

Preparation, supervision and assessment for international fieldwork in health sciences: Gaining consensus using a Delphi process

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International fieldwork is considered integral to developing graduate attributes for a globally competitive job market. This is evidenced by the growing trend for universities to provide outbound mobility experiences for students and the \$100 million New Colombo Plan commitment by the Australian Government aimed to support undergraduate students to undertake international work placements. It is becoming increasingly important to identify and disseminate standards paramount to quality international fieldwork experiences. This showcase describes a key phase of an Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT) project aimed to establish academic standards for international fieldwork within health science disciplines. The emphasis was on establishing standards for fieldwork preparation, the level and model of supervision, and assessment criteria to ensure excellent student learning outcomes. A standard Delphi approach consisting of three survey rounds was used to identify and iteratively gain consensus from a 25 member expert panel on academic standards for international fieldwork (preparation, supervision and assessment). One hundred and forty statements relating to standards for preparation, supervision and assessment for international fieldwork in health sciences were developed. Consensus on the relative importance of 114 statements was achieved (>80% of expert panel members). This inaugural study consulted with experts across Australia to identify the quality components of international fieldwork for health sciences. The resulting good practice principles and accompanying guide identify and promote quality dimensions to optimise student learning and support the Work Integrated Learning agenda in Australian higher education. Given that student outbound mobility programs are resource intensive, the standards created through the Delphi process will assist universities to maximize the return on investment.