and the chance to tap into an apprenticeship-style medical education you'll be hard pressed to find anywhere else.

Cy Gilbert, E16 TRUST Scholar, Dillon

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