

Dear Sophia,

Many thanks again for the opportunity to make a submission to the WA Select Committee on Child Development Services.

I have limited my comments here to 2c of the Committee's Terms of Reference, namely the role of specialist medical colleges, universities and other training bodies in establishing sufficient workforce pathways. My comments here concern three main barriers to enhancing workforce pathways in this space, and also two possible solutions.

We would of course be pleased to consider a wider range of training of relevance to Child Development Services. Our ability to do so is limited by three factors, which are summarised briefly below;

1. The COVID pandemic placed enormous strain on the resources of the healthcare system, and required premises to impose strict limitations on who was deemed essential to be on site. One necessary but unfortunate consequence of this has been a significant backlog in students who require access to healthcare premises in order to meet accreditation requirements for their discipline and subsequently graduate into the workforce. We are confident that this will be resolved over time, but in the meantime represents an acute constraint on the supply of graduates in many health-related disciplines.
2. A number of providers of student fieldwork placements have informed us of their intention to begin or increase charges we must pay in order to host our students. While we await confirmation of the specific financial impact of this, the net effect is a significant increase in costs which inevitably impacts the resources we have available to undertake other activities
3. I understand that the University recruits to a level that means we have reached our cap of funding for Commonwealth-supported students. In the context of health sciences disciplines the student contribution alone represents a small proportion of total teaching costs. Consequently any attempt to scale up provision (e.g., via new courses) represents an increase in resource requirements but with relatively little additional resourcing available.

In the context of these constraints, there are two possible routes to a solution that may deserve further consideration. Either model below would mitigate barriers to increasing employment pathways.

The first would be a generalist qualification in child development and health, ideally as a graduate entry Masters. This would be open to students from a wide-range of health sciences backgrounds, and so has the greatest potential of attracting a viable cohort. A GEM course could potentially have a lower placement requirement, as students would have completed such in their undergraduate studies. It may be possible to liaise with the federal government with regard to a relatively minor increase in the funding envelope to support additional CSP places for what is clearly a priority area for WA.

A second possibility would be a Graduate Certificate in the field. This would be useful in providing a more limited quantity of upskilling. Since these courses typically last for only one semester full-time (or part-time equivalent thereof) they are typically attractive to people who wish to study while continuing to work. This in turn means that students may be willing to pay fees, providing they can identify a clear career and financial benefit. Alternately the lower course fees mean that employers are often more willing to consider covering tuition fees for their staff.

I hope that the information and views here are useful to the Select Committee.

With best wishes,

Adrian North

PhD

Interim Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor, Faculty of Health Sciences

Curtin University

Tel | +61 (0)8 9266 9558

Mobile | +61 (0)423 621 674

Email | Adrian.North@curtin.edu.au

Web | www.curtin.edu.au

Inquiry into Child Development Services

Submission number: P00067

Submission received: 01 Nov 2022

Organisation name: Faculty of Health Sciences, Curtin University

Position: Interim Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor

Title: Professor

First name: Adrian

Surname: North

Email address: adrian.north@curtin.edu.au

Contact phone number: 0423 621 674

Would you like the committee to consider:

How did you find out about the inquiry? Unsure

Record created by

Dear Sophia,

Many thanks again for the opportunity to make a submission to the WA Select Committee on Child Development Services.

I have limited my comments here to 2c of the Committee's Terms of Reference, namely the role of specialist medical colleges, universities and other training bodies in establishing sufficient workforce pathways. My comments here concern three main barriers to enhancing workforce pathways in this space, and also two possible solutions.

We would of course be pleased to consider a wider range of training of relevance to Child Development Services. Our ability to do so is limited by three factors, which are summarised briefly below;

1. The COVID pandemic placed enormous strain on the resources of the healthcare system, and required premises to impose strict limitations on who was deemed essential to be on site. One necessary but unfortunate consequence of this has been a significant backlog in students who require access to healthcare premises in order to meet accreditation requirements for their discipline and subsequently graduate into the workforce. We are confident that this will be resolved over time, but in the meantime represents an acute constraint on the supply of graduates in many health-related disciplines.
2. A number of providers of student fieldwork placements have informed us of their intention to begin or increase charges we must pay in order to host our students. While we await confirmation of the specific financial impact of this, the net effect is a significant increase in costs which inevitably impacts the resources we have available to undertake other activities
3. I understand that the University recruits to a level that means we have reached our cap of funding for Commonwealth-supported students. In the context of health sciences disciplines the student contribution alone represents a small proportion of total teaching costs. Consequently any attempt to scale up provision (e.g., via new courses) represents an increase in resource requirements but with relatively little additional resourcing available.

In the context of these constraints, there are two possible routes to a solution that may deserve further consideration. Either model below would mitigate barriers to increasing employment pathways.

The first would be a generalist qualification in child development and health, ideally as a graduate entry Masters. This would be open to students from a wide-range of health sciences backgrounds, and so has the greatest potential of attracting a viable cohort. A GEM course could potentially have a lower placement requirement, as students would have completed such in their undergraduate studies. It may be possible to liaise with the federal government with regard to a relatively minor increase in the funding envelope to support additional CSP places for what is clearly a priority area for WA.

A second possibility would be a Graduate Certificate in the field. This would be useful in providing a more limited quantity of upskilling. Since these courses typically last for only one semester full-time (or part-time equivalent thereof) they are typically attractive to people who wish to study while continuing to work. This in turn means that students may be willing to pay fees, providing they can identify a clear career and financial benefit. Alternately the lower course fees mean that employers are often more willing to consider covering tuition fees for their staff.

I hope that the information and views here are useful to the Select Committee.

With best wishes,

Adrian North

PhD

Interim Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor, Faculty of Health Sciences

Curtin University

Tel | +61 (0)8 9266 9558

Mobile | +61 (0)423 621 674

Email | Adrian.North@curtin.edu.au

Web | www.curtin.edu.au

Inquiry into Child Development Services

Submission number: P00067

Submission received: 01 Nov 2022

Title:

First name: Adrian

Surname: North

Email address: adrian.north@curtin.edu.au

Contact phone number: 0423 621 674

Would you like the committee to consider:

How did you find out about the inquiry? Unsure

Record created by

Dear Sophia,

Many thanks again for the opportunity to make a submission to the WA Select Committee on Child Development Services.

I have limited my comments here to 2c of the Committee's Terms of Reference, namely the role of specialist medical colleges, universities and other training bodies in establishing sufficient workforce pathways. My comments here concern three main barriers to enhancing workforce pathways in this space, and also two possible solutions.

We would of course be pleased to consider a wider range of training of relevance to Child Development Services. Our ability to do so is limited by three factors, which are summarised briefly below;

1. The COVID pandemic placed enormous strain on the resources of the healthcare system, and required premises to impose strict limitations on who was deemed essential to be on site. One necessary but unfortunate consequence of this has been a significant backlog in students who require access to healthcare premises in order to meet accreditation requirements for their discipline and subsequently graduate into the workforce. We are confident that this will be resolved over time, but in the meantime represents an acute constraint on the supply of graduates in many health-related disciplines.
2. A number of providers of student fieldwork placements have informed us of their intention to begin or increase charges we must pay in order to host our students. While we await confirmation of the specific financial impact of this, the net effect is a significant increase in costs which inevitably impacts the resources we have available to undertake other activities
3. I understand that the University recruits to a level that means we have reached our cap of funding for Commonwealth-supported students. In the context of health sciences disciplines the student contribution alone represents a small proportion of total teaching costs. Consequently any attempt to scale up provision (e.g., via new courses) represents an increase in resource requirements but with relatively little additional resourcing available.

In the context of these constraints, there are two possible routes to a solution that may deserve further consideration. Either model below would mitigate barriers to increasing employment pathways.

The first would be a generalist qualification in child development and health, ideally as a graduate entry Masters. This would be open to students from a wide-range of health sciences backgrounds, and so has the greatest potential of attracting a viable cohort. A GEM course could potentially have a lower placement requirement, as students would have completed such in their undergraduate studies. It may be possible to liaise with the federal government with regard to a relatively minor increase in the funding envelope to support additional CSP places for what is clearly a priority area for WA.

A second possibility would be a Graduate Certificate in the field. This would be useful in providing a more limited quantity of upskilling. Since these courses typically last for only one semester full-time (or part-time equivalent thereof) they are typically attractive to people who wish to study while continuing to work. This in turn means that students may be willing to pay fees, providing they can identify a clear career and financial benefit. Alternately the lower course fees mean that employers are often more willing to consider covering tuition fees for their staff.

I hope that the information and views here are useful to the Select Committee.

With best wishes,

Adrian North

PhD

Interim Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor, Faculty of Health Sciences

Curtin University

Tel | +61 (0)8 9266 9558

Mobile | +61 (0)423 621 674

Email | Adrian.North@curtin.edu.au

Web | www.curtin.edu.au