

Small Capital and Equipment Program

Final report

Expanding clinical education

Date completed: 31 August 2012

Background and context

Northern Health has a strong history of collaborative, interprofessional working. Together with university and other health and community service partners we aim to train, attract and retain a dynamic, collaborative and highly skilled workforce for Melbourne's outer north. Accessible, practical teaching resources are central to achieving quality placements and building placement capacity. Having access to the core facilities such as well-equipped tutorial rooms, computers/hot-desks, internet access, online and face-to-face teaching resources enables learning to take place. This project is needed as students have variable access to these facilities and are often accommodated in crowded and poorly resourced spaces.

In order to provide quality learning experiences to our increasing student population, we require some small equipment and additional information technology (IT) resources.

Project objectives and expected impacts

- To address resource gaps in equipment and IT support available to health professional students
- To enable further development of an interprofessional approach to clinical placement experiences
- To provide a higher quality learning experience for an increased number of health professional students.

Project activities

The project activities are mainly focused around finalising the equipment to be purchased and ordering/installing and using the equipment. A number of principles underpin the selection and purchase of the equipment.

- Applicable/available for a range of disciplines
- Enabling interprofessional learning
- Value adding to quality student education
- Providing opportunities for increased student capacity
- Compatible with existing systems and equipment
- Minimal maintenance required.

Project management

- Governance: Equipment ordering is being overseen by the Allied Health Learning and Research Unit, with final sign off by Northern Health Executive as required by current delegation guidelines.
- Stakeholder engagement and consultations: Key staff from allied health, medicine/nursing education and practice have been consulted regarding equipment needs. Information and Communication Technology staff are involved in the decisions regarding hardware, applications and software purchase.
- Budget: Is subject to routine delegation and management guidelines.
- Timelines: Equipment ordered by end June 2012.

Project performance against stated deliverables

Original timelines have been included in the 'due date' column. Please note that contracts were not finalised for this project until April 2012.

Project activity	Project deliverable /target	Due date	Status
Scope all equipment required	Detailed equipment list	Mid February 2012	Completed
Order equipment	Orders completed	End February 2012	Completed
Install equipment	Equipment installed and in situ ready for use	End April 2012 (nb: as much as possible to be ordered / available prior to commencement of academic /placement year	Majority completed Two outstanding items currently – due to manufacturer/supplier delays
Training regarding equipment use	Clinical education staff trained (as required)	End April 2012	Initial is Completed Process in place for periodical orientation and updates to new staff
Monitor use of equipment and obtain feedback	Data collected for inclusion in final report	Mid June 2012	Ongoing – will be part of routine monitoring of clinical education
Prepare project report	Report finished	End June 2012	1 June 2012 – report provided Final Report – provided 1 September 2012

The project has achieved its stated objectives:

- To address resource gaps in equipment and IT support available to health professional students
- To enable further development of an interprofessional approach to clinical placement experiences
- To provide a higher quality learning experience for an increased number of health professional students.

Equipment has been ordered and the majority of equipment has been received/installed (waiting on two items due to manufacturers delays).

Project outcomes

- The equipment ordered and installed has enabled a larger number of students to access computer hot-desks and has value added to existing teaching resources. A greater number of students now have access to online learning, online exercise and food management programs (for planning/implementing their patient care while on placement), internet access and access to basic clinical care systems.
- Some equipment has already been used to support our existing interprofessional education programs.
- Creating a positive learning environment that is shared by students from different disciplines (i.e., through computer purchase for hot-desk areas) provides for informal as well as formal opportunities to learn with, from and about one another.
- The teaching equipment purchased enables us to offer resources to a greater number of health professional students and provide resources that are dedicated to teaching.
- We now have the capacity to develop/author online training programs as an adjunct to our hands-on and face-to-face clinical placement experiences. Students can work through theory independently then come together with an experienced clinician to advance their learning.
- Availability of standard ward/rehabilitation equipment in the teaching setting means students can practice in a safe environment prior to working directly with patients. Access to this equipment dedicated to student teaching also allows us to more fully test student skills and development: improving the quality of the programs we provide.

Evaluation

This grant has enabled us to address some resource gaps for information technology and teaching equipment in Melbourne's outer north. In a resource constrained environment, student teaching resources are often extremely difficult to acquire. This funding provides teaching equipment that will not only enhance the students' learning experience but will add to our ability to increase student numbers – particularly in the subacute and community setting.

Finalising all equipment and purchasing within a tight timeline has been the most difficult aspect of this project. This made the process much more challenging – particularly when dealing with multiple stakeholders across a range of disciplines and sites.

- Good relationships (which this project has) enable projects with short timelines to be more easily achieved.
- Many opportunities for building interprofessional collaboration when working through project processes.
- Basic and relatively inexpensive individual items/resources make a big difference to the teaching program.
- To consider the cost and availability of staff time in managing such a project.

Conclusion

This project provides an excellent opportunity for value adding to clinical education outcomes and capacity in allied health, medicine and nursing across a range of clinical areas. The purchased resources will be located and deployed at sub-acute and community sites, increasing the opportunity for student placements and clinical teaching in these important areas of practice for Melbourne's outer north.