Australian Outbound Student Mobility

quality dimensions for international fieldwork in health sciences

Project Team

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Acknowledgements

The project team gratefully acknowledges the valuable contribution of the 25 expert panel members (listed in alphabetical order below) who generously shared their experiences and knowledge in relation to Australian outbound student mobility programs and assisted in identifying critical components relating to fieldwork preparation, supervision and assessments for inclusion in the good practice guide.

Assistant Professor Rachel Bacon, University of Canberra (ACT)
Dr Sara Bayes, Edith Cowan University (WA)
Dr Chris Brebner, Flinders University (SA)
Professor Lucy Chipchase, University of Western Sydney (NSW)
Dr Helen Cleak, Latrobe University (VIC)
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Ms Kristy Robson, Charles Sturt University (NSW)
Miss Brooke Sanderson, Curtin University (WA)
Dr Charlotte Scarf, The University of Sydney (NSW)
Ms Lois Sear, Griffith University (QLD)
Ms Kay Skinner, Charles Sturt University (NSW)
Mrs Sue White, Curtin University (WA)

The project team also gratefully acknowledges the following individuals at Curtin University who assisted with different components of this project:

Associate Professor Andrew Briggs, School of Physiotherapy and Exercise Science
Ms Diana Blackwood, Health Sciences Faculty Librarian
Mr David Spann, Virtual Classroom System Coordinator
Mrs Susan Walsh, Curtin Teaching and Learning
Definitions

Assessment: “a process to determine a student’s achievement of identified learning outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015).

Academic standards: “an agreed specification (such as a defined benchmark or indicator) that is used as a definition of a level of performance or achievement, rule, or guideline. Standards may apply to academic outcomes, such as student or graduate achievement of core discipline knowledge and core discipline skills (known as learning outcomes), or to academic processes such as student selection, teaching, research supervision, and assessment” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015).

Benchmarking: “is recognised as a means by which an entity can: demonstrate accountability to stakeholders; improve networking and collaborative relationships; generate management information; develop an increased understanding of practice, process or performance; and garner insights into how improvements might be made. For example, in the context of course accreditation, benchmarking involves comparing performance outcomes and/or processes of similar courses of study delivered by other providers. ‘Internal benchmarking’ against other relevant courses offered by the provider may also be undertaken” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015).

Clinical placement: involves supervised practice in approved clinical settings.

Clinical supervision: “involves the oversight – either direct or indirect – by a clinical supervisor of professional procedures and/or processes performed by a student or a group of students within a clinical placement for the purpose of guiding, providing feedback on, and assessing personal, professional and educational development in the context of each student’s experience of providing safe, appropriate and high-quality patient care” (Health Workforce Australia, 2011, p. 4).

Clinical supervisor: “is an appropriately qualified and recognised professional who guides students’ education and training during clinical placements. The clinical supervisor’s role may encompass educational, support and managerial functions. The clinical supervisor is responsible for ensuring safe, appropriate and high-quality patient care” (Health Workforce Australia, 2011, p. 4).

Cultural capability¹: “refers to a person’s capacity to deliver services that are responsive to the cultural concerns of racial and ethnic minority groups including their languages, histories, traditions, beliefs and values, and response by developing a set of skills, knowledge, and policies to deliver effective treatments” (Gibbs, Huang & Associates, 2003 p. 36 cited in Fejo-King, 2013, p. 271).

Graduate attributes: “generic learning outcomes that refer to transferable, non-discipline specific skills that a graduate may achieve through learning that have application in study, work and life contexts” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015).

Employability: “means that students and graduates can discern, acquire, adapt and continually enhance the skills, understandings and personal attributes that make them more likely to find and create meaningful paid and unpaid work that benefits themselves, the

¹ Capability is used here rather than competence as no one can be “competent” in another person’s culture and competency also implies an endpoint rather than the life-long journey which is cultural capability development. In other words, intercultural capability cannot be fixed and will shift dependent on the community and context and is, therefore, not a competency that can merely be achieved to a predetermined standard (Taylor, Durey, Mulcock, Kickett, & Jones, 2014).
workforce, the community and the economy” (Oliver, 2015).

**Global citizenship:** shows global empathy in cross-cultural settings and respects and values diversity. Thinks and acts for human dignity with a focus on social justice and equity (Oxfam, 2015).

**International fieldwork:** placements during tertiary study that occur in countries other than where the students received their academic preparation. In the context of this guide to Australian student mobility in health sciences, fieldwork also refers to clinical placements.

**Internationalisation:** Intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education (O’Malley, 2014).

**Interprofessional practice:** “When two or more professions learn with, from and about each other to improve collaboration and the quality of care” (Freeth et al., 2005, p. xv); occurs in both tertiary and clinical settings (Brewer, Flavell, Smith, Trede, & Jones, 2014).

**Learning outcomes:** “are the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015).

**Leadership:** “means the aggregated leadership of an organization is dispersed among some, many, or maybe all of the members. This additive understanding does not privilege the work of particular individuals or categories of persons, nor is there a presumption about which individual’s behavior carries more weight with colleagues. On the other hand, numerical or multiple leadership allows for the possibility that all organization members may be leaders at some stage” (Gronn, 2002, p. 427).

**Outbound mobility:** international study experiences for students in a location outside their home country (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009).

**Quality:** “Academic quality is a way of describing how well the learning opportunities help students to achieve the learning outcomes. It is about making sure that appropriate and effective teaching support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided” (adapted from Group of Eight, 2010, p. 130).

**Quality dimensions:** elements of a product and/or service that define quality.

**Reflective practice:** a personal perspective on how the learner interacts with the learning experience, individualises outcomes, and identifies personal future learning needs (Hodges, 2011).

**Work-integrated-learning (WIL):** “where structured and purposefully designed learning and assessment activities integrate theory with the practice of work. Work-integrated learning includes service learning, and activities normally involve students interacting with industry and community within a work context or similar situation (that may be simulated) to allow them to learn, apply and demonstrate skills and knowledge applicable to the course of study being undertaken” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015).
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Background

- This guide is designed to be read in conjunction with the project report, which provides full information on the project methodology and outcomes
- An eDelphi process was used to identify the essential learning outcomes, preparatory requirements, supervision model, and assessment criteria for international fieldwork in health
- Twenty-five experts from across Australia—from a range of health sciences professions—were involved in three eDelphi survey rounds
- The intended audience for this guide includes academic and professional staff responsible for international fieldwork in health
- The findings can be used to inform program design and to benchmark existing programs.

This guide to quality dimensions for international fieldwork was developed as part of the Office for Learning and Teaching Seed Grant titled: SD14-3758: *Quality in Australian Outbound Student Mobility Programs: Establishing Good Practice Guidelines for International Work-Integrated-Learning.* The aim of the project was to improve student learning by identifying good practice in the sector, establish academic standards for international fieldwork and support benchmarking. Of note, the meaning of ‘standards’ and ‘benchmarking’ are not well understood by the majority of academics in Australian higher education (Booth, 2013; Booth, Melano, Sainsbury, & Woodley, 2011). Within the context of international fieldwork, this guide hopes to assist readers to better comprehend what is meant by academic standards and how they can be used for benchmarking purposes. In addition the project addresses calls for frameworks to evaluate quality assurance standards in fieldwork (Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards), 2011; Orrell, 2011; Smith, Ferns, & Russell, 2014).

Quality in higher education is highly contested as the recent discussion paper by Probert attests (Probert, 2015). Notions of quality are underpinned by assumptions that reflect current ideologies and, as a consequence, any international fieldwork program will be determined by the culture of the organisation involved and how it determines its purpose.

For this project international fieldwork is defined as placements during tertiary study that occur in countries other than where the students received their academic preparation. In the context of this guide to Australian student mobility in health sciences, fieldwork also refers to clinical placements which involve supervised practice in approved clinical settings.

The specific objectives of the project were to:

1. Identify current Australian international fieldwork practices in health (including the desired learning outcomes, supervision and assessment practices)
2. Define the essential preparatory requirements for Health Sciences’ students participating in an international fieldwork placement
3. Establish a minimum standard and a sustainable model of supervision required for interprofessional and discipline specific international fieldwork that will promote student learning
4. Develop a standardised set of essential learning assessment criteria for Health Sciences’ students participating in an international fieldwork placement.
Intended audience

This guide has been written to assist academic and professional staff engaged in international fieldwork in health sciences to inform the design of international fieldwork programs and benchmark existing programs against good practice to engage in quality improvement. It is recommended that the guide be read in conjunction with the project final report.

International fieldwork in health

A literature review conducted as part of the project highlighted that outbound mobility is a growing focus in the peer reviewed literature (Kulbok, Mitchell, Glick, & Greiner, 2012) and whilst frameworks and approaches to assuring quality exist they are limited in number, variable and often dependent on the outbound country’s context or a specific discipline. In fact, the literature review identified only four peer reviewed papers with best practice guidelines (Crump & Sugarman, 2010; Lattanzi & Pechak, 2011; Pechak & Black, 2014; Riner, 2011) with only one of those across the professions (Crump & Sugarman, 2010) and the remaining three focused on physiotherapy and occupational therapy (Lattanzi & Pechak, 2011; Pechak & Black, 2014) or nursing (Riner, 2011). This is consistent with other literature reviews examining quality and clinical placements (Health Workforce Australia, 2012). There is a gap, therefore, in the literature on quality dimensions for international fieldwork in health and, specifically, within the context of outbound Australian health students. The Australian quality dimensions for international fieldwork in health developed through an eDelphi process—and presented here—are consistent with the literature reviewed and the broader literature on WIL (Billett, 2009; Orrell, 2011; Patrick et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2014). In particular, they highlight the essential need of effective preparation, supervision practices, assessment and feedback including critical-reflection and debriefing.

Methodology

The project took place over 12 months and utilised the Delphi method (Keeney et al., 2011)—managed electronically as an eDelphi—to identify current practices in international health fieldwork and develop the guidelines. The Delphi technique involves an iterative process using a multi-staged survey which engages a group of experts to achieve consensus on an important subject (Keeny, Hassan, & McKenna, 2011).

Establishment of an expert panel

An eDelphi expert panel was established which consisted of individuals with experience in international fieldwork in health. To be eligible, panel members had to meet the following criteria:

1. be a current staff member at an Australian tertiary institution;
2. have at least one year of experience in developing, coordinating or supervision international fieldwork placements, and;
3. be currently involved in international fieldwork.

Panel members were recruited between August and October 2014 via several methods including an expression of interest via the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN) and other relevant peak bodies; a search of current peer reviewed literature; a desktop website review of 38 Australian universities and snowball sampling (see the project report for full details). All individuals who expressed interest completed demographic information and a screening questionnaire which was reviewed by the project team to confirm eligibility prior to being formally invited to join the expert panel.
**eDelphi process**

The electronically administered Delphi process (eDelphi) consisted of three survey rounds. For each round, panellists were given two weeks to respond with three reminders sent over this time period to panellists who had not responded. If a panellist failed to respond in a round, they were automatically excluded from any following rounds. The online survey software Qualtrics was utilised to conduct the eDelphi process. As an acknowledgement for their time and contribution, expert received a A$100 gift voucher after completing all three rounds. The project was approved by Curtin University’s Human Research Ethics Committee (TL-10-14).

**Round 1**

The first round was conducted in October 2014. Panel members were asked to respond to nine open ended questions which asked for their views relating to preparatory requirements, supervision model and learning assessment criteria for international fieldwork placements.

**Round 2**

Round 2 was conducted in February 2015. The purpose of the second round was to seek endorsement from the expert panel of key themes and corresponding elements identified from Round 1. Panellists were asked to review each key theme and corresponding elements and select one of three nominal response options:

1. Agree entirely (no modifications required).
2. Partly agree (modifications required).
3. Disagree entirely.

If a panellist selected the partly agree or disagree option, they were requested to provide suggestions for refinements/changes to the key theme and corresponding elements.

**Round 3**

Round 3 was conducted in April 2015. In the third and final round, expert panel members were presented with a final synthesis of key themes and corresponding elements. These were presented as statements which related to recommendations for preparatory requirements, supervision model and learning assessment criteria for international fieldwork placements. Panellists were asked to rank the importance of each statement using a five point Likert scale:

1. Not at all important.
2. Somewhat important.
4. Importance.
5. Essential.

Expert consensus was defined as being reached where a statement was ranked by 80 percent of the panel members as being essential or important.

For full details of the project—including the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the expert panel—please see the project final report available from the Office for Learning and Teaching website.
The leadership role of the international fieldwork coordinator in quality learning experiences

- Leadership is defined here as distributed (Gronn, 2002). This means that leadership is dispersed across an organisation and teams rather than being tied to an individual in a senior role
- International fieldwork program coordinators require leadership development, as a range of sophisticated leadership skills are essential for effective coordination
- A fieldwork leadership program was developed through an earlier Office for Learning and Teaching project and is available from: http://academicleadership.curtin.edu.au/ALFCP/

Although examining the role of the fieldwork coordinator was not part of this project, it became clear that it was impossible to focus on quality in international fieldwork and not recognise the essential leadership role of the coordinator to the fieldwork learning experience (Coll et al., 2009; Jones et al., 2013c). Much in the same way that a course coordinator for a program of study on-campus has an academic leadership role, the coordinator of international fieldwork must have capacity for a complex range of leadership capabilities. In particular, international fieldwork demands significant leadership due to the diverse stakeholders, intercultural factors, risk management and legislative requirements and the demands of assuring learning in host sites located long distances from the home institution.

A recent study, for example, argues that effective organisations require leaders with a combination of transformational leadership styles, and leadership development is an important area for focus (Deichmann & Stam, 2015). Similarly, fieldwork coordinators must be given the opportunity to develop their leadership capacity (Jones et al., 2013c). Not only are these leaders typically overlooked for formal leadership development, and often invisible in their institutions, there is also a tendency for fieldwork coordinators to focus on operational aspects at the expense of strategy and innovation (Jones et al., 2013c; Patrick et al., 2014). In effect, this suggests that many fieldwork coordinators are invested in management rather than leadership. Elsewhere, the importance of the fieldwork coordinator in ensuring quality work-integrated-learning (WIL) experiences has been affirmed, along with the need to support their development (Patrick et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2014).

To achieve quality learning and teaching experiences for students in international

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2 Transformational leadership is "a form of leadership intended to motivate and inspire followers to pursue higher-order goals through the transformation of followers' attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors" (Lo, Tse, & Ashkanasy, 2015, p. 543).

3 Transactional leadership refers to a leadership style of exchange in which clear expectations and rewards are communicated with rewards achieved through demonstrating pre-determined objectives (Deichmann & Stam, 2015).
fieldwork in health sciences, it is therefore important to consider leadership and how coordinators—regardless of whether they are academic or professional staff—can develop the necessary capabilities. The following leadership model (Vilkinas & Cartan, 2001, 2006) (Figure 1) was adapted for use in the Office for Learning and Teaching Leading Fieldwork: Academic Leadership for Fieldwork Coordinators project (Jones et al., 2013c) and provides a useful framework to conceptualise the leadership capabilities required for effective fieldwork coordination. The Integrated Competing Values Framework (Vilkinas & Cartan, 2001, 2006) identifies six roles and illustrates the behavioural complexity of leadership. The central “integrator” role is also known as the “control room” where reflection and critical thinking enable the fieldwork coordinator to identify which of the other five roles must be brought into play and when (Vilkinas & Cartan, 2001).

The following passage from Leading Courses (Jones et al., 2013a, pp. 8-9) explains the six roles within the Integrated Competing Values Framework and its application to fieldwork:

**Deliverer** - requires the development of a system to manage student fieldwork placements, managing paperwork and compliance issues, unit outlines, and communication strategies to ensure the program runs efficiently. It also requires initiatives to manage the risk and legal issues associated with a fieldwork program.

**Monitor** - involves collecting and collating relevant fieldwork data to continuously improve the quality of work integrated learning, for example, placement numbers, monitoring trends in numbers, placement availability, collecting feedback on students, educators, placement quality, evaluating the fieldwork program and models of education, moderation of fieldwork assessment and ensuring inter-rater reliability and understanding competency based evaluation.

**Developer** - will include issues such as providing training and support for educators in

the field around coaching, supervision and fair and equitable assessment of students, alignment of assessment practices of student learning on placements between university and industry.

**Broker** - requires development of strategic partnerships with agencies, accreditation and professional bodies, fieldwork educators, and Head of School/Department. The interplay of these key stakeholders requires negotiation and networking skills to build and sustain the fieldwork program.

**Innovator** - will focus on considering changes to professional practice and how this influences fieldwork education. These changes, along with increasing enrolments and competition for placements require innovative and new approaches to models of fieldwork education.

**Integrator** - involves reflecting on practice, taking a critical perspective on one’s own leadership role and one’s movement between the operational roles, and involving others such as peer coaches, critical friends or colleagues in one’s ongoing development as a fieldwork coordinator.

If the higher education sector is to achieve quality learning outcomes—and justify the costs associated with international fieldwork—it is important that fieldwork coordinators keep abreast of current developments through the literature. However, this cannot be achieved unless coordinators are provided with time allocation, support and development opportunities. With increasing competition for placements, due to larger student numbers and a greater focus on employability and WIL as a key strategy to achieve this, fieldwork coordinators now need even more structured support and recognition of their leadership role. Of note, the leadership program developed as part of the Leading Fieldwork project includes an action learning project to improve fieldwork quality. For the full project resources visit: [http://academicleadership.curtin.edu.au/ALFCP](http://academicleadership.curtin.edu.au/ALFCP) or search the OLT website resources for “Leading Fieldwork.”
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Figure 1: The Integrated Competing Values Framework and the Fieldwork Coordinator (Jones et al., 2013, p. 21)

A note on community engagement

- Effective and considered engagement with the host site is an essential quality indicator for international fieldwork in health
- The engagement mechanisms with host sites and their communities must be considered and reflect mutual benefit and reciprocity.

Varying models of community engagement exist in higher education (Mason O'Connor, McDwen, Owen, Lynch, & Hill, 2011). Similar to the need to consider the leadership style underpinning the international fieldwork coordination, it is also evident that the process for recruiting and building a relationship with the host organisation—as well as the partnership model—needs to be a focus when considering quality assurance for learning (Rowland, 2006). As identified in the literature, cultural capability is a key graduate attribute that can be supported through international fieldwork (Button, Green, Tengnah, Johansson, & Baker, 2005; Peiying, Goddard, Gribble, & Pickard, 2012). Furthermore, within health, cultural safety is identified as an important aspect to achieving improved health outcomes particularly for minority and marginalised groups (Coffin, 2007). However, if the community engagement process does not model culturally safe practices and recreate colonial practices and power relationships (Sultana, 2007) (dependent on the host country), it is unlikely that students will automatically develop the desired critical self-reflection skills to facilitate culturally appropriate care. According to Holland and Ramaley (2008, p. 35) relational indicators are essential in quality for higher education community engagement:

Recent research found that experienced community partners are motivated to develop project connections with universities if there is evidence of commitment to reciprocity and mutual benefit, as defined by the community. In particular, partners look for evidence that academic partners are willing to spend time getting to know the community, listening to community voices, respecting cultural values and practices, and sharing resources and knowledge in ways that are useful and relevant to community initiatives and interests.

It is suggested, therefore, that when considering quality in international fieldwork—and to develop students' capacity for knowledge co-creation, reflective practice, communication, and awareness of self and others—the engagement mechanisms with host sites and their communities be considered and reflect mutual benefit and reciprocity (Mason, O'Connor et al., 2011; McEwen, 2013).

There are also an increasing number of third party providers (TPP) who are offering international fieldwork opportunities for students. Universities planning to use TPP should refer to the guide for working with TPP recently released by the International Education of Australia Student Mobility Special Interest Group [http://www.ieaa.org.au/documents/item/593](http://www.ieaa.org.au/documents/item/593).
The approach taken here aligns with Biggs (1993) adaption of Dunkin and Biddle’s (1974) presage-process-product, or 3P, model. Presage factors describe what occurs prior to student engagement in the learning (preparation prior to fieldwork); process describes the variables that impact on what happens as the student learns (supervision, assessment and feedback); and, product variables relate to the outcome of that learning (desired learning outcomes) (Gibbs, 2010). Furthermore, the 3P model acknowledges the complexity of the educational system or context in which learning occurs (Gibbs, 2010). According to The Higher Education Academy (Gibbs, 2010, p. 11):

quality is ... a relative concept – what matters is whether one educational context has more or less quality than another, not whether it meets an absolute threshold standard so that it can be seen to be of adequate quality, nor whether it reaches a high threshold and can be viewed as outstanding and of exceptional quality, nor whether a context is perfect, with no defects. What is discussed here is the dimensions that are helpful in distinguishing contexts from each other in terms of educational quality.

This guide, therefore, recognises not only the diversity of international fieldwork and varying resourcing levels but also the importance of the relative nature of quality. The quality dimensions provided here are intended to be used as a guide for establishing new international fieldwork programs in health sciences or when benchmarking an existing program. They are not intended as absolute measures of quality and should be used in an interpretive fashion. Although not specific to international fieldwork, a Health Workforce Australia report Promoting quality in clinical placements: literature review and national stakeholder consultation (2012, p. v) identified several enablers and barriers to quality which are consistent with this guide:

**Enablers** are factors known to improve the quality of the clinical placement experience and include:

1. A culture for quality, comprising relationships, learning, and best-practice.
2. Effective supervision founded on a good supervisory relationship.
3. Learning opportunities largely supported participation in direct patient care.
4. Effective communication and collaboration between students, academic institutions, and placement sites to ensure adequate placement preparation.
5. Resources and facilities to conduct placement activities.

**Barriers** are factors known to reduce the quality of the clinical placement experience and include:
1. Occupational stress which induces states of anxiety that inhibit learning, impair performance, and compromise health and wellbeing; and

2. Workplace incivility and aggression which threatens the socio-emotional and physical safety of students in the placement environment.

Other issues that affect the quality of clinical placements were identified:

1. Innovation to increase placement quality and capacity, in areas such as mode of supervision, length of placement, inter-professional placements, and learning technologies;

2. Rural and remote considerations, including a recognition of the unique enablers and barriers in rural and remote placements; and

3. Diversity, where the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse groups, the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and the impact of gender and disability on the placement experience are considered.

Dimensions of quality

1. Preparation requirements prior to an international fieldwork placement

The preparation that students undergo prior to placement has been identified as a very important part of the learning experience (Tan, 2014). This was reinforced through the eDelphi process. Of the three areas identified (information requirements, desirable student attributes and approaches to ensuring student preparedness), and their respective themes presented here, all received high consensus through the expert panel. Of note, there was discussion relating to whether the students should come to the fieldwork experience demonstrating capacity for the desirable capabilities or whether the international fieldwork program should wholly develop those capabilities. The conversations emanating through the eDelphi on this point were not conclusive; however they reinforced the importance of preparation for international fieldwork in not only supporting students to achieve the best possible outcomes but also in establishing realistic student expectations. The conversation highlighted the interrelated nature of all aspects of fieldwork in achieving excellence in learning and teaching (preparation, supervision and assessment).

1.1 Information requirements

- Five key areas relating to essential information requirements prior to the placement were identified including: site specific information, the curriculum for the placement, professional practice and knowledge required, as well as cultural and travel information.

Students require the following information in preparation for their placement:

Site specific information

- Site occupational health and safety briefing
• Contact details for site and supervisors, and communication procedures
• Common challenges/dilemmas that may be faced (e.g. practical tips from peers from previous placements)
• Types of tasks students will be involved in.

Curriculum for the placement
• Where the placement fits within the course/degree
• The purpose and learning objectives/outcomes
• Expectations for placement including roles and responsibilities
• The structure of the placement
• The students’ scope of practice during the placement
• The discipline specific pre-requisite knowledge
• The assessment tasks.

Professional practice and knowledge
• Expectations regarding professional and ethical behaviour
• Critical reflective practice and evaluation tools
• Conflict management strategies
• Discipline specific knowledge and skills
• Professional indemnity (e.g. legal and insurance matters).

Cultural information
• Cultural awareness and strategies for appropriate verbal and non-verbal behaviour
• Social determinants of health specific to host country
• Social, political and health landscape of host country
• General knowledge of the host country (e.g. via self-study)
• Commonly used phrases of the local language of host country (if necessary).

Travel information
• Passport and visa requirements
• Travel insurance
• Personal safety (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [DFAT] safety ratings)
• Referral to GP or travel doctor for general healthcare during travel
• Accommodation
• Personal care and hygiene
• Incident and accident policies and procedures (institution and host site)
• Emergency and disaster management information (institution and in host country)
• Financial information (cost of placement)
• Tentative itinerary.
1.2 Identification and development of desirable student attributes and capabilities

- Five key areas relating to the desirable student attributes and capabilities prior to the placement were identified including: self-efficacy capabilities, communication skills, professional knowledge and skills, and learning and cultural abilities.

- Dependent on the placement type and associated risks it is recommended that students either come with some capacity for the identified capabilities and/or the preparatory sessions are designed to foster these capabilities and get students to begin the reflective process to identify areas for growth.

- Realistic expectations about the nature of the fieldwork placement need to be communicated to students within the context of whether they have what is required to manage any challenges.

- Basic language skills and student capacity for being community minded did not reach consensus with the expert panel. Again, the aims and context of the fieldwork program will determine the importance of these capabilities which could be fostered in preparatory sessions if required.

The following student attributes and capabilities were identified as important for international fieldwork in health:

**Self-efficacy capabilities**
- Coping skills and resilience
- Ability to be self-sufficient
- Self-motivated
- Ability to manage risk
- Flexible and adaptable to new or unexpected situations
- Open to new experiences.

**Communication skills**
- Conflict resolution
- Team work (e.g. ability to negotiate, listen and build relationships).

**Professional knowledge and skills**
- Reflection/reflective practice skills
- Team management and time management skills
- Enthusiastic and passionate about discipline and professional practice

**Learning abilities**
- If relevant to the placement, discipline specific skills (clinical reasoning, role clarification, interprofessional practice skills).

**Cultural abilities**
- Genuine and respectful curiosity in people from different cultures
- Able to self-regulate in a culturally appropriate way (e.g. patient, tolerant, thoughtful, respectful, humble)
• Culturally sensitive (self-reflection on and awareness of own cultural values and beliefs).

1.3 Approaches to ensure student preparedness

The following approaches were identified as a means to ensure student preparedness:

_A selection process relevant to the program_

• An application process (written or other formats) that requires students to address selection criteria. For example, reflect on cultural perspectives of the country they intend to visit and reasons they want to undertake the placement

• Screen applicants for acceptable academic standards (determined by the context of the fieldwork placement)

• Travel supervisors and academic staff monitor student progress prior to placement

• Interview applicants.

_Consideration given to the timing of fieldwork preparation_

• Should allow adequate time to prepare students and is conducted when students can focus.

_A combination of delivery methods_

• Face-to-face (physical or synchronous virtual)

• Online resources.

*Compulsory preparatory sessions which incorporate the following*

• Interactive training and discussion

• Open and direct about known challenges

• An emergency plan everyone is familiar with.

_A range of stakeholders (on campus) involved in the preparation program_

• Experienced clinical staff/experts

• University staff.

_An onsite orientation_

• To take place within the first few weeks so that students can meet key staff who will guide them and provide support throughout their placement.

• Through the eDelphi process some suggestions for delivery methods (i.e. hard copy, apps and social media) did not achieve consensus. However, dependent on the fieldwork program and its aims some of these delivery approaches may be appropriate

• Other aspects that did not reach consensus included research into the host country’s health system and pre-departure team building activities. This lack of consensus reflects the diversity of international fieldwork and these elements are worth considering if relevant to the fieldwork program. For example, if the fieldwork placement is interprofessional then pre-placement team building activities are essential.
2. Supervision

- Five key areas relating to supervision were identified including the: supervision model, student/supervisor ratio, access to supervisor, supervisor attributes and supervisor:student relationship.
- A strong message from the expert panel was that the supervisor model had to be flexible and adaptable (see Figure 2).

The findings of this project reflect the literature by emphasising the importance of the supervisory relationship and the quality and frequency of student feedback.

Supervision and the supervisory relationship has been identified as an essential component of fieldwork and can significantly impact on a student's experience (Warne et al., 2010). According to the Health Workforce Australia's (2010, p.4) National Clinical Supervision Support Framework clinical supervision must take into account context and discipline (as consistent with the overall approach of this guide) and is defined as:

the oversight – either direct or indirect – by a clinical supervisor of professional procedures and/or processes performed by a student or a group of students within a clinical placement for the purpose of guiding, providing feedback on, and assessing personal, professional and educational development in the context of each student’s experience of providing safe, appropriate and high-quality patient care.
2.1 Supervision model

A flexible and adaptive supervision model that considers the following:

- The learning objectives/outcomes of the placement (clinical/hands-on or experiential, high or low risk, length of placement)
- Nature of placement and area of practice (e.g. single, multi-disciplinary or interprofessional; caseload; size of group: single or large group of students)
- Nature of organisation and context of placement (e.g. country of placement, environmental risks, degree of support from host)
- The needs and capacity of placement/host site (focus on building a strong, collaborative partnership with placement site)

- Supervisor skills, commitment and availability (discipline specific or mentor/facilitator, staff student ratio, frequency, onsite vs distance).

**Recommended supervisor:student ratio**

- A low supervisor:student ratio of less than 1:10 (range 1:3 to 1:8) which should be determined by the nature/type of placement, the placement context/location and clinical risks.

**Good access to supervisors**

- Onsite supervision for at least 50% of the placement in the early stages to support clinical, communication and reasoning skills and tapering off to collaborative/consultative supervision for other 50% of the placement using technology (e.g. Skype)
• Good access to a (local) onsite supervisor, to support learning and respond to and deal with students’ issues or needs

• Use of alternative supervision models (e.g. Skype, Face Time) for geographically remote areas or if staff are unable to travel with students.

**Essential supervisor attributes, experience and qualifications**

• Responsive, flexible and student-centred

• Capacity to mentor students to facilitate reflection and make meaning from experience

• Recent knowledge of clinical areas, and learning theories

• Negotiation skills

• Australian registered health professional (if required by the accreditation body of the course).

**A well-established supervisor/student working relationship**

• Establishing learning plans pre-departure to explicitly outline expectations (including feedback mechanisms) for student and supervisor

• Developing mutual, reciprocal and respectful relationships in which the supervisor mentors students to consider their practices, make meaning from their experiences and journey towards professional goals

• Conducting daily debriefs to optimise key learning and link theory, practice and reflection on cultural differences.
3. Key assessment criteria

3.1 Key learning outcomes

At the end of the placement students will have developed the following:

An international healthcare perspective including the ability to:

- Explain the healthcare system in the host setting and identify the associated benefits and challenges
- Critically compare and contrast the Australian and host country healthcare systems
- Discuss the impact of the social determinants of health in the host setting.

Cultural capabilities including:

- The capacity to reflect on ‘otherness’, their own social/cultural identity and the social/cultural identities of groups different from them
- An awareness of cultural differences and demonstrated sensitivity to different cultural, social and healthcare practices
- An appreciation of the host country’s culture and population
- An appreciation of the need for cultural competence
- Demonstrated basic language phrases (where appropriate) for the setting.

Capacity to deliver culturally appropriate healthcare services that includes the ability to:

- Create appropriate action plans to enhance current and future practice relevant to the cultural setting
- Create culturally appropriate and sustainable resources
- Demonstrate an understanding and ability to apply different consultative models of practice/service delivery.

Professional skills and capabilities including:

- Demonstrated professional awareness across different cultural contexts
- The ability to adapt professional practice to different contexts and healthcare needs
- The ability to discuss the legal and ethical practices in the cultural setting
- The ability to train and work with interpreters
- Other generic skills from their course (e.g. time management, decision making, teamwork, understanding professional responsibilities, professional communication and training others)
• The ability to tailor communication skills to engage a diverse range of stakeholders from the cultural setting they are in
• Demonstrated awareness of what it means to be a global citizen.

*The international fieldwork program should also provide students with opportunities to further develop their self-efficacy skills and capabilities such as:
  • Resilience
  • Confidence
  • Adaptability
  • Awareness of self and others
  • Organisational skills.

### 3.2 Optimal approaches or tools to assess learning outcomes

The expert panel identified the following optimal assessment tools and strategies:

**Reflective practice facilitated through:**

- The use of a diary/journal to reflect on performance
- Regular discussion between supervisor and students to help students reflect on and develop specific attributes for personal and professional development (e.g. what they have learned, still need to learn, achievements, expectations, attitudes and strategies for improvement).

**Feedback on learning**

- Regular and timely formative feedback from supervisor and relevant key stakeholders throughout placement.

**A standardised assessment tool**

- Use of a standardised assessment tool (generic or discipline specific).

**Students report on their achievement or learning through a presentation**

- Potential forms including: oral, written, audio-visual, portfolio, individual or group.

### 3.3 Optimal strategies to provide students with feedback on their learning

- Five key learning strategies were identified and are listed below.
- Of note, there was some discussion through the eDelphi as to whether the students should share their reflective journals, whether formative feedback from multiple stakeholders should be given (e.g. local, onsite and Australian supervisors), and whether a learning plan should be used. Consistent with other elements that were not agreed upon, this lack of consensus likely reflects the diversity of placements.
- The following five strategies are essential and reflect good teaching and learning practice as identified in the literature (Boud, Cohen, & Walker, 1993).
Recommended strategies to provide students with feedback during an international placement (either onsite or remotely):

- Use regular and timely individualised formative feedback
- Provide constructive feedback to encourage reflective practice (regular review of learning goals; identifying strengths and areas and strategies for improvement)
- Utilise a range of formats for feedback, singly or in combination (verbal, written, and/or structured assessment tools) where appropriate to the placement
- Conduct regular debriefing activities (individually or in a group where appropriate) during and after placement
- Optimise student’s receptiveness to feedback by ensuring adequate time and preparation for receiving and responding to feedback.
References


Gronn, P. (2002). Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis. *The


### Appendix 1: Vietnam placement generic Assessment Form

Student Name: ____________________________

Supervisor: ____________________________ Date: ____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfactory/ Emerging/ Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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#### Professional behaviour

- e.g. Demonstrates an understanding of patient/client rights and consent
- Demonstrates ethical, legal & culturally sensitive practice
- Demonstrates teamwork
- Conducts self in a professional manner

#### Self management skills

- Displays efficient organisation to complete administrative responsibilities safely and effectively.
- Demonstrates initiative and takes responsibility
- Responds appropriately to feedback

#### Acquire and review knowledge for ongoing professional improvement

- Demonstrates commitment to learning
• Applies an evidence based approach to practice.
• Considers the research evidence, patient/client preferences, clinical expertise and available resources in patient/client management
• Shares new evidence with colleagues

Communicate and interrelate effectively in diverse contexts

• Uses effective interpersonal skills and adopts appropriate strategies in working with diverse patient/client groups.
• Demonstrates clear and accurate documentation
• Utilises reporting and presentation skills at an appropriate level.
• Conducts an appropriate patient/client interview
• Uses interpreters effectively
• Is an effective educator/health promoter
• Communicates effectively within the workplace

Selects & measures relevant health indicators and outcomes. Sets goals

• Selects appropriate variable/s from WHO ICF domains of impairment, activity limitation and participation restriction.
• Identifies and justifies variables to be measured to monitor treatment response and outcome.
• Sets realistic short and long term goals
• Links outcome variables with treatment goals

**Performs appropriate physical procedures**

• Considers patient/client comfort and safety
• Demonstrates sensitive and appropriate handling
• Monitors and evaluates management plan

**Risk Management**

• Monitors patient/client safety.
• Reports adverse events and near misses to appropriate members of the team
• Implements appropriate measures in case of emergency
• Reports inappropriate or unsafe behaviour of a co-worker or situations that are unsafe (taking into account available resources)
Appendix 2: Interprofessional Capability Assessment Tool