Student Placements and Disability: Experiences, Innovation and Planning for the Future
Summary Report
7 November 2016
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1 Introduction

The Specialist Placement and Recruitment Unit, Clinical Innovation and Governance held the ‘Student Placements and Disability: Experiences, Innovation and Planning for the Future’ forum on the 27 September 2016.

The forum aimed to bring together key stakeholders to discuss current challenges and opportunities for students placements in the disability sector. It is also aimed to make future plans to ensure that student placements are viable within the disability sector moving into a new service system.

The information in this report was captured during a workshop at the forum. It presents viewpoints from a wide range of participants from the government, private, non-government and university sectors.

“Providing high quality student placements within the disability sector is essential for creating a high quality sustainable workforce in the future. It is estimated that the disability workforce will have to nearly double in size to meet the needs of the NDIS participants, with the largest growth estimated to be in the allied health sector (NDIS, 2015)”
2 What Barriers and Opportunities Exist When Offering Student Placements Within the Disability Sector?

**Barriers**
- Lack of clarity on how to cost sessions involving students under the NDIS
- Caseload complexity—concerns students will have difficulty consolidating skills
- Lack of resources supporting people with disability to make informed choices about involving students in their services
- Balancing workload and supervision of students in a fee for service model
- Practitioners lack of experience in supervising students
- Supervisors unsure how to integrate students in the key worker model
- Student perceptions of disability
- Inflexible placement structures
- Student supervisors’ lack of understanding of insurance coverage for students on placement

**Opportunities**
- Potential partnerships with schools, day programs or respite services
- Innovative placement models to suit student supervisors e.g. shared or interdisciplinary placements
- Increased capacity to offer new services with student support e.g. group therapy
- Potential to cost services involving students at an allied health assistant rate within NDIS
- Attracting students to the sector—growing a sustainable workforce
- Avenue for recruitment
- People with disability have more choice
- Involving students in quality improvement and community based projects
- Collaboration between service providers and universities
- Easy access to resources and tools to assist with student placements
- Tele supervision
3 Innovative Placement Models to Increase Capacity to Offer Student Placements

**Innovative Placement Models**

**Shared Placement**
Students are supervised by two supervisors across two sites. This model provides an opportunity for practitioners who work part time, occupy a sole position, or work in the private sector to participate in the clinical education of students in a more efficient and manageable way.

**Multiple Students on Placement**
Student supervisors take on more than one student at a time. This model increases students' independence and maximises peer learning opportunities. Students are still assessed individually.

**Interprofessional Placement**
Students from two or more disciplines whose placements overlap together at a particular location. The student supervisors work collaboratively to provide a holistic experience for the students, while the students are encouraged to work collaboratively to provide a holistic service for people with disability.

**Sharing the Supervisory Role**
Sharing the supervisory role may be useful for staff working part time, or a new supervisor seeking support while taking on the role for the first time. It can provide the student with a varied learning experience.

**Cross Year Peer Mentoring**
Cross-year peer mentoring exists when students of different stages in their academic progress attend a placement at the same time. It involves the more senior student taking on a mentor role for the more junior student whilst their placements overlap.
4 Strategies to Increase Capacity to Offer Student Placements

- Incentives for student supervisors e.g. funding, training, support and access to resources
- Organisations to include student placements in strategic business plans
- Offer students opportunities to volunteer at disability services to increase disability awareness
- Utilise students for projects that can strengthen organisation and community relationships
- Professional associations to develop clinical education interest groups
- Discuss placement flexibility with universities e.g. duration of placement
- Simulation - employment opportunities for people with disability as well as benefits for students
- Telehealth - further explore IT requirements, structure, costs, possibilities
- Offer new student led services e.g. group therapy or teacher training
- Increase opportunities for participation in rural and remote placements
- Promote and utilise existing SPAR resources e.g. Student Supervisor Practice Package
- Trial and evaluate new student placement models
5 Resources Currently Available

**SPAR Unit Resources**
- Student Supervisor Practice Package
- Disability Awareness Resources
- Shared Placement Resources

Search “SPAR unit ADHC” in your internet search browser for easy access.

**Student Supervision workshops.** Contact local university for dates.

**Websites**
- Health Education and Training Institute (HETI)  
- Clinical Education Australia  
- National Disability Services  

**On Track E-Learning Package**

Designed for rural and remote allied health and nursing professionals. Appropriate for both experienced supervisors and those new to supervision. Available [online](#).

**University Student Placement contact list**

**Disability Workforce Education Reference Group (NSW)** to provide a reference point for joint discussion and planning aimed at improving education for students and practitioners in the sector.

**Resources that exist to support student supervisors**

There are so many resources out there that aren’t being utilised  
(Participant at forum, 2016)
6 What Training and Resources Should be Developed?

- Guidelines about costing services involving students within the NDIS
- Tailored workshops and development of “how to” guides for private practitioners wanting to supervise students
- Training for students on the transdisciplinary model of practice
- A guide for students about disability sector placements including disability awareness resources
- Increased disability content in university degrees
- Clinical education special interest groups
- Information about what funding students can access to assist with rural and remote placements
- Ensuring SPAR unit resources are accessible in the future
- Flexible professional development options to increase accessibility for those working in a fee for service model

“We need guidelines about billing for services provided by students under NDIS”

(Participant at forum, 2016)
7 What Would We Like to See Happen Next?

- NDIA provide clarification regarding billing services involving students
- Develop resources to support people with disability to make informed decisions around students being involved in their services
- Continued collaboration between key stakeholders across the sector
- Professional associations to develop position papers and special interest groups on clinical education
- Increased support for student placements in rural and remote areas
- The university sector deliver tailored training to support student placements in the disability sector
- Further exploration of telehealth and telesupervision
- Establishment of a community of practice for student supervisors in the disability sector
- Continue to develop the evidence base around which student placement models have the best outcomes for students
8 References


