DOCTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH WORK PLACEMENTS

Background

The Doctor of Public Health is a three year full-time professional doctoral program delivered by the School of Population Health. It comprises one-third coursework, one-third research and one-third practical training. The program is designed to provide non-medical and medical graduates with the skills and experience to apply the principles and methods of public health in professional practice.

During the second year of the course, students are required to conduct a major piece of research in an academic setting. In their final year, students are required to undertake over a calendar year a supervised placement in the workforce. This is intended to complement the coursework and research components of the course, by providing students with the opportunity to be involved in a real-life work setting.

Expectations of the University and the student

The university’s expectation is that the work placement setting will provide the student with the opportunity to be involved in a range of activities which might include the following, for example:

- in a research setting - planning, design and implementation of a research study; preparation of a funding submission; writing of a journal article; delivery of a conference presentation.
- in a program delivery setting – provide assistance with program delivery; conduct community consultation; evaluation of a program and introduction of change.

It is expected that the workplace would appoint a supervisor to whom the student would report and be accountable. The tasks and responsibilities allocated to the student during the placement would be negotiated in the context of the workplace’s current commitments and the student’s interests and abilities. It is presumed that the potential workplace supervisor will meet with the student prior to commencement of the placement to discuss and negotiate a suitable project(s)/tasks and work arrangements. The work placement supervisor will be responsible for ensuring that any pieces of work completed by the student on the agency’s behalf meet its standards and requirements.

Whilst there is no requirement for the work placement to pay the student a salary, any assistance which is able to be provided to the student (such as a contribution towards their student fees) would be appreciated. It is anticipated that the student would be reimbursed for any expenses incurred during the course of their work for the agency. Students are covered by the University's Personal Accident, Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance.
policies whilst they are participating in relevant and authorised work experience placements, given that the activity constitutes a compulsory component of their university course.

**Expectations of the work placement agency**

The work placement agency should expect the student to act in a responsible manner consistent with the behaviour required of all employees, and to make an effective contribution to the public health activities and outcomes of the agency. It is reasonable to require the student to be involved in any of the usual activities of the organisation, such as staff meetings, external meetings, community activities, etc. The agency should be set out clearly at the outset its expectations of the student in terms of deliverables.

**Assessment**

To meet the University’s requirements for completion of this component of the Doctorate program, the student has to submit a report of 30,000-40,000 words about the placement. It is anticipated that this would primarily be comprised of any work undertaken, together with a commentary (of approximately 10,000 words) about the workplace experience (the tasks undertaken, the skills acquired, the issues and challenges faced, the outcomes, etc.). The student’s work placement supervisor will be required to complete a brief proforma on the student’s performance, which will be mailed to the agency towards the end of the placement. You will also be contacted midway through the placement by the DPH Coordinator to discuss the student’s progress, identify any issues of concern etc.

**Actions required**

Before commencement of a work placement, the workplace supervisor is required to complete a Letter of Understanding. This should outline the work program and work arrangements proposed for the student (see attachment). It should be signed by the Workplace Supervisor, the student and the DPH Coordinator. The student should arrange for a copy to be forwarded to their Academic Coordinator.

In the event of any queries, contact should be made with either:

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