

# Rural Health student placements

## Student evaluation



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

Semester 2, 2014

### Student profile

Health services across the Hume region and Wagga Wagga hosted a number of health care students in semester 2, 2014 and 79 students provided feedback regarding their placement. These students consisted of 13 males and 66 females, none of whom identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander. The majority (60%) were aged 18-25 years of age, while 25% were aged 25-35 and 15% were aged 35 years of age and older. Most students (68%) were in their first three years of study; 66% undertook placement that was between two to four weeks; with the majority placed within a public hospital (65%), community health centre (20%) or private practice (6%).

Nursing and Midwifery students were the highest number of students to undertake practical placement within the Hume region, which was followed by Medicine, Occupational Therapy, and Dietetics students as outlined in Figure 1.

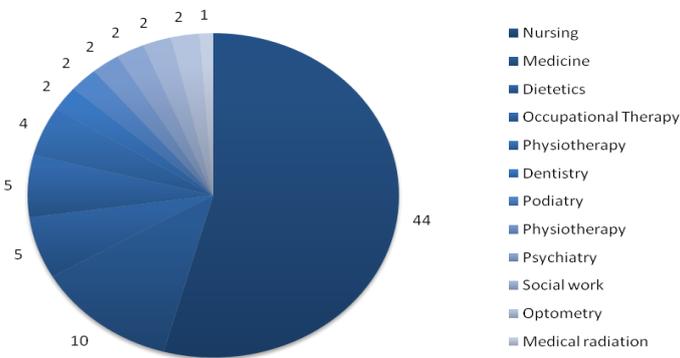


Figure 1: Number of students

### Learning and training

Within their placement 86% of the students indicated that they were provided with an interprofessional learning experience, while 4% stated they did not and the remainder were unsure if this had occurred. In addition, 23% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they had received adequate Indigenous cultural training in their placement and 37% were unsure about receiving adequate training. However it must be noted that there was a high proportion of students that were satisfied with the workplace supervision while on placement as demonstrated in Figure 2.

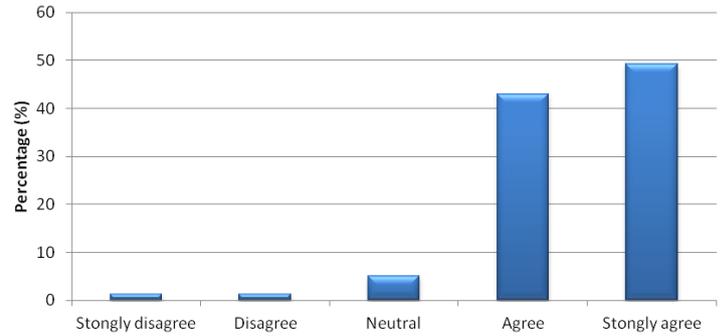


Figure 2: Satisfaction with supervision

### Placement satisfaction

In addition to the high percentage of satisfaction with supervision, this was matched with a high level of satisfaction with receiving adequate educational resources on placement; 86% indicated they were satisfied, while 11% were neutral about receiving adequate educational resources. There was a moderate level of satisfaction (74%) with the accommodation while on placement. Overall student placement satisfaction was also recorded to be high with 94% students satisfied as indicated in Figure 3.

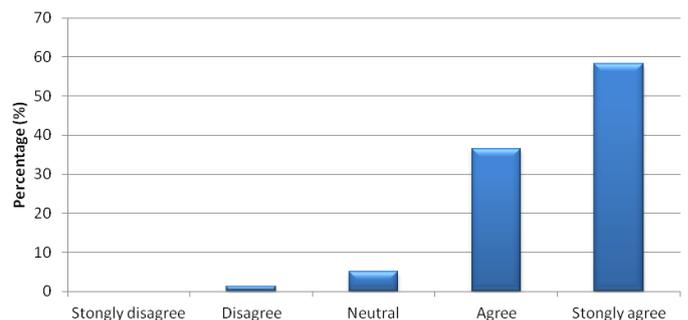


Figure 3: Overall student satisfaction

The satisfaction with the placement was reflected by the students who stated the following

*My placement in a rural setting enabled me gain friendships with the health care team which... assisted my learning and how to apply it into practice.*

*I would recommend rural placement to other students... as I learned a lot and had a fantastic placement...*

## Positive and challenges of placement

Beyond satisfaction, there were a high proportion of students (67%) who indicated that the placement was challenging. To provide some further context to these challenges, two students stated “This was my first time living out of home” and “[I was] a little bit isolated”, while another student said that “living away from home was enjoyable but also very difficult as... I was also unable to work during this time.” Lastly, a student discussed the challenges of placement.

*There was a lot of travel involved... but I feel this placement was very beneficial in consolidating my skills and knowledge surrounding podiatry practice.*

One student highlighted that there was a lack of educators and having work placement practices signed off made their placement difficult, while other students offered suggestions to improve this challenge. For example, two students stated

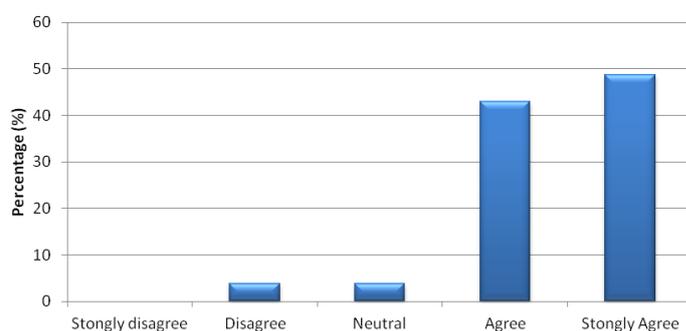
*It would have been great to have some sort of debriefing for students maybe at the end of each week of placement, just to see how we were all getting along.*

*All students had a debriefing session with a clinical facilitator to discuss what we experienced and learned. This process significantly improve critical thinking ability by sharing information, assisted by clinical nurse educator's evidence based knowledge.*

The more positive experience were shown to outweigh some of these challenges with 77% outlining that their placement allowed a great opportunity to work with a wide range of staff and students from a number of disciplines. This was further highlighted when one student who stated

*[It] was a fantastic place to do placement as all of the staff are really supportive of students learning and really go the extra mile to make sure you are achieving the best you can while on placement... I feel that this experience has really strengthened me both personally and professionally.*

Again, most students (89%) stated that they received quality feedback, while on placement and 90% indicated they were treated with respect by staff; while there was only one student that that indicated they were unsure. This was also reflected when students indicated that their placement was conducive to their learning as outlined in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: Constructive placement for learning**

## Effectiveness of placement

Overall the student evaluation revealed that 93% of students felt they had made a contribution to the services while on placement which was highlighted by a number of students who stated

*Being at a rural hospital allowed my learning to increase greatly as the staff were highly trained... and they were willing to help me complete tasks that I would normally not have an opportunity to undertake.*

*Being part of such a friendly team and getting hands on experience in several modalities helped to build my confidence and autonomy.*

*The patients were fantastic and they made me aware of many of the unique challenges of regional health.*

*Rural hospitals enable much greater learning than city hospitals. [Staff] have the time to talk and teach the students rather than students standing by and watching.*

## Conclusion

The student evaluation demonstrated that the majority of student experiences with their placement including supervision and learning outcomes were positive. Each of the services were felt to be a constructive health service that met the needs and expectations among current students and conducive of future student needs.