Public Health Nutrition
Program Observation Handbook

NUTR2008 Special Populations Project

Bachelor of Nutrition
Bachelor of Applied Public Health (Nutrition)
1. WORK FLOW OF PLACEMENT PROCESS

- Secure external observational placement
- Participate in observational placement
- Prepare for external observational placement
- Sign and submit placement agreement form prior to observation
2. PURPOSE OF PLACEMENT

The purpose of the observational placement is to introduce you to the practice of promoting population health within the area of Public Health Nutrition.

You will familiarise yourself with the operations of a Public Health Nutritionist, Health Promotion Practitioner, or similar. You will observe professionals and clients in a community setting in order to gain a better understanding of the scope of practice. You will develop an appreciation of the role of practitioners in their chosen modality, including the scope as well as the limitations of practice. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to become familiar with tasks involved in program implementation, and be able to evaluate and make recommendations to improve practice following observation.

External observational placement will provide you with the opportunity to see how health promotion programs are successfully operated in a real world environment. It enables students to begin to integrate their theoretical learning with the practical realities of professional practice, and is invaluable in shaping the quality and passion of our future professionals within the Public Health Nutrition industry.

3. PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Number of hours

The program observation has the recommendation of a minimum of 8 hours observation time within the specified time-frame across the trimester of study. Number of observational hours may vary due to the variable nature of program delivery in the community. Please refer to your subject outline and/or assessment area of your subject/s.

Type of placement

As the student, you will be required to observe professional public health nutrition practice only. You are not required to provide any information / advice or care to a client during these observations.

Assessment

Observational placement participation is compulsory. A student’s ability to pass this subject is dependent upon the successful completion of all observational requirements and assessment tasks.

Important Forms

- Agreement for Work Integrated Learning with the Certificate of Currency (Insurance)
- Letter of introduction
4. FINDING A SUITABLE PLACEMENT

You are responsible for searching and securing a suitable public health nutrition program for observation and we recommend starting your search before you begin this subject. Ideally, the program should be relevant for your future career goals and specialisation.

Program Requirements

A suitable placement program lead / contact must be appropriately qualified with formal qualifications in Nutrition.

- The prospective observational placement program lead / contact must work professionally in the field of public health nutrition / health promotion.

- The student and the prospective observational placement program lead / contact must negotiate a suitable work program.

- Arrangements must be confirmed in writing on the Placement Agreement form with details filled in of the prospective workplace, the Education provider and the student prior to the commencement of the placement.

Searching for a Public Health Nutrition Program

First step is to make a short list of Public Health providers within your local area, and write yourself a brief introduction so you can be clear and succinct in your phone call or email; outlining your needs of the observational placement supervisor. Use the 'Letter of Introduction' or 'Email Intro Template' document to assist you.

You may wish to book in an appointment at a nearby public health nutrition program provider, which will give you a chance to have a one-on-one discussion with a public health nutrition practitioner and find out if they take students for observational placement.

Finding a observational placement may require some persistence and a little 'thinking outside the square', consider Hospitals, Non-Government Organisations, Community Health Organisations and your local Council. These can be in different areas of your town / city or in rural areas rather than focusing on possible providers in your immediate neighbourhood if you are experiencing challenges securing placement. This provides students with more opportunity.

Just like applying for a job, you want to show your potential program lead / contact that you are interested and have taken initiative to find out as much as you can about their program. Make sure to do some research!

Suggested Email & Introduction Letter

At the end of this Handbook you will find an example of an Introduction Letter and Email Template, you may choose to use these when you are approaching nutrition programs / organisations. Please always remember to follow-up email correspondence with a phone call, this adds a personal touch and usually has more success.

If you need further advice, please get in touch with your Supervisor who can assist further with your correspondence.
5. CONDUCT AT YOUR HOST ORGANISATION

When you commence at your host organisation you should be made aware of and abide by the host organisation’s policies and procedures whilst you are conducting your placement. This could include Work, Health & Safety, Code of Conduct and a range of other policies. If you are not aware of these, please ensure you ask your Program lead / contact if they can provide these to you.

Placement Agreement (Insurance & Indemnity)

The Education provider arranges insurance cover for those students undertaking an external placement. This cover includes Personal Injury, Public Liability and Professional Indemnity.

To be eligible for coverage under this policy, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that a completed Placement Agreement form is lodged with your Supervisor prior to the commencement of the external placement. Copies of this form will be forwarded to the Industry Consultant and the student, with the original kept on file at the Education provider.

Failure to lodge the appropriate documentation will render the student ineligible for insurance cover. Students engaged in observational practice do not receive any remuneration and therefore have no claim on the employer’s Worker’s Compensation Insurance of their placement workplace.

Immunisation requirements

Some individual workplaces such as public health facilities that involve direct client contact may require you to provide evidence of their immunity status or be vaccinated against chicken pox, hepatitis B, influenza, tuberculosis, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles mumps and rubella prior to commencing their placement. Please check with individual programs prior to commencing placements.

Professional behaviour

You are expected to comply with all of the standards and practices of the placement workplace.

You should also be aware that you are representatives of the Education provider, and as such, should behave in a professional manner at all times.
In addition, you are expected to:

- Work with colleagues and patients irrespective of gender, age, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation
- Maintain a high standard of hygiene and promote safe practices in the workplace
- Respect the rights and dignity of any clients
- Maintain professional and ethical conduct
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with clients and with other practitioners
- Be punctual (see below)
- Maintain client and program privacy and confidentiality (see below)
- Take personal responsibility for seeking out learning opportunities

You must not:

- Attend your program observations under the influence of alcohol or any drug that has a negative effect on behaviour
- Engage in any behaviour which could be considered to be bullying, threatening, abusive or intimidating
- Attend placement if you are unwell
- Give any advice within the program setting without first obtaining the permission of the program lead / contact
- Leave the observational placement without first advising your program lead / contact

Professional Misconduct

There are many types of professional misconduct. Examples include when you:

- Make breaches of professional and personal boundaries
- Break confidentiality/privacy of persons in their care

In cases of serious professional misconduct, your Supervisor and/or Program Director will be required to meet with you. Depending on the outcome you may be withdrawn from external observations for the remainder of the teaching period.

Where you are not permitted to return to your program observations a fail grade may be recorded for that unit. You have the right to appeal through normal Torrens University procedures.

Punctuality

You are expected to be punctual at all times. Generally, you will observe the usual working hours of the workplace.
What to do if you can’t attend?

If you are unable to attend your external placement due to sickness, carer responsibilities or other personal emergencies you must contact your program lead / contact to advise them of your absence as soon as you can, and no later than your expected starting time.

In the event that you require an extended absence or are unable to complete your placement, it is your responsibility to advise your supervisor as soon as possible. You may be required to renegotiate a later placement at the current workplace, or an alternative placement to ensure you complete the recommended hours.

Dress Code

The dress standards of the workplace should be observed, and all clothing and shoes clean and in good repair.

Personal hygiene must be maintained in the work setting. You are expected to have bathed and used deodorants or antiperspirants as needed prior to attending your placement. Breath fresheners should be used as appropriate. Chewing gum whilst observing is not acceptable.

If any aspect of dress, grooming or hygiene is not regarded as satisfactory by your program lead, you may be sent home, and will need to make up any hours missed.
Rights of consumers

The program lead / contact and yourself are expected to uphold the rights of consumers including:

• Consumers have the right to expect a safe and adequate level of care delivered by competent staff.

• All consumers accessing services should be made aware that you are present.

• Any consumer has the right to refuse a student to observe their treatment/care.

• Consumers are under no obligation to participate in teaching activities and have the right to refuse the presence of an observational student.

Confidentiality and privacy

You are required to maintain the confidentiality of all clients / patients. This means that any information of a personal nature or that is sensitive or personal health information must not be disclosed, collected or used without the express consent of the client.

Any information about clients should not be read, collected, discussed or disclosed, including in general conversation, without the permission of your program lead / contact. Additionally, you should not discuss clients outside of the program.

The privacy of individuals and personal information is protected by government legislation and breaches of privacy carry legal penalties. You should read and apply all sections of privacy legislation as it relates to their State. The following link is provided for you on their online learning site: Privacy Act 1988 [http://www.privacy.gov.au](http://www.privacy.gov.au)

Patient notes, or other materials containing confidential patient/client information, such as, treatment planning, must not leave the site. Students are not permitted, under any circumstances, to take patient notes home.

Students must also respect and not divulge any information about the program operations, financial information or anything else which can be considered to be “commercial in confidence” obtained by you in the course of your placement.

There may be instances where students are required to sign a confidentiality agreement, declaring not to access, use, disclose or retain personal client information. Students found in breach of the above will be withdrawn from the placement, effective immediately and may subsequently be excluded from the program following consideration of the matter by the Program Director.

As part of their learning, students will be required to analyse their program observations. In order to support learning whilst protecting confidentiality the following guidelines have been developed:

• Pseudonyms should be used for the names of clients and organisations in all academic works.

• Identifying information, including demographic information, should be modified in academic work, using terminology such as ‘similar to’.

• Students should develop ‘composite’ patients/clients based upon their experiences. Students should note this as a ‘composite’ and not intended to identify a single person.

• Students should use the password protect function on their word programs to further guard sensitive information.

• Students should avoid naming other students / colleagues in academic work, such as reflective pieces or portfolios.
Reporting Incidents and Accidents

As part of our responsibility, and for your safety, the college has developed guidelines for the reporting of incidents and unusual events that occur during external observations.

An incident is defined as an adverse event where there is some injury or potential injury to the student. The incident should be reported as soon as possible to the agency staff at the observation placement, and seek appropriate treatment; as soon as practically possible contact your Supervisor.

The need for a medical assessment is determined according to the Occupational Health and Safety Policy of the workplace and the college. Following initial resolution which may include medical assessment, an agency and the college incident / accident report should be completed and can be found on the online learning resource site.

Official reporting on behalf of the workplace is the responsibility of the workplace staff and not the student. It is however, your responsibility to participate in this activity.

What to do if something goes wrong

If you have any concerns or problems at your external program observations, you should discuss these, in the first instance with your Supervisor.
6. DOCUMENTATION
INDUSTRY PLACEMENT LETTER

TORRENS UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA:
INVITATION TO PARTNER AS A NUTRITION INDUSTRY PLACEMENT PROVIDER

ABOUT TORRENS UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA AND PUBLIC HEALTH NUTRITION
Torrens University Australia is an educational institution delivering academic excellence in the advanced area of Public Health Nutrition.
Our programs include the Bachelor of Nutrition and Bachelor of Applied Public Health (Nutrition).
Our students are required to undertake Industry Placement and participation whereby they observe industry best practice in the field of Public Health Nutrition and Health Promotion.

INDUSTRY PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITY
We cordially invite your establishment to partner with us to support our students to successfully meet industry expectations and the latest industry trends. Industry placements encourage our students to consider ‘best practice’ through observation. Students are provided with the opportunity to apply acquired knowledge in a workplace context, which further supports their learning and also provides a foundation for reflection and practice.

AS AN INDUSTRY PLACEMENT PROVIDER, YOU WILL BENEFIT BY:
Collaborating with an established University and leveraging off our reputation and graduate network for your work-force, educational and network needs.
Supporting the next generation of industry professionals by exposing them to best practice standards within the field of Public Health and Nutrition.

YOUR SUPPORT WILL BENEFIT OUR STUDENTS BY:
Allowing our students to gain valuable insight into the Public Health Nutrition profession at your respected establishment.
Enhancing our students’ knowledge to increase industry immersion and awareness.
Allowing our students to master critical reflective practices within the industry.
Assisting our students to keep abreast of the ever-changing scope of practice within their chosen field.

Students are required to complete a recommended number of industry placement hours and will record their observations in a participation log. This log will then be used as evidence forming part of their assessments pertaining to their practical subjects.

Should you wish to proceed, our students will be covered (under Torrens University Australia's insurance) for public indemnity and personal accidents.

We are conscious of your organisational needs and will ensure this is a mutually positive and rewarding experience for you, your staff, your clientele and our students.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact:
Lloyd Bristow
Project Supervisor
Email: lbristow@laureate.net.au
Phone: 03 9415 3300

We look forward to welcoming you as a partner of Torrens University Australia.

Kind regards

Kath Curry
General Manager, Health
To whom it may concern,

INVITATION TO PARTNER AS A TORRENS UNIVERSITY PUBLIC HEALTH NUTRITION INDUSTRY PLACEMENT PROVIDER

Torrens University Australia is an educational institution delivering academic excellence in the advanced area of Public Health Nutrition. Our programs include the Bachelor of Nutrition and Bachelor of Applied Public Health (Nutrition).

Our students are required to undertake Industry Placement and participation whereby they observe industry best practice in the field of Public Health Nutrition and Health Promotion. Upon securing an industry placement, students will record their observations into a participation log to further enhance their learning of best practice standards (policies, procedures and protocols) within their chosen qualification.

AS AN INDUSTRY PLACEMENT PROVIDER, YOU WILL BENEFIT BY:

• Collaborating with an established University and leveraging off our reputation and graduate network for your work-force, educational and network needs.
• Supporting the next generation of industry professionals by exposing them to best practice standards within the field of Public Health and Nutrition.

YOUR SUPPORT WILL BENEFIT OUR STUDENTS BY:

• Allowing our students to gain valuable insight into the Public Health Nutrition profession at your respected establishment including the latest industry trends.
• Assisting our students to master critical reflective practices within the industry.
• Boosting their networking capabilities with the emphasis of ensuring they understand the importance of best practice.
• Supporting students to secure successful employment and longevity within the Industry.

Below is an example of the types of nutrition education / lifestyle modification programs (but not limited to) that our students are required to observe:

• Weight Management Groups
• Nutrition Education Programs
• Lifestyle Modification Programs

In addition to the above observations, students are asked to evaluate and provide recommendations on ‘best practice standards’ in regards to:

• Participant recruitment
• Program planning
• Program content
• Program delivery
• Resources used
• Program sustainability

For further information, please review our website www.torrens.edu.au

We look forward to welcoming you as a partner of Torrens University Australia.