External evaluation of the Queensland Health Clinical Education Workload Management Initiative

This project was funded by the ClinEdQ Research and Publication Initiative to evaluate the Clinical Education Workload Management Initiative which provides financial support to allied health disciplines within Queensland Health (administered by AHCETU) to deliver support for clinical education to pre-entry students and support for new graduates. The summary below outlines the key outcomes of the project.

Summary

In May 2011, Young Futures was commissioned to evaluate the achievements of the Initiative to date, including providing:

- A description of the implementation of the resource over the past two years;
- A description of observable outputs; and
- An assessment of supports and barriers to effectively and efficiently increase clinical education capacity and support to new graduates.

The methodology included:

- Development of a program logic to capture the rationale behind the Initiative and relationships between its expected outcomes. This was used to frame the evaluation questions and processes;
- Analysis of activity data for pre-entry clinical education from 2008 – 2010 and new graduate support in 2010; and
- Collection of feedback about the Initiative specifically, as well as pre-entry clinical education and new graduate support generally, through surveys and interviews of clinical educators employed through the Initiative, QH allied health professionals and external stakeholders.

On the whole, it can be said that the initiative has already had a positive impact on the provision of pre-entry clinical education and new graduate support. It has achieved a lot in a short time and there is support and optimism for it to continue to develop and evolve.

The main strengths of the Initiative so far have been:

- The introduction of designated clinical education resources and a statewide focus applied through AHCETU which has raised pre-entry clinical education and new graduate support;
- The flexibility in the design, which has allowed each discipline to utilise the resource in a way that suits its unique needs; and
- AHCETU’s central coordination, support for training and contribution to establishing and maintaining clinical educator networks. This has been of particular value to the
smaller disciplines, many of which have not had a governance or support structure within allied health in the past.

Areas within the Initiative that need greater focus as it evolves further include:

- Communication about the existence and intent of the initiative to all AHPs
- Collaboration and partnership building with external stakeholders and associated disciplines
- Data collection of activity data, as well as ongoing monitoring and feedback processes
- Quality including measurement and reporting
- Capacity of facilities to take on additional student placements
- Support in rural and remote areas

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