

ANZAME Position Statement on the link between workforce and health professional education in Australia and New Zealand - DRAFT

ANZAME

ANZAME, the association for health professional education in Australia and New Zealand aims to promote, support and advance education in the health care professions. ANZAME supports all health care professional educators, is not discipline specific, and covers undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing education and training. ANZAME facilitates communication between educators in the health care professions by providing a network, through its special interest groups, database of expertise, journal, bulletin and annual conference.

It promotes educational research and good practice through seeding grants, awards and conference presentations and through its peer-reviewed journal, Focus on Health Professional Education.

ANZAME promotes innovation in educational practice and best evidence teaching and learning. We have a network of education researchers who contribute to an international evidence base for health professional education.

Background

Patient safety and wellbeing are dependent on the quality of health care delivery. In turn, the quality of health care delivery is dependent on the quality of health practitioner education. Such practitioners must be fit for purpose and ready to undertake ongoing training. Workforce and education are therefore very closely linked. Education must be informed by workforce needs and the workforce must be informed by educational developments and by the capacity to deliver. Clinical educators develop the next generation of clinicians and are therefore highly influential in shaping the way clinicians think and practise.

Recent times have seen an expansion of the training places for some health care professionals. However the capacity to deliver the training is finite. Not only are placements within community and hospital workplaces limited, but there are a limited number of clinical educators, clinician supervisors and educational/clinical sites. Most clinical educators are also health practitioners. This creates tension when demands are placed on individuals to deliver both health care and education. ANZAME sees significant merit in ensuring there is good ongoing dialogue between workforce planners and educators.

Development of a workforce of educators should be planned and cannot happen by chance. It needs planning and fostering. Where health care practitioners choose to have a career, either part-time or fulltime, in health professional education they should be encouraged and supported in their endeavours.

Recommendations

As a peak body representing health care professional educators, ANZAME strongly values dialogue with health workforce planners and recommends that:

- Educators should be consulted about proposed changes in the health workforce
- Educators should be responsive to the needs of the health workforce
- Educators should be involved in planning for changes in the health care workforce.

ANZAME is keen to promote clinical education as a career path

- Health professional education should be fostered as a career path by recognising this as a vocational branch of practice.
- Current postgraduate vocational training programmes should also recognise that a focus on clinical education is a valued and useful component of training

Teaching and learning within clinical workplaces should be valued by health care organisations.

- Teaching should be regarded by health organisation employers as a normal and valued and essential service of all clinicians.

DRAFT