

Health Professions Education in the Pacific Region: standardisation and inclusion in the Regional Framework for Action:

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Acronyms

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CAMC	Caribbean Association of Medical Councils
CCNE	Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
CDC	Centre for Disease Control
CDE	Committee on Dental Education of the American Medical Association
CITTI	Cook Island Tertiary Training Institute
CMNHS	College of Medicine Nursing and Health Science
CMN	Council of Nursing and Midwifery (Samoa)
CDE	Commission on Dental Education
DHERT	Department of Higher Education, Science, Research and Technology (PNG)
EQAP	Educational Quality Assessment Programme
EU	European Union
FNU	Fiji National University
GPA	Grade Point Average
HRDA	Human Resources <i>for</i> Development Alliance
ICN	International Council of Nurses
LCME	Liaison Committee on Medical Education
MBBS	Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery
MHESRT	Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Technology
MHMS	Ministry of Health and Medical Services
MoH	Ministry of Health
NAACLS	National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences
NCD	Non-communicable Diseases
NCPNG	Nursing Council for Papua New Guinea
NCSI	Nursing Council of the Solomon Islands
NDH	National Department of Health
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NZQF	New Zealand Qualifications Framework
NUS	National University of Samoa
PAASCU	Philippines Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities
PHMM	Pacific Health Ministers' Meeting
PICTA	Pacific Islands Countries Trade Agreement
PIHOA	Pacific Islands Health Officers Association
PQF	Pacific Qualifications Framework
PRQS	Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
RNB	Regional Nursing Board (Caricom)
SSCSiP	Strengthening Specialised Clinical Services in the Pacific
SPBEA	Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPCNMOA	South Pacific Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officers Alliance
SPFSC	South Pacific Form Seven Certificate
TEAS	Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme (PNG)
TQF	Tonga Qualifications Framework
TNQAB	Tonga National Qualifications Board
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
VQA	Vanuatu Qualifications Authority
VQF	Vanuatu Qualifications Framework
WASC	Western Association of School and Colleges
WFME	World Federation of Medical Education
WHO	World Health Organization
WPSEAR	Western Pacific and South East Asia Region

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The paper is presented in 4 Parts.

Part A is an Executive Summary of the issues and findings of this review and the points requiring further discussion. Part A also includes some discussion points and recommendations for consideration by Pacific health leaders, partners and stakeholders.

Part B introduces the issues, provides definitions and some orientation to recent developments, particularly the implementation of the Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF).

Part C is an inventory of health professions education programmes available in the Pacific Islands Countries provided by government, statutory, non-government and private sector institutions, and which lead to a formal qualification. An *estimation* of where the awarded qualification may sit on the 10 levels of the PQF is included, as is the identification of the accrediting or approving authority for each programme. Part C also presents a brief overview of the potential for identifying common course curricula within disciplines and across countries.

Part D is an inventory of programme accrediting or approving authorities by country and a description of the various organisations and methods of programme accreditation or endorsement currently used for health professions programmes in the Region.

PART A

Executive Summary

The Pacific Region is progressing towards achieving common levels of higher education qualifications, a common quality assurance approach to education providers' registration, and common methods of accrediting programmes, with anticipated outcomes of international recognition of qualifications obtained in Pacific countries, and improved professional and technical services at home. These activities are being facilitated by the implementation of the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PRQS) managed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

Until these region-wide objectives are achieved the countries and education providers in the region are acting independently by establishing diplomatic and professional ties to assist each other in training, experiencing both professional mobility within the region and migration out, suffering shortages of trained staff (some countries in crisis) through insufficient production and retention, dealing with identifying equivalencies for course credit transfers, integrating overseas graduates, opening to private sector providers, struggling to retain regional academics, duplicating teaching materials and employing professionals from other countries.

Regional action on standardisation in higher education may not solve all of these problems, but it will make their management far easier and the outcomes safer. The main causes of mortality and morbidity in the Pacific are regional and the importance of strengthening health professional education to produce competent health professionals capable of delivering quality and safe health services is a common concern.

The Pacific health sector is progressing from the position where health programme providers were governed by their national ministries of health and their programmes authorised and approved by statutory professional registration authorities, such as councils of medicine and nursing (and others). The primary purpose of these professional bodies is to register and govern the professional conduct of graduates of approved courses, and to assess the qualifications of external applicants for national registration.

With the more recent entry of health professions education into the university sector the role of the professional registration authorities remains one of programme review and advice but provided to university senates rather than ministries of health, and the accreditation of programmes within a national qualifications framework (NQF) becomes a responsibility of the University Council.

The Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF) is a 'translation device' used to draw comparisons among the various NQFs in the Region. It could be anticipated that when the NQFs translations are completed that the countries will have aligned their educational award systems on the basis of a common reference point (the PQF), and have a better understanding of programme comparability.

However, the region still has significant progress to make to all of the complex changes needed to achieve valid region-wide comparisons, from school leaving standards, entry into programmes on the PQF, to governance arrangements of institutions and providers, to the creation of clear and comparable processes of programme accreditation/approval and to the legislative and bureaucratic changes to manage and audit new systems.

Entry into health professions education commences on obtaining required scores in national secondary school leaving examinations, or in the regional school leaver equivalent examinations – the USP full Foundation Year or SPC's Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP) managed South Pacific Form Seven Certificate (SPFSC) equivalent to national Grade 13 examinations. The development of regional school leavers examinations is a way to standardise entry into higher education, however, at present, there is still a need to identify the equivalences of the various national high school completion examinations (Years 12 and 13).

A review of the health professions education courses available in Pacific countries identified 250+ individual programmes (all disciplines and all levels). Given that all programmes require academic support, teaching materials and resourcing it could reasonably be assumed that significant rationalisations around standardised programme cores could occur within disciplines across the Region.

A common factor in the health sector is that all countries of the region need competent health practitioners, trained in quality education programmes by quality academic staff to make safe judgements in support of the Healthy Islands Vision. All of the health professions lend themselves to the creation of common curricula and teaching materials, common methods of assessment of competency and common professional standards. Yet in some disciplines individual countries have developed their own programmes (often with international consultants and donor support) and most have attempted to provide them on their own. To confound the issue further, graduates of international programmes (e.g. undergraduate medicine in Cuba and China) are returning to the Pacific to seek registration to practice in Pacific countries.

The international community is addressing these issues on a regional basis. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) holds regional professional registration examinations and is progressing towards common competency based curricula; and the European Union (EU) has a system of equivalencies that allow professional mobility between countries of the region. The ASEAN community is progressing in a similar direction. In the Pacific, arrangements for professional mobility remain largely informal.

This proposal for the Pacific Region is to develop a regional framework that consists of a set of agreed principles, practices, procedures and standardised terminology intended to ensure effective comparability of qualifications and credits across borders in the Pacific, to facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications among countries, to harmonise qualifications wherever possible, and create acceptable regional standards where appropriate.

In summary, the proposal to standardise health professions' education in the region meets all of the criteria for inclusion in the Regional Framework for Action; i.e. that it should establish a shared norm or standard, establish a common position on an issue, deliver a public good which is regional in scope, realise economies of scale; overcome national capacity constraints; complement national governments where they lack capacity, facilitate economic or political integration, and that where benefits accrue sub-regionally the contribution to broader regionalism should be clear.

Accordingly, a number of recommendations are presented.

Recommendation 1: That Pacific health leaders advocate for and support further progress towards the development of a regional framework for health professions education competencies, standardized programme accreditation processes and quality standards.

Recommendation 2: That countries with limited academic capacity, or opportunities for clinical learning, seek collaboration and support to meet regionally agreed health professional education standards.

Recommendation 3: That work be undertaken to identify current programme accreditation or approval processes in use and to collaborate with countries to develop common frameworks for each discipline.

Recommendation 4: That a focal point for liaison with country professions' representative groups be set-up to convene meetings to develop profession specific criteria to support the standardization of programme accreditation processes for each discipline and the acceptance of common competency-based curricula.

Recommendation 5: That a strategic alliance of health leaders, partners and stakeholders monitor the progress towards standardization of health professional education in the Pacific Region and within the Pacific Framework for Action.

Recommendation 6: That comparative country deficits in academic capacity or programme quality are brought to the attention of regional agencies and/or donor supporters, to seek assistance to address deficits directly, or to support 'twinning' or other partnerships with countries or external institutions.

Recommendation 7: That in accordance with test item 4 of the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* this issue be placed on the agenda of the annual PHMM to oversee progress of the above recommendations.

Discussion Points

The following notes are provided to stimulate discussion on establishing an education framework that has truly regional characteristics; where neighbouring countries work towards common standards and assist each other to achieve them.

There is no doubt that some countries in the region are experiencing significant human resourcing problems in the health sector, both in numbers of staff, in quality of graduates and in deployment to rural and remote areas. The current large number of education programmes in the Pacific health sector (250+) and the varying country capacity to provide quality professional education will impact on the quality of services and limit progress towards achieving the Healthy Island vision.

A truly regional approach to health systems staffing would allow for regionally agreed forms of supported intra-regional professional mobility and the potential to fill critical staffing gaps with staff trained to a regionally agreed standard.

1. Regionalism

The question as to whether a regional action approach could be taken to health professions education was raised at the 9th Pacific Health Ministers Meeting in 2011, primarily to "develop a regional framework for regional professional competencies, accreditation and standards". Regionalism is being addressed in other areas, and the criteria for acceptance of regional initiatives have been defined. The *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* endorsed by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in July 2014, contains 7 tests against which new initiatives will be tested for inclusion in regional action frameworks.

In summary, six of the test items are: *the market* - not to involve a service the private sector can supply well; *sovereignty* – countries not regional bodies should decide; *benefit* – it should bring substantial net

benefits; *political oversight* – requiring leaders’ attention (i.e. not delegated); *risk and sustainability* – sound management and resourcing; and, *duplication* – the initiative should not duplicate a current effort.

The seventh item is *regionalism* – it should establish a shared norm or standard, establish a common position on an issue, deliver a public good which is regional in scope, realise economies of scale; overcome national capacity constraints; complement national governments where they lack capacity, facilitate economic or political integration, and that where benefits accrue sub-regionally the contribution to broader regionalism should be clear.

The current paper is prepared to facilitate the discussion on the benefits of standardisation (in part or full) of health professions education in the Pacific Region. Based in the initial assessment, it appears that the seven criteria are met, although feasibility of implementation and operationalization in some disciplines requires further discourse.

2. Standardisation of Programmes

It is important to note that ‘standardisation’ as discussed in this paper has two dimensions. The first is structural – starting with provider registration, qualifications of academic staff, adequacy of teaching facilities and materials, course duration, clinic rotational requirements etc. These structural items are subject to administrative audit, as performed by EQAP and the various national qualifications authorities.

The second is to do with professional content – where students are educated to achieve the same minimum set and level of competencies, as assessed by a commonly applied method. (That additional sub-regional or country specific competencies are needed is acknowledged). When professional agreement has been achieved it becomes a component of programme audit.

That there are so many (250+) health professions programmes available in Pacific countries justifies the need to consider standardization and common quality assurance mechanisms. It raises questions of the potential for rationalisation of programmes and their delivery between or among countries, of common core curricula and competency assessment, course materials and practical experience requirements, of regional academic staff support, of quality graduates and of economies of scale.

Standardisation of curricula developed by regional stakeholders may be a way to reduce potential deterioration in quality of both training and health services as staffing shortages take effect. Small country programmes may benefit by collaborating with a neighbour(s) to create economies of scale and maintain common standards to produce quality graduates. In some disciplines a multilateral approach may be more sustainable. The Strengthening Specialist Clinical Services in the Pacific (SSCSIP) programme provides a regional model of collaboration.

Standardisation could produce an outcome that is both academically sustainable and cost-effective across the region. It could rationalise the design and development of competency-based curricula, create common standards of student assessment, make the best use of limited numbers of well-qualified academic staff in the region and ensure that educational standards are maintained, so that intra-regional workforce sharing becomes one of the solutions to workforce shortages.

3. Professional Registration Examinations. An alternative (or complementary) approach to programme standardisation is to standardise the assessments of graduates for purposes of professional registration, as in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), where graduates of programmes from various institutions in the participating countries are able to sit a common regional registration examination, which, if passed, facilitates employment within the CARICOM region. In the health sector this approach is governed by the Caribbean Association of Medical Councils (CAMC) and the Regional Nursing Board (RNB) and applied in conjunction with regional strategies to set competency standards and strengthen education in all participating countries.

However, to implement such a system in the Pacific will require supporting legislation in each of the participating countries.

4. Registration of Providers and Accreditation of Programmes.

While programme approval and accreditation processes currently vary across and within the professions and countries, their development towards a common framework of accreditation can progress from the implementation of the PQF. Some discussion will be needed on the alignment of the PQF with programmes taught in the Northern Pacific, which align with American standards.

In universities, the programme accreditation process is a responsibility of a University Senate, which advises their University Council to endorse the programme on the basis of their own or external reviews of curriculum design, resourcing, qualifications of teaching staff, and methods of teaching and assessment. External accreditation assessors, such as the World Federation of Medical Education (WFME) provide advice to university senates but don't provide accreditation per se.

In colleges, programme approval is a variable process. In Fiji, colleges must apply for registration as a provider and for accreditation of their programmes by the Higher Education Commission. Program accreditation is generally aligned with licensing and registration requirements, so that only graduates of approved programs are eligible for registration and licensed to practice. Employment of graduates by government depends on meeting the standards set by statutory councils (such as nursing, medical and dental councils) which require, for licensing purposes, the completion of an educational programme they endorse as suitable for producing registerable professionals.

Essentially, the joined processes of programme endorsement for professional licensing requires an agreement between the education provider and the end-user (normally governments) on acceptable learning outcomes. That these may vary to some degree according to procedural, geographical and/or cultural contexts is part of the challenge of achieving an acceptable standardisation.

Apart from the American associated sub-region of Micronesia there is no international accreditation of health professionals' education providers in the Pacific Region, nor a regional approach to standardising accreditation. In recent years, the Pacific nursing schools have begun addressing the need for defined and shared competencies based on the agreed Western Pacific and South East Asia Region (WPSEAR, 2003) common competencies, although progress has been slow and applications have been variable, as countries contextualise the competencies for their particular health and social needs. The South Pacific Chief Nursing and Midwifery Alliance (SPCNMOA) has identified this as an urgent agenda for 2016-2018 (SPCNMOA 2014, 2016).

Registration requirements for pharmacists in Fiji refer to having passed an examination in an approved Commonwealth country, while both Solomon Islands and Kiribati refer to The Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In Samoa, standards and competencies have been identified for all health professionals, including biomedical scientists. That a large number of organisations are involved in health programme approvals or accreditation in the Pacific Region is evident in the tables below.

4. Examinations

Final-Year School Examinations: Progressing the roll-out of the South Pacific Form Seven Certificate (SPFSC) examination and the USP Foundation Certificate examination to a greater number of countries and schools will allow for a greater number of young people to compete directly for university entrance, either at home or within the region.

Professional Registration Examinations: Given the potential and early reality of the private sector developing courses for health professionals in the region the standard of graduates may vary widely. The application of regional registration examinations could be progressively applied within disciplines across the region.

5. Common programme audit and assessment methods

The creation of commonly agreed programme audit and accreditation/approval processes is recommended. All of the processes of provider registration, programme audit and programme accreditation/approval could be standardised across the region to provide a solid basis for comparison.

Comparison is confounded using differing systems, such as occurred in Fiji where the two medical schools used two different international assessment organisations.

While the PQF and the NQFs form the basis for comparison, they also have the potential to obscure limitations if conducted administratively. It can be anticipated that a greater professional oversight will be needed to ensure programme content is updated and additional professional standards for program accreditation are developed and applied across all regional providers.

6. Common Core Content or Competencies

Epidemiological profiles among the countries in the region are relatively similar apart from the existence of malaria to the west of Fiji, although other factors of the health systems, population and human resources may differ. Where countries are not able to retain committed teachers, the programmes they offer reduced in quality over time. The preparation of common framework for competency based curricula within disciplines would allow for cost savings, reduce duplication, improve materials where they are weak and encourage the best academic staff to remain in the region with greater responsibilities and career potentials to produce competent and practice ready professional.

PART B. Why standardise health professions education?

1. Current Situation.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) through Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP) has responsibility for developing the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PQRS) which addresses the issues of educational comparability, quality and accreditation across the Pacific through the implementation of the Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF).

The purpose of the PRQS “is to facilitate the benchmarking of Pacific qualifications against international standards.....through the use of the PQF as a translation device. Qualifications from Pacific Island countries and territories will be referenced against the PQF and a level for registration on the PRQS will be confirmed....the PQF will also be the instrument that will establish comparability of Pacific qualifications with other international education and training systems.

The Northern Pacific and Hawai'i are affiliated with the American accrediting agency, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) which provides 3 types of accreditation: regional, institutional and specialized or professional programmes. Aligning their programmes with the PQF is yet to occur.

In 2014 the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences of Fiji National University (FNU) organised a *Pacific Health Education Forum* which recommended “the compilation of a comprehensive report mapping out the number/location of training institutions in the Pacific providing health and medical related education/training and a list of accredited training courses and programmes provided by these institutions”.

This paper addresses that recommendation in the context of the Pacific Framework for Action 2014 and the potential to adopt a regional approach to health professions education, quality assurance of programmes, economies of scale, to support countries unable to develop or maintain quality education programmes on their own, and to address issues of staff mobility and retention in the region. This issue is made more urgent as many health professionals trained in the Pacific migrate out of the region, while other countries experience major staff shortages due, in large part, to the failure to produce staff in sufficient numbers.

Pacific education institutions and national licensing authorities have begun to address the complex issues of quality assurance associated with programme provision and standardisation of professional and technical courses; and to integrate significant numbers of new graduates of diverse programs into their national health systems. Most have devised their own systems of approvals based on the authorities of their universities, training schools, professional councils and/or ministries of either health

or education. Some programmes are externally accredited, particularly in countries affiliated with US systems of education. Registration and licensing as a health practitioner in the Pacific is conducted by each sovereign state and depends on the requirement of graduation from a program approved by the relevant professional council. This has become more difficult with the return of internationally trained students.

As yet there is no formalised agreement on health professional mobility in the Pacific. Individual professionals do move between countries in the Pacific, mostly informally, based on an acceptance of the qualifications obtained in certain 'historically endorsed' institutions, such as the Fiji School of Medicine or the University of Papua New Guinea. The achievement of standardisation and the recognition of levels of comparability where they exist will be a necessary basis of any future agreement on the transferability of qualifications and intra-regional professional mobility in the Pacific. Students also move between countries, so the potential to provide common standards that facilitate the credit-transfer of courses will allow for the continuation of study within the region.

Inter-country professional mobility is a widely recognised international reality, at times supported through regional agreements, such as in the European Union (E.U.) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that allows the free movement of professionals provided they have graduated from a government registered education provider. ASEAN countries are moving towards adopting the ASEAN Economic Community Framework 2020 to facilitate mobility of doctors, nurses and dentists.

The development of the Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF) is a move towards achieving a regional standardisation of practice and education, so that the graduates of the many and various country level programmes would have guaranteed reciprocity of qualifications recognition within the region.

That Pacific health professionals have access to courses provided outside the region is acknowledged. The purpose of the current paper is to provide sufficient information on Pacific providers and programmes to allow discussion of the strategic opportunities for strengthening health professional education in the Pacific, to establish common standards, set common principles and procedures on quality assurance, facilitate professional mobility and intra-regional employment and to co-operatively fill health sector human resource gaps within the region.

2. Background

2.1. Recent literature

Much of the recent literature on health professions education in the Pacific is accessible on the Human Resources for Health Knowledge Hub @ University of New South Wales. Particular reference is made to *Accreditation of Healthcare Professionals Education Programs, A Review of International Trends and Current Approaches in Pacific Countries*.

2.2. Endorsement

An important driving force for standardisation in the Pacific is the 2011 recommendation by the Pacific Ministers of Health Meeting in Honiara to develop a regional framework for professional competencies, accreditation & standards. *"Regional development partners, in consultation with relevant national authorities, are encouraged to develop and implement Pacific-wide initiatives including: professional competencies and standards; a Continuing Professional Development Accreditation framework; model legislation, bridging courses and reintegration programmes; and a specialist clinical services support programme"*. (Ninth Meeting of the Ministers of Health, Honiara 2011.)

2.3. Definition of Accreditation

Accreditation is a process designed to confirm the educational quality of new, developing and established education and training programs. An assessment for confirmation is usually carried out by peer/third party reviewer against established standards/outcomes, which makes a recommendation to the educational provider to accredit the course, or to undertake further developments. Programmes

delivered in countries of the Northern Pacific affiliated with the United States are accredited by US institutions, such as the *Western Association of Schools and Colleges*. Medical programmes in the Pacific are generally and periodically assessed by an international assessment organisation, usually the *World Federation of Medical Education* (WFME) which makes its' recommendations to the Academic Senate of the medical education provider.

2.4. Registration/Licensing

There is a clear link between programme accreditation and professional registration, where the graduates of an accredited or approved programme achieve registration by a national licensing authority; in the Pacific, usually by a medical, dental or nursing council constituted by an Act of Parliament. Some allied health professions holding qualifications from an approved programme are licensed to practice by a relevant national board, such as a pharmacy and poisons board, a radiation board or an allied health professionals' council.

The first regional consultation of professional associations in 2014 was organised by SPBEA/EQAP as within the countries there is no single national agency for professional associations or licensing authorities. Individual professional associations and licensing authorities in each country were invited. During the consultation, the Medical and Nursing Associations had the opportunity to compare their registration standards and licensing criteria. In order to continue this process in line with the current recommendations, it will be necessary to identify a regional focal point to convene and facilitate the regional discussions on the processes of achieving standardised programme review and national registration/licensing requirements.

2.5. Qualification Frameworks

Most Pacific countries have begun to develop National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) most of which conform to the 10 levels of the Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF). The PQF is largely structurally consistent with the levels of the Australian and New Zealand Qualifications Frameworks and is being used in the Pacific as a 'translation device' in order to identify programme comparability across countries. Qualification Frameworks are being developed internationally in accord with regional agreements, such as the PICTA agreement in the Pacific. The Brisbane Communiqué from a meeting of the Asia-Pacific Ministers for Education in 2006 resolved that the Asia-Pacific Region collaborate on:

- a quality assurance framework for the region linked to international standards, including courses delivered online.
- recognition of educational and professional qualifications.
- common competency-based standards for teachers, particularly in science and mathematics.
- the development of common recognition of technical skills across the region in order to better meet the overall skill needs of the economic base of the region.

Extracts from SPC's *Pacific Qualifications Framework*, Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment, (Secretariat of the Pacific Community), Suva, Fiji, 2011.

"1. At the Pacific Forum Education Ministers' inaugural Meeting in Auckland in 2001, it was agreed to 'consider the setting up of a regional qualifications framework covering basic, primary, secondary, TVET and tertiary education benchmarked against appropriate international standards and qualifications'.

2. At a meeting of the Pacific Heads of Education Systems in 2003 in the Cook Islands, the diversity of education and training environments in the Pacific region was recognised. It was agreed that the development of a Pacific qualifications register should precede the Pacific qualifications framework. The meeting recommended this to the Ministers for Education, and it was endorsed at the Forum Education Ministers Meeting in May 2005 in Samoa.

5. Pacific leaders have actively encouraged the mobility of labour as a means of improving the livelihood of Pacific people. The national qualifications frameworks and the *Pacific Qualifications Framework* (PQF) are enabling mechanisms that will facilitate implementation of the *Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement* (PICTA) and in particular the Trade in Services component.

Part B. 2. In the Pacific, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu have made progress in their development of national qualifications agencies and national qualifications frameworks. Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau are aligned with the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. The Northern Pacific Countries (Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and Republic of the Marshall Islands) seek accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges of the United States. Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu are continuing to work with SPBEA to explore options most appropriate for their needs*.

G. 31. The rate of registration of qualifications on the PRQS will be determined primarily by two important factors. The first is the rigor with which quality assurance is exercised at the accreditation of programmes. The second is the level of confidence of national accrediting agencies in carrying out the referencing of qualifications against the PQF.**

G. 34. For the Pacific region, there are common elements among national qualifications frameworks that will facilitate the articulation of qualifications between the various systems, including: most have ten levels from certificates to doctorate degrees.

Levels 1 to 4 are certificates.

Levels 5 and 6 are diplomas.

Level 7 is the bachelor degree and graduate certificates and graduate diplomas.

Level 8 is bachelor with honours and post-graduate certificates and post-graduate diplomas.

Level 9 is the master's degree.

Level 10 is for doctoral and post-doctoral degree.”

* Kiribati and Tuvalu have now adopted the PQF as their national qualifications framework.

** the referencing of NQFs against the PQF is now complete and it is now determined that the NQFs are comparable to the PQF. Similarly, for the Pacific Quality Assurance Framework and the national quality assurance frameworks.

Progress has continued on developing NQFs that align with the PQF, although further work is needed to create comparable educational structure both within countries and the region. For example, in some countries the Ministry of Health still has responsibility for the majority of nursing schools (PNG, Kiribati), in some that has been transferred to the Ministry of Education (Fiji, Tonga, Samoa) and nursing is now taught in autonomous universities, while in all cases the providers liaise with the appropriate national professional council (i.e. medicine, nursing, dental and other) or, as in the northern Pacific to an external (i.e. US) agency.

As countries adapt internal structures and change organisational roles to develop their systems for implementing their NQF some variation in governance and management structures across the region may remain. The task of understanding how these differing structures impact on the quality of education and the comparability of levels of award will be a component of PQF implementation.

During a consultation coordinated by EQAP in 2016 on mapping of the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards' against the relative NQFs, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu confirmed the comparability with the PQF, while Kiribati and Tuvalu have adopted the PQF. Papua New Guinea's higher education structure differs and is currently under review (PNGDHERST 2016). It is critically important that this process is genuinely consultative, respectful of sovereignty and not seen to be imposed.

The PQF is consistent with both Australia's NQF and New Zealand's NQF, however, it is important to acknowledge that attainment of an equivalent level of award does not automatically attach to international professional mobility. Professional mobility depends on meeting the standards and requirements of national professional bodies, trade agreements, obtaining visas, language competency and (often) further study. In this regard the use of the words 'international standards' in Pacific higher education applies mainly to the Pacific community of nations, while the broader definition of international (i.e. global) is more difficult to attain.

This issue of international recognition of the qualifications attained from Pacific higher education providers is more complex than it appears in a simple comparison of PQF and NQF levels. Historically

there has been a concern that the Pacific counties may train people for overseas employment markets. An alternative view is that the export of graduates contributes to the national economy through remittances to families, however, the issue remains sensitive but worthy of debate and economic analysis.

2.6. Entry Level Requirements and Payment of Fees:

Entry into a commencement level programme, such as a nursing diploma, is dependent on final year high school completion at specified minimum aggregates and with grades in specified subjects according to the program applied for. Study beyond introductory level usually requires the attainment of the prior level of qualification in a stepwise progression, as in the PQF and in most NQFs.

The standardization of entry requirements for further education would depend on the equivalence of high school curricula and examination results across the region. This is the domain of the EQAP and their assessments of the comparability of final high school examinations is an important starting point. EQAP coordinates and a regional examination for school leavers - the South Pacific Form Seven Certificate (SPFSC) commenced in 2014 and offered by 18 schools in 5 different countries (5 in Kiribati, 1 in Samoa, 1 in Solomon Islands, 1 in Tuvalu and 10 in Vanuatu). Apart from Tonga whose Form 7 exam is similar to SPFSC in the sense that it is also outcomes based, the exams offered by other countries are national examinations. The SPFSC now gives the region a qualification that is regionally and internationally recognised and which serves to certify secondary school completion, provide higher education entry level certification and aids employee selection.

Programme entry requirements are also influenced by demand and supply issues for either student numbers or for health staff, both of which may compromise quality; by dropping entry standards to have sufficient students to run a program, or by graduating insufficiently trained or experienced staff to fill a service gap.

With the importance attached to both education and health in the Region all countries subsidize higher education in the health sectors through a variety of national scholarships and fee waivers. Beyond the limited numbers of scholarships available across all sectors, most health professions programmes are available to fee paying students if they meet entry requirements and if places are available. Some students are supported by donor funds managed through a national agency. All post-basic programmes require candidates to hold the preceding award and, usually, to have a prior period of professional practice of up to 5 years. Table 1 provides an overview of entry requirements for identified programmes and the arrangements for the payment of fees.

Table 1: Pacific Health Professions Education Programmes, Entry Requirements and Payment of Fees.

Discipline	Programme	Entry Level Requirement	Payment of Fees
FIJI			
Nursing	Certificate IV Enrolled Nurse	1. A minimum score of 250 in the year 12 Examination, with a pass in English, Biology and another science subject and between 18 to 35 years of age	Tertiary Scholarship and Loans Board supports Undergraduate Programmes that are within the Fijian Government's priority areas (including: MBBS: Bachelor's Degree in: Oral Health, Dietetics, Biomedical, Engineering, Dermatology, Nursing, Public Health, Medical Lab Sciences, Physiotherapy, and Pharmacy) tenable at one of the following eligible Higher Education Institutions. (Including: Fiji National University, The University of the South Pacific, University of Fiji, and Sangam Institute of Nursing.)
	Bachelor of Nursing	1. Fiji Year 13 examination or equivalent with a minimum score of 250/400. 60% or more in English and Biology, 50% in Mathematics and a science subject preferably Chemistry. 2. A minimum GPA of 3.0 in Foundation Science from a recognized Tertiary Institution with passes in English, Biology and Maths with a science subject preferably Chemistry. 3. Regional students will be considered for admission based on (2) above and its equivalence in SPFSC.	
	Post Graduate Nursing Courses	Bachelor in nursing with a minimum GPA of 3.0, or equivalent with 3 years of general nursing experience.	
Medicine	Fiji School of Medicine MBBS	1. Candidates from Fiji - minimum 340/400 score in the Fiji Year 13 Examination + subject requirements 2. A minimum GPA of 4.55/4.6 from FNU or GPA of 4.1 from USP in full Foundation Science programme 3. Completed BSc with GPA of 3.5. 4.. Regional students will be considered based on a grade in the SPBEA Year 12 assessment together with Year 13 grades. 5. Candidates from the American-associated Pacific should have graduated from high school in the top 10% of their graduating class, and have completed at least one year of tertiary education, preferably in science subjects.	1. NATIONAL TOPPERS SCHEME (NTS) – SCHOLARSHIPS Medicine and Health MBBS: Bachelor's Degree in: Oral Health, Dietetics, Biomedical, Engineering, Dermatology, Nursing, Public Health, Medical Lab Sciences, Physiotherapy, and Pharmacy. 2. TERTIARY EDUCATION LOANS SCHEME (TELS) 2017 provides student loans to eligible citizens of Fiji to enable them access to higher education at affordable rates. 3. SELF FUNDED. Parents and or guarantors. Providers have payment plans (e.g. FNU payment Plan) CMNHS fees are around 30% higher for non-Fijian candidates. Hostel fees are additional. University of Fiji Fees for non-Fijian candidates are double those of Fijian nationals except for the final year. Postgraduate Programmes, Diploma and Masters years in Medicine are both fee paying and supported by professional fellowships.
	PG Diplomas in Medicine	MBBS from a recognized institution + minimum 3 years' work experience + medical registration in Fiji	
	Master(s) of Medicine	Postgraduate Diploma in selected disciplines	
	University of Fiji MBBS	Passed Form 7 with 300+/400 or equivalent or Foundation Programme or, holds a Bachelor degree or above, or mature entry.	
Dentistry	Certificate in Dental Hygiene	Fiji Year 13 Examination or equivalent, with aggregate of 250+/400 and subject passes in English, Maths, Biology and Chemistry/Physics or full Foundation Science with GPA of 2.5	
	Diploma in Dental Therapy	As for Certificate	
	Bachelor of Oral Health	Fiji Year 13 Examination Pass of 300+ or equivalent. full Foundation Science with minimum GPA of 3.5. Candidates who have completed a BSc with minimum GPA of 3.0 Note: this is a new programme with provisions for lateral entry.	
	Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health Dentistry	Applicants must have a Diploma in Dental Surgery or a Bachelor of Dentistry (BDS) qualification or an equivalent basic dental degree. At least three years of work experience.	
	Postgraduate Diploma in Oral Surgery	Bachelor of Dental Surgery or an equivalent basic dental degree registered at the Fiji Dental Council. At least three years of post-qualification work experience.	
Health Sciences	Certificate level courses	Fiji Year 13 Examination, or its equivalent, with 250/400 including a 50% pass in English and at least 3 science subjects or a pass in full Foundation Science programme, or its equivalent, with a minimum GPA of 2.5 out of 5 or out of 4.5.	
	Bachelor level	Fiji Year 13 Examination, or its equivalent, with 250/400 or a pass in full Foundation Science programme, or its equivalent, with a minimum GPA of 2.8 out of 4.5 or 3 out of 5.	
	Bachelor in Pharmacy	Fiji Year 13 Examination, or its equivalent, with 320/400 or a pass in full Foundation Science programme,	

		or its equivalent, with a minimum GPA of 3.7 out of 5 or/and out of 4.5.	
	Postgraduate Diploma in Pathology	Graduates with MBBS and at least 2 years' experience following internship. One year in pathology laboratory at a tertiary hospital and with medical registration in Fiji	
	Master in Pathology	Postgraduate Diploma in Pathology – or international equivalent.	
Public Health	Certificates in Department of Public Health	Fiji Year 13 Examination with a minimum score of 250 or an examination deemed equivalent by the Academic Board. Or, Foundation Science full programme with a minimum GPA of 2.0 or passed an examination deemed equivalent by the Academic Board e.g. South Pacific Board of Examination and Assessment (SPBEA).	
	Bachelors level	Fiji Year 13 with 280+/ 400 overall pass in or GPA of 3.0. or, Candidates who have completed an undergraduate Certificate, Diploma or Degree in the relevant disciplines For Bridging, a holder of the Diploma Programme from FSMed/ FNU or equivalent	
	PG Diploma	Obtained a Bachelor's degree in the relevant discipline with a minimum GPA of 3.0 or equivalent OR	
	Master	Having completed the Postgraduate Diploma courses with an overall grade 'B' average or 65% and above.	
Papua New Guinea			
Nursing	Community health Worker	Year 10	Tertiary Education Student Assistance Scheme (TESAS) to students offered admission. or, Self, family or sponsor if places are available.
	Registered nurse	Grade 12 school leavers with GPA of 2.5 or above with subjects appropriate to the choice of course	
	Advanced Diplomas	Registered Nurse	
Medicine	MBBS	School leavers are selected based on their options provided through the Department of Higher Education. Non-School Leavers are selected based on their application in response to the University's advertisement every year.	International students on home country scholarships are accepted in medicine if places are available
Solomon Islands			
Nursing	Nurse Aide	Secondary school form 3 or passed tests set by the Institution	A small number of donor supported national scholarships are available for international and domestic study (all sectors).
	Registered Nurse	Secondary form 6/ 7 (Science) with passes in English, Math, Science or passed tests set by the Institution	
	Midwifery	Registered nurse	
Cook Islands			
Nursing	Diploma	NCEA Level 3 (42 credits) including English, Science and Maths. Attributes and health suitable for nursing.	MoH waiver - Subject to Ministry of Health minimum material fees.
Samoa			
Nursing	Registered Nurse	Foundation Year or Mature Entry	In-country Scholarship Awards are funded through the Samoa Scholarship Scheme (SSS) administered by the Samoa Training and Scholarships Committee. The Samoa Ministry of Health provides annual scholarships.
	Registered Midwife	Registered Nurse (Bachelor)	
Medicine	MBBS at NUS	Graduate entry	5 Government scholarships p.a.
Tonga			
	Registered Nurse	Pass PSSC with aggregate 14 or less (University entrance examination)	A small number of NZ scholarships are available for study at Queen Salote Institute of Nursing and Allied
	Midwife	Registered Nurses of 5 years' experience or more	
	Nurse Practitioner	RN and Midwife	
Vanuatu			
VHW	Village Health Worker	Year 6 or 10. Chosen by community	Trained in-service
Nursing	Nurse Aide	Year 10 Certificate with experience as a Village Health Worker or Nurse Aid in a hospital/ Health Centre setting (Note: not currently available).	The Training and Scholarships Unit in Vanuatu (TSCU) deals with different scholarship schemes for tertiary training opportunities in and outside of Vanuatu.
	Registered Nurse	Between 18-30 years and have Year 12 or 13 Certificate with good grades in science	

	Nurse Practitioner	RN with over 5 years of clinical experience	
	Midwife	RN with over 5 years of clinical experience	
Nauru			
Nursing	Nursing Aid	In-service training	Ministry of Health
	Registered Nurse	Year 12 and should have completed science subjects	Training provided externally in Honiara, Kiribati, Fiji and PNG
Kiribati			
Nursing	Registered Nurse (Diploma)	Form 6 & 7 (Science students) Test and interview	Senior Secondary & Scholarship Unit manages GoK pre-service scholarships.
	Nurse Practitioner	RN with over 5 years of clinical experience	
	Midwifery	RN with over 5 years of clinical experience	
Tuvalu: no training schools in health sector			
Northern Pacific USA Affiliated Programmes			
Nursing, Medical Assisting and Public Health	Preparatory	High school preparatory programmes and Doctors and Dentists for Tomorrow Programme	AHEC Guam Community College, the College of Micronesia, and the College of the Marshall Islands. College level application for FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)
	Nursing	High School transcripts English and Maths placement test waived if applicant has minimum GPA of 3.2	
	Medical Assisting	High School transcripts English and Maths placement test	
	Continuing Education	Graduate in a health profession.	

2.7. Potential for standardisation of programme content

It could reasonably be assumed that the greatest part of the content in programmes within a discipline that lead to the same award would be largely similar. This is mostly the case although it is modified by factors of epidemiology, indigenous culture, and health system requirements for defined staff functions. These country specific modifications combined with varying country academic capacities have the potential to produce graduates of varying quality and result in wide variations in health service quality. This suggest that there is a need to standardise the bulk of core programme content, to identify common competencies and to find common methods of programme delivery.

For example: Malaria exists in the Western Pacific but not east of Vanuatu; clinical interaction across the sexes is more sensitive in some countries than others; clinical roles may vary in relation to specific procedures (such as dental extractions by nurses in Kiribati, or NCD specific community nursing as in Tonga) or by varying degrees of integration of traditional remedies. These contextual factors may be considered as necessary differences in curricula, although it is likely that a close comparative review of curricula will reveal that they play a relatively minor part and could be taught as country specific modules added to common core content.

It will be necessary to closely review course content in order to identify such differences in curricula and the various ways in which they are taught. Such reviews need to be conducted by discipline experts should the Region decide to progress the issue of standardisation of core content further. Beyond content it is more difficult to determine the comparability of programmes, as learning resources, the quality and qualifications of academic staff, clinical placement terms and exposure to cases may all vary. Accordingly, the concurrent implementation of the PQF with the development of comparable programme accreditation processes and the acceptance of the PQA quality assurance mechanisms across the Region is necessary to allow for the review of such factors.

2.8. Competencies as a method of standardisation

In the nursing profession progress is being made towards standardisation, although indirectly. WHO has been working with countries to support the development of competency frameworks for nursing and other health professions. The common adoption of international competency frameworks, such as those of the International Council of Nurses, modified to suit health system needs and country context, should make it possible to identify common core competencies and the training required to achieve them.

WHO's (2009) publication *Global Standards for the Initial Education of Professional Nurses and Midwives* identifies additional issues that require consideration such as transferring nursing education into the university sector, the length of the programme, the status of the provider, and the degree to which midwifery is combined with nursing; as a postgraduate programme, as a stand-alone qualification, or as a component of nurse practitioner training. The global standards "are intended to serve as a benchmark for moving education and the learning system forward to produce a common competency-based outcome in an age of increasing globalization." This remains a challenge for the profession, as the competency sets differ between countries (Australia and UK have 4, New Zealand and USA 5, Canada 3 and CARICOM 8).

Despite the complexity of aligning international systems it seems to the current author that the task of identifying core content to be taught in Pacific nursing schools is achievable through professional consultation between regional nursing councils, academics and supporting agencies. This would allow for some degree of rationalization in the production and authorship of learning materials by highly qualified academics, sharing of case studies, standardization of clinical experience requirements to accompany learning and create the potential for a regional agreement on core content. There are global standards set by International Council of Nursing (ICN) and International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) that many countries strive to adhere to and which could facilitate this process.

2.9. Regional School Final Year Examinations as a method of standardizing at entry

It is evident that a variety of standards are used to assess school leavers' preparedness for entry into health professions education, and that *this* is the critical point at which to start standardization. Once entered into study one's progress through the educational system is prescribed as a progressive attainment of sequenced qualifications. The South Pacific Form Seven Certificate (SPFSC) or the University of the South Pacific Foundation Certificate provide the best vehicles for achieving regional standardisation and relativities in national school performance.

PART C: Inventory of health professions programmes in the Pacific Region by Country, Provider, Programmes and Accrediting Authorities.

1. Summary of Findings and Limitations.

The finding of a large number (250+) of health professions education programmes provided in the Pacific (Table 2) is consistent with the history of each country developing its own programmes within its own institutions, often with bilateral donor support. Those countries unable to provide programmes due to small population numbers and inefficiencies of scale generally access programs in other Pacific countries, where places are made available for them through diplomatic arrangements, or further afield, depending on diplomatic ties and offers of scholarships. These international programmes are not listed here but include undergraduate medical programmes in Cuba and elsewhere, and postgraduate programmes in medicine, nursing and other areas and require individual country-level efforts to design and implement internship and assessment programs. In addition, many people access internationally offered postgraduate courses at their own arrangement and expense. The many education providers in Pacific Rim countries who accept Pacific students are not listed here.

It is important to note that PQF levels in Table 2 are *estimated* and require confirmation by country authorities in association with EQAP. (It is not intended here to confirm PQF levels – this remains the work of EQAP).

Table 2. Pacific Health Professions Education Programmes*

Country	Discipline	Health Training Institutions	Programs	PQF Level (estimated)	Accrediting body **
NURSING					
Fiji	Nursing	CMNHS/ Fiji National University (Suva)	Enrolled Nursing	5-6	FNU Senate ¹
Fiji	Nursing	CMNHS/FNU	Bachelor of Nursing	7	FNU Senate
Fiji	Nursing	CMNHS/FNU	Bachelor of Public Health Nursing	7	FNU Senate
Fiji	Nursing	CMNHS/FNU	PG Certificate in Mental Health Nursing	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Nursing	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma in Midwifery	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Nursing	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma in Nursing Practice	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Nursing	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma in Nursing Management	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Nursing	TISI Sangam School of Nursing (Labasa)	Diploma in Nursing	5-6	FNU Senate
Samoa	Nursing	National University of Samoa	Diploma in Nursing	5-6	Council of NUS ² , Council of Nursing and Midwifery (CNM)
Samoa	Nursing	National University of Samoa	Bachelor of Nursing	7	Council of NUS, CNM
Samoa	Nursing	National University of Samoa	PG Diploma of Nursing (Midwifery)	8	Council of NUS, CNM
Samoa	Nursing	National University of Samoa	PG Diploma in Nursing (Acute Care)	8	Council of NUS CNM
Samoa	Nursing	National University of Samoa	PG Diploma in Nursing (Mental Health)	8	Council of NUS CNM
Samoa	Nursing	National University of Samoa	PG Diploma in Nursing (Primary Care)	8	Council of NUS CNM
Tonga	Nursing	Ahopanilolo Technical Institute	Certificate in Health Assistant	2-3	Tonga National Qualifications Accreditation Board (TNQAB) ³

Tonga	Nursing	Queen Salote Institute of Nursing and Allied Health	Diploma of Nursing	5	TNQAB
Tonga	Nursing	Queen Salote Institute of Nursing and Allied Health	Advanced Diploma in Midwifery	6	TNQAB
Tonga	Nursing	Queen Salote Institute of Nursing and Allied Health	Advanced Diploma in NCD Nursing	6	TNQAB
Kiribati	Nursing	Kiribati School of Nursing (Tarawa)	Diploma in Nursing	5-6	Ministry of Health
Kiribati	Nursing	Kiribati School of Nursing (Tarawa)	Post-basic Midwifery, and Public health	6-7	Ministry of Health
Cook Islands	Nursing	Cook Islands School of Nursing	Diploma in Nursing	5-6 (NZQF)	Ministry of Health
Cook Islands	Nursing	Cook Islands School of Nursing	PG Certificate in Nursing Practice (9 months)	7 (NZQF)	Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute (CITTI)
Marshall Islands	Nursing	College of the Marshall Islands	Diploma in Nursing	5-6	Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)
Marshall Islands	Nursing	RMI MOH in partnership with FNU and PIHOA	PG Diploma Nurse in Practice	8-9	FNU senate
Federated States of Micronesia	Nursing	College of Micronesia (Pohnpei)	Associate of Science in Nursing	5-6	WASC
Palau	Nursing	Palau Community College	Diploma in Nursing	5-6	Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)
Palau	Nursing	Palau Community College	Diploma in Midwifery	5-6	WASC
Palau	Nursing	Palau Community College	PG Certificate in Nursing Practice	7	WASC
Guam	Medical Assisting	Guam Community College (UG)	Associate of Science in Medical Assisting	5-6	WASC
Guam	Medical Assisting	Guam Community College (UG)	Certificate in Medical Assisting	2-3	WASC
Guam	Medical Assisting	Guam Community College (UG)	Certificate in Practical Nursing	2-3	WASC
Northern Marianas	Nursing	Northern Marianas College	Associate of Science in Nursing	5-6	WASC
Hawai'i	Nurse Aide	University of Hawai'i (Kapi'olani)	Certificate of Competence Long Term Care Nurse Aide	1-2	Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing
Hawai'i	Nursing	University of Hawai'i (Kapi'olani)	Certificate of Achievement Practical Nursing	2-3	Board of Nursing, State of Hawaii
Hawai'i	Nursing	University of Hawai'i (Kapi'olani)	Associate in Science Degree (Nursing)	6	Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc.
Hawaii	Nursing	University of Hawaii (Manoa)	Bachelors of Science degree in (Nursing)	7-8	American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACCN)
Hawaii	Nursing	University of Hawaii (Manoa)	RN to Bachelors of Science degree in (Nursing)	7-8	AACCN
Hawaii	Nursing	University of Hawaii (Manoa)	Master's of Science degree in (Nursing, focus Population Health) (Online program)	9	AACCN
Hawaii	Nursing	University of Hawaii (Manoa)	Doctorate in Nursing Practice degree in (Nursing)	10	AACCN
Hawaii	Nursing	University of Hawaii (Manoa)	PhD degree in (Nursing)	10	AACCN
Hawai'i	Nursing	Hawai'i Pacific University (Honolulu)	Bachelor of Science in Nursing	7	WASC

Hawai'i	Nursing	Hawai'i Pacific University	PG Certificate in Transcultural Nursing	7	WASC
Hawai'i	Nursing	Hawai'i Pacific University	Master of Science in Nursing	9	Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)
Hawai'i	Nursing	Hawai'i Pacific University	Post Masters Family Nurse Practitioner Certificate	9	CCNE
Solomon Islands	Nursing	Helena Goldie College of Nursing (Western Province)	Diploma in Nursing	5-6	Nursing Council of Solomon Islands (NCSI), ⁴ Ministry of Health & Medical Services (MHMS)
Solomon Islands	Nursing	Atoifi Nursing School (Malaita Province)	Diploma in Nursing	5-6	NCSI, MHMS
Solomon Islands	Nursing & Midwifery	Solomon Islands National University (Honiara)	Diploma in Nursing & Midwifery	6	NCSI, MHMS
Solomon Islands	Nursing	Solomon Islands National University	Bachelor of Nursing (in-service)	7	NCSI, MHMS
Vanuatu	Nursing	Vanuatu College of Nursing Education (Pt. Vila)	Nurse Aide	1-3	Vanuatu Nurses Council (VNC) ⁵ , Ministry of Health (MOH)
Vanuatu	Nursing	Vanuatu College of Nursing Education	Diploma in Nursing	5-6	Vanuatu Qualifications Authority (VQA)
Vanuatu	Nursing	Vanuatu College of Nursing Education	PG Diploma in Midwifery	7	VQA
Vanuatu	Nursing	Vanuatu Health Training Institute (Santo) - CLOSED	Facility not currently in Use	5-6	VQA
Vanuatu	Nursing	Vanuatu College of Nursing Education	PG Certificate in Nursing Practice	7	VQA
Vanuatu	Nursing	Vanuatu Health Training Institute	PG Certificate in Nursing Practice	7	VQA
Papua New Guinea	Nursing	Pacific Adventist University (Pt. Moresby)	Bachelor of Nursing	7	Department of Higher Education, Science, Research and Technology (DHESRT) + Papua New Guinea Nursing Council (PNGNC)
Papua New Guinea	Nursing	Pacific Adventist University (Pt. Moresby)	Bachelor of Midwifery	7	DHESRT + PNGNC
Papua New Guinea	Nursing	University of Goroka	Bachelor of Midwifery	7	DHESRT + PNGNC
Papua New Guinea	Nursing	St Mary's School of Nursing/DWU – (East New Britain)	Diploma of Nursing	5	PNGNC
Papua New Guinea	Nursing	St Mary's School of Nursing/DWU – (East New Britain)	Bachelor of Midwifery	7	DHESRT NCPNG
Papua New Guinea	Nursing	Highlands Regional College of Nursing (Goroka)	Diploma of Nursing	5	PNGNC
Papua New Guinea	Nursing	Lutheran School of Nursing /DWU (Madang)	Bachelor of Midwifery	7	PNGNC
Papua New Guinea	Nursing	Lutheran School of Nursing /DWU (Madang)	Diploma of Nursing	5	PNGNC
Papua New Guinea	Nursing	SOPAS Enga School of Nursing	Diploma of Nursing	5	PNGNC
Papua New Guinea	Nursing	St Barnabas School of Nursing (Alotau)	Diploma of Nursing	5	PNGNC
Papua New Guinea	Nursing	Lae School of Nursing	Diploma of Nursing	5	PNGNC
Papua New Guinea	Nursing	Arwara SON ARBO	Diploma of Nursing	5	PNGNC
Papua New Guinea	Nursing	APIASETS SON Port Moresby	Diploma of Nursing	5	PNGNC

Papua New Guinea	Nursing	SMHS/UPNG	Bachelor of Clinical Nursing- Midwifery	7	DHESRT + PNGNC
Papua New Guinea	Nursing	SMHS/UPNG	Bachelor of Clinical Nursing- Paediatrics	7	DHESRT + PNGNC
Papua New Guinea	Nursing	SMHS/UPNG	Bachelor of Clinical Nursing – Acute Care	7	DHESRT + PNGNC
Papua New Guinea	Nursing	SMHS/UPNG	Bachelor of Clinical Nursing – Mental Health	7	DHESRT + PNGNC
Papua New Guinea	Nursing	SMHS/UPNG	Bachelor of Nursing- Administration & Education	7	DHESRT + PNGNC
Papua New Guinea	Community Health Worker	12 CHW training schools	Certificate in Community Health Work	1-2	PNGNC / PNG Medical Board
Pacific Region	Reproductive Health	UNDP/FNU	Sexual and Reproductive Health Management Training Programme (SRHMTP)	-	FNU Senate, UNDP
Nauru	Nursing Aide	Nauru Health Professional Training Institution (NHPTI)	Enrolled Nursing	4	Ministry of Health
Nauru	Nursing	NHPTI	Bridging -Nursing Certificate	5-6	Ministry of Health
Nauru	Advanced Clinical Nursing	NHPTI	Nurse Practitioner Program	7	Ministry of Health
Nauru	Midwifery	NHPTI	Internship –New Graduates	-	Ministry of Health
Palau	Nursing Preparation	Palau Community College	Nursing Career Ladder	-	NA
Tuvalu	Tuvalu currently has no formal nurse education programs held in country. Nurses are sent to external schools for qualifications predominantly to Fiji or Kiribati.				
Tokelau	Tokelau currently has no formal nurse training program. Nurses are educated in either Fiji or Samoa.				
MEDICINE					
Fiji	Medical Internship	Ministry of Health	Bridging course and Internship	-	Fiji Medical Council (FMC) ⁷
Solomon Islands	Medical Internship	Ministry of Health and Medical Services	Bridging course and Internship	-	Medical Council of Solomon Islands
Kiribati & Tuvalu	Medical Internship	Ministry of Health	Bridging course and Internship	-	Ministries of Health
Palau	Medical Internship	Ministry of Health	Bridging course and Internship	-	Ministry of Health
Samoa	Medical Internship	Ministry of Health	Bridging course and Internship	-	Ministry of Health
Vanuatu	Medical Internship	Ministry of Health	Bridging course and Internship	-	Ministry of Health
Fiji	Medicine	CMNHS/FNU	Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery	9	FMC , FNU Senate. (Assessed against World Federation of Medical Education (WFME) standards 2012)
Fiji	Medicine	Umanan Prasad School of Medicine/ University of Fiji (Western Division)	Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery	9	FMC, (WFME assessment 2011)
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	SMHS/UPNG	Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery	9	DHESRT (WFME assessment 1996)
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	Divine Word University (Madang)	Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery	9	DHESRT
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	UPNG	Masters of Medicine Surgery	10	DHESRT (WFME 1996)
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	UPNG	Masters of Medicine Anaesthesiology	10	DHESRT (WFME 1996)
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	UPNG	Masters of Medicine Child Health	10	DHESRT (WFME 1996)
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	UPNG	Masters of Medicine Obstetrics and Gynaecology	10	DHESRT (WFME 1996)

Papua New Guinea	Medicine	UPNG	Masters of Medicine Internal Medicine	10	DHESRT (WFME 1996)
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	UPNG	Masters of Medicine Psychiatry	10	DHESRT (WFME 1996)
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	UPNG	Masters of Medicine Pathology	10	DHESRT (WFME 1996)
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	UPNG	Masters of Medicine Emergency Medicine	10	DHESRT (WFME 1996)
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	UPNG	Masters of Medicine Ophthalmology	10	DHESRT (WFME 1996)
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	UPNG	Masters of Medicine Otorhinolaryngology	10	DHESRT (WFME 1996)
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	UPNG	Masters of Medicine Medical Imaging	10	DHESRT (WFME 1996)
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	UPNG	Masters of Medicine Dermatology	10	DHESRT (WFME 1996)
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	UPNG	Masters of Medicine Rural Health	10	DHESRT
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	UPNG	Higher Postgraduate Diploma (Surgical Sub-Specialties)	10	DHESRT
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	Divine Word University (Madang)	Advanced Diploma in Emergency Medicine	8	DHESRT
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	SMHS/UPNG	PG Diploma in Anaesthetic Science	8	DHESRT
Papua New Guinea	Medicine	UPNG	Doctorate in Medicine and PhD degrees	10	DHESRT
Samoa	Medicine	National University of Samoa Faculty of Medicine	Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery	9	Council of NUS, on the assessment of Philippines Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities (PAASCU)
Samoa	Medicine	National University of Samoa Faculty of Medicine	Master of Medicine in Intensive Care (MMedIC)	9	Council of NUS
Samoa	Medicine	Oceania University of Medicine	MD (American MBBS)	9	PAASCU
Pohnpei /FSM	Dual science and Medicine	Bachelor of Science/Doctor of Medicine Dual Degree Program	2-3 years	-	ECFMG
Pohnpei /FSM	Medicine	New Tokyo Medical College	Doctor of Medicine MD	9	ECFMG
Fiji	Medicine	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma in Anaesthesia	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Medicine	CMNHS/FNU	Master of Medicine Anaesthesia	9	FNU Senate
Fiji	Medicine	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma in Obstetrics & Gynaecology	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Medicine	CMNHS/FNU	Master of Medicine Obstetrics & Gynaecology	9	FNU Senate
Fiji	Medicine	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma in Child Health	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Medicine	CMNHS/FNU	Master of Medicine Paediatrics	9	FNU Senate
Fiji	Medicine	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma in Surgery	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Medicine	CMNHS/FNU	Master of Medicine in Surgery	9	FNU Senate
Fiji	Medicine	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma in Emergency Medicine	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Medicine	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma in Internal Medicine	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Medicine	CMNHS/FNU	Master of Internal Medicine	9	FNU Senate
Fiji	Medicine	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma in Mental Health	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Medicine	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma in Pathology	8	FNU Senate

Tonga	Medicine	University of Sydney (in Tonga)	Master of Medicine Paediatrics	9	Senate of the University of Sydney ⁸
Hawai'i	Medicine	University of Hawai'i	Doctor of Medicine (MD)	9	Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) of the Association of American Medical Colleges and the Council on Medical Education of the American Medical Association
Hawai'i	Gerontology	Hawai'i Pacific University	PG Certificate in Gerontology	6	WASC
Hawai'i	Postgraduate Medicine Resident Programs	John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawai'i	PG Masters in Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Paediatrics, Obstetrics, Gynaecology, Psychiatry, Pathology, Orthopaedic Surgery	10	LCME
MEDICAL SCIENCES					
Papua New Guinea	Medical Science	UPNG	Master of Medical Sciences	9	DHESRT
Papua New Guinea	Anaesthetics	UPNG	Diploma in Anaesthetic Science	5-6	DHESRT
Fiji	Endoscopy	CMNHS	Certificate in Endoscopy	7	FNU Senate
Hawai'i	Research	John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawai'i	Master and Doctorate of Clinical Research	9 and 10	LCME
Hawai'i	Speech Pathology	John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawai'i	Master and Doctorate of Communication Science and Disorders	9 and 10	LCME
Hawai'i	Reproductive Health	John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawai'i	Master and Doctorate of Developmental and Reproductive Biology	9 and 10	LCME
Hawai'i	Tropical Medicine	John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawai'i	Master and Doctorate of Tropical Medicine	9 and 10	LCME
Hawai'i	Biology	John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawai'i	Master and PhD in Cell and Molecular Biology	9 and 10	LCME
Hawai'i	Neuroscience	John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawai'i	Master and PhD in Neurosciences	9 and 10	LCME
Hawai'i	Medical Assistant	University of Hawai'i (Kapi'olani)	Associate Science Degree in Medical Assisting	5-6	Commission on Accreditation for Medical Assistant Education
Pohnpei /FSM	Pre-med	Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Med	1 year	-	Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates
Pohnpei /FSM	Pre-med science	Basic Science Foundation Course	Non-award	-	ECFMG
Palau	Medical Science	Palau Area Health Education Centre (AHEC)	PG Diploma in Medical Sciences	8	WASC. Joint program of MOH, Palau Community College with U. Hawai'i (AHEC) and U. Auckland
OPHTHALMOLOGY					
Fiji	Medicine	Pacific Eye Institute (Suva)	PG Certificate in Eye Care	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Medicine	Pacific Eye Institute	PG Diploma in Eye Care	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Medicine	Pacific Eye Institute	PG Diploma in Vitreo-Retinal and Diabetes Eye Care	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Medicine	Pacific Eye Institute	Master in Eye Care	9	FNU Senate
Fiji	Medicine	Pacific Eye Institute	PG Diploma in Ophthalmology	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Medicine	Pacific Eye Institute	Master of Ophthalmology	9	USP Senate

Papua New Guinea	Eye Care	Divine Word University (Madang)	Advanced Diploma in Eye Care	8	DHESRT
Solomon Islands	Eye Care	Pacific Eye Institute/National Referral Hospital	PG Certificate in Eye Care	8	FNU Senate /Ministry of Health and Medical Services
DENTISTRY					
Cook Islands	Dental Nursing	Cook Islands School of Nursing	Certificate in Dental Nursing	3-4	CITTI & New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)
Cook Islands	Dental Assistant	Cook Islands School of Nursing	Certificate in Dental Assistant (1 year)	3-4	CCTTI & NZQA
Cook Islands	Dental Therapy	Cook Islands School of Nursing	Diploma in Dental Therapy	5	CCTTI & NZQA
Samoa	Dental Hygiene	National University of Samoa	Certificate in Dental Hygiene	3-4	Council of NUS, MOH
Samoa	Dental Hygiene	National University of Samoa	Diploma in Dental Therapy	5	Council of NUS, MOH
Tonga	Dental Therapy	Queen Salote Institute of Nursing and Allied Health	Diploma in Dental Therapy	5	TNQAB
Fiji	Dental Hygiene	CMNHS/FNU	Certificate in Dental Hygiene	5-6	Fiji Dental Council (FDC) ⁷ , FNU Senate
Fiji	Dental Therapy	CMNHS/FNU	Diploma in Dental Therapy	5-6	FDC FNU Senate
Fiji	Dental Technology	CMNHS/FNU	Diploma in Dental Technology	5-6	FDC, FNU Senate
Fiji	Oral Health	CMNHS/FNU	Bachelor of Oral Health	7	FDC, FNU Senate
Fiji	Dentistry	CMNHS/FNU	Bachelor of Dental Surgery	7	FDC, FNU Senate
Fiji	Dentistry	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma in Public Health dentistry	8	FDC, FNU Senate
Fiji	Oral Health	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma of Oral Surgery	8	FDC, FNU Senate, Fiji Higher Education Commission
Papua New Guinea	Dental Technology	SMHS/ UPNG	Diploma in Dental Technology	5-6	DHESRT
Papua New Guinea	Dentistry	SMHS/UPNG	Bachelor of Dental Surgery	7	DHESRT
Papua New Guinea	Dentistry	SMHS/UPNG	PG Diploma in Public Health Dentistry	8	DHESRT
Papua New Guinea	Oral Health	SMHS/ UPNG	Bachelor of Oral Health	5-6	DHESRT
Papua New Guinea	Oral Surgery	SMHS/ UPNG	Master's in dental surgery	9	DHESRT
Hawai'i	Dental Assistant	University of Hawai'i (Kapi'olani)	Certificate of Achievement in Dental Assisting	3-4	American Dental Association, Commission on Dental Education (CDE)
Hawai'i	Dental Hygienist	University of Hawai'i (Manoa)	Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene	7	CDE
NUTRITION AND DIETETICS					
Fiji	Dietetics	CMNHS/FNU/FNU	Certificate in Dietetics	3-4	FNU Senate
Fiji	Dietetics	CMNHS/FNU	Diploma in Dietetics	5-6	FNU Senate
Fiji	Nutrition and Dietetics	CMNHS/FNU	Diploma in Dietetics and Nutrition	5-6	FNU Senate
Fiji	Nutrition	CMNHS/FNU	Diploma in Public Health Nutrition	5-6	FNU Senate
Fiji	Nutrition and Dietetics	CMNHS/FNU	Bachelor in Dietetics and Nutrition	7	FNU Senate
Fiji	Food safety	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma in Food Safety	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Food Science	University of the South Pacific (Suva)	Certificate in Food Science	2	USP Council on advice of USP Senate ⁹
Cook Islands	Food Safety	Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute	Certificate in Food Safety	2	CCTTI & NZQA
Hawai'i	Dietetics	University of Hawai'i (Manoa)	Bachelor of Science in Dietetics	7	Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics
Hawai'i	Food Science and Human Nutrition	University of Hawai'i (Manoa)	Bachelor of Science in Food Science and Human Nutrition	7	WASC

	(Sports Wellness track)				
Hawai'i	Food Science and Human Nutrition (Pre-Professional track)	University of Hawai'i (Manoa)	Bachelor of Science in Food Science and Human Nutrition	7	WASC
Hawai'i	Children's Healthy Living Summer Institute	University of Hawai'i (Manoa)	Credit and Non-credit online courses; Certificate is pending	7	WASC
PUBLIC HEALTH					
Fiji	Public Health	CMNHS/FNU	Certificate in Public Health	5	FNU Senate
Fiji	Public Health	CMNHS/FNU	Diploma in Public Health	6	FNU Senate
Fiji	Public Health	CMNHS/FNU	Bachelor in Public Health	7	FNU Senate
Fiji	Public Health	CMNHS/FNU	PG Certificate in Public Health	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Public Health	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma in Public Health	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Public Health	CMNHS/FNU	Master of Public Health Coursework	9	FNU Senate
Fiji	Public Health	CMNHS/FNU	Master of Public Health by Research	9	FNU Senate
Fiji	Public Health	CMNHS/FNU	PG Certificate in Health Research	8	FNU Senate
Papua New Guinea	Public Health	SMHS/UPNG	Diploma in community Health	5-6	DHESRT
Solomon Islands	Public Health	Solomon Islands National University	Diploma of Public Health Awareness	3-4	NCSI, MOHMS
Hawai'i	Public Health	Hawai'i Pacific University	Bachelor of Science in Public Health	7	Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association (WASC)
Hawai'i	Public Health	University of Hawai'i at Mānoa	Bachelor of Arts in Public Health (BA)	7	WASC and Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)
Hawai'i	Public Health	University of Hawai'i at Mānoa	Masters of Public Health (MPH)	9	WASC and CEPH
Hawai'i	Public Health	University of Hawai'i at Mānoa	Masters of Science in Public Health (MS)	9	WASC and CEPH
Hawai'i	Public Health	University of Hawai'i at Mānoa	Doctor of Public Health (DrPH)	10	WASC and CEPH
Federated States of Micronesia	Public Health	College of Micronesia (Pohnpei)	Associate of Science in Public Health	5-6	WASC
Marshall Islands	Public Health	College of the Marshall Islands	Certificate in Public Health and Health Promotion	2-3	WASC
Northern Marianas	Public Health	Northern Marianas College	Certificate in Public Health	2-3	WASC
Palau	Public Health	Palau Community College	Associate of Science in Public Health	5-6	WASC
Palau	Public Health	Palau Community College	Certificate in Community and Public Health	2-3	WASC
Nauru	Public Health	Nauru Health Professional Training Institute (NHPTI)	Post Basic Certificate in Public Health Nursing	5-6	Ministry of Health
Nauru	Primary Health Care – Public Health	NHPTI	Certificate in Primary Health Care	4	Ministry of Health
EPIDEMIOLOGY					
Fiji	Epidemiology	CMNHS/FNU	Certificate in Applied Epidemiology	3-4	FNU Senate
Fiji	Epidemiology	CMNHS/FNU	Diploma in Applied Epidemiology	5-6	FNU Senate
Fiji	Epidemiology	CMNHS/FNU	PG Certificate in Applied Epidemiology	8	FNU Senate

Fiji	Epidemiology	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma in Applied Epidemiology	8	FNU Senate
Federated States of Micronesia, American Samoa, Guam, RMI	Data for Decision Making	College of Micronesia (Pohnpei) with PIHOA, CDC and Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN)	PG Certificate in Field Epidemiology	8	FNU Senate
HEALTH PROMOTION					
Fiji	Health Promotion	CMNHS/FNU	Certificate in Health Promotion	3-4	FNU Senate
Fiji	Health Promotion	CMNHS/FNU	Diploma in Health Promotion	5-6	FNU Senate
Fiji	Health Promotion	CMNHS/FNU	PG Certificate in Health Promotion	7	FNU Senate
Fiji	Health Promotion	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma in Health Promotion	8	FNU Senate
Papua New Guinea	Health Teaching and Education	University of Goroka	Diploma in Health Education	5-6	DHESRT
Papua New Guinea	Health Teaching and Education	University of Goroka	Diploma in Teaching Health	5-6	DHESRT
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH					
Fiji	Environmental Health	CMNHS/FNU	Certificate in Environmental Health	3-4	FNU Senate
Fiji	Environmental Health	CMNHS/FNU	Diploma in Environmental Health	5-6	FNU Senate
Fiji	Environmental Health	CMNHS/FNU	Bachelor of Environmental Health	7	FNU Senate
Tonga	Environmental Health	Queen Salote Institute of Nursing and Allied Health	Certificate of Environmental Health	4	MOH
Samoa	Environmental Health	National University of Samoa	Diploma in Environmental Science	5-6	Council of NUS, MOE
Papua New Guinea	Environmental Health	Divine Word University (Madang)	Bachelor of Environmental Health	7	DHESRT
HEALTH SERVICES MANAGEMENT					
Fiji	Health Services Management	CMNHS/FNU	Certificate in Health Service Management	3-4	FNU Senate
Fiji	Health Services Management	CMNHS/FNU	Diploma in Health Service Management	5-6	FNU Senate
Fiji	Health Services Management	CMNHS/FNU	PG Certificate in Health Service Management	8	FNU Senate
Fiji	Health Services Management	CMNHS/FNU	PG Diploma in Health Service Management	8	FNU Senate
Samoa	Health Services Management	National University of Samoa	PG Diploma in Health Management and Leadership	8	Council of NUS, MOE
Papua New Guinea	Health Services Management	Divine Word University (Madang)	Diploma in Health Services Management	5-6	DHESRT
Papua New Guinea	Health Services Management	Divine Word University (Madang)	Bachelor of Health Management	7	DHESRT
LABORATORY SCIENCES					
Fiji	Phlebotomy	CMNHS/FNU	Certificate in Phlebotomy	3-4	FNU Senate
Fiji	Laboratory Technology	CMNHS/FNU	Certificate in Clinical Laboratory Technology	4	FNU Senate
Fiji	Laboratory Science	CMNHS/FNU	Bachelor in Medical Laboratory Science	7	FNU Senate
Tonga	Laboratory Technology	Queen Salote Institute of Nursing and Allied Health	Diploma of Laboratory Technology	5	TNQAB
Samoa	Laboratory Science	National University of Samoa	Certificate in Medical Laboratory Science	3-4	Council of NUS, MOE
Samoa	Health Sciences	National University of Samoa	Bachelor of Health Science	7	Council of NUS, MOE
Papua New Guinea	Laboratory Science	SMHS/UPNG	Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science	7	DHESRT
Papua New Guinea	Health Sciences	Divine Word University (Madang)	Bachelor of Health Sciences (Rural Health)	7	DHESRT

Hawai'i	Mobile Intensive Care Technician	University of Hawai'i (Kapi'olani)	Certificate of Competence	2-3	Commission on Accrediting of Education Programs for Emergency Medical Service Professionals
Hawai'i	Surgical Technology	University of Hawai'i (Kapi'olani)	Certificate of Competence (5 Stages)	5-6	Commission on Accrediting Allied Health Programs
Hawai'i	Laboratory	University of Hawai'i (Kapi'olani)	Associate in Science – Medical Laboratory Technician	3-4	American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP).
Hawai'i	Medical Technology	John A. Burns School of Medicine University of Hawai'i	Certificate for Clinical Training (Medical Technology)	3-4	National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS)
Hawai'i	Medical Technology	John A. Burns School of Medicine University of Hawai'i	Bachelor in Medical Technology	7	NAACLS
Hawai'i	Forensic Science	Hawai'i Pacific University	Certificate in Forensic Science	3-4	WASC (US)
New Zealand	Laboratory Science	Pacific Paramedical Training Center in (Wellington, NZ)	1-3 month up-dating courses in NZ	-	NA
MEDICAL IMAGING/Radiology					
Fiji	Medical Imaging	CMNHS/FNU	Bachelor in Medical Imaging	7	FNU Senate
Tonga	Medical Imaging	Queen Salote Institute of Nursing and Allied Health	Diploma in Medical Imaging	5	TNQAB
Papua New Guinea	Medical Imaging	SMHS/UPNG	Bachelor of Medical Imaging Science	7	DHESRT
Hawai'i	Radiology	University of Hawai'i (Kapi'olani)	Associate in Science Radiologic Technology	4-5	Joint Review Committee on Education and Radiologic Technology
PHARMACY					
Papua New Guinea	Pharmacy	SMHS/UPNG	Bachelor of Pharmacy	7	DHESRT
Fiji	Pharmacy	CMNHS/FNU	Diploma in Pharmacy	5-6	FNU Senate
Fiji	Pharmacy	CMNHS/FNU	Bachelor in Pharmacy	7	FNU Senate
Tonga	Pharmacy	Queen Salote Institute of Nursing and Allied Health	Diploma in Pharmacy	5	TNQAB
Hawai'i	Pharmacology	University of Hawai'i	Bachelor Pharmaceutical Science	5-6	Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE)
Hawai'i	Pharmacology	University of Hawai'i	Certificate in Pharmacy Practice	5-6	ACPE
Hawai'i	Pharmacology	University of Hawai'i	Master Of Science in Clinical Pharmacology	9	ACPE
Hawai'i	Pharmacology	University of Hawai'i	Doctor of Pharmacy	10	ACPE
PHYSIOTHERAPY					
Fiji	Rehabilitation	CMNHS/FNU	Certificate in Disability and Community-based Rehabilitation	3-4	FNU Senate
Solomon Islands	Rehabilitation	University of the Solomon Islands	Diploma in Community-based Rehabilitation	5-6	NCSI, MOHMS
Fiji	Physiotherapy	CMNHS/FNU	Diploma in Physiotherapy	5-6	FNU Senate
Fiji	Physiotherapy	CMNHS/FNU	Bachelor in Physiotherapy-Bridging	6	FNU Senate
Fiji	Physiotherapy	CMNHS/FNU	Bachelor in Physiotherapy	7	FNU Senate
Papua New Guinea	Physiotherapy	Divine Word University (Madang)	Bachelor of Physiotherapy	7	DHESRT
Hawai'i	Physical Therapy	University of Hawai'i (Kapi'olani)	Associate In Science, Physical Therapist Assistant	3-4	Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE).
PSYCHOLOGY					

Fiji	Psychology	University of the South Pacific	PG Diploma in Arts (Psychology)	8	USP Council on advice of USP Senate ⁹
Hawai'i	Psychology	University of Hawai'i	Graduate Certificate in Clinical Psychology	7	American Psychological Association
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY					
Hawai'i	Occupational Therapy	University of Hawai'i (Kapi'olani)	Associate In Science, Occupational Therapy Assistant	3-4	Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE)
BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING					
Fiji	Biomedical Engineering	FNU/CMNHS	Certificate in Biomedical Technology	4	Pending accreditation from RMIT

*The list may contain programmes that are not currently (2017) offered, however, all programmes listed were obtained from current sources and reviewed by country officials. Programmes in Social Sciences and Early Childhood Education are not included here although relevant to the provision of health services.

Table 3 presents the health sector related programmes (or parts of programmes) available in the Region through distance learning. Those available through FNU's College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) award credit points towards a formal qualification. Many are short courses that contribute towards continuing education credits but not to the award of formal qualifications.

Distance learning provides a vehicle for standardization as students from all countries are attracted to programmes that offer content that is not available through local institutions and that provides potential for career advancement and access to higher level international qualifications.

Table 3. Regional Distance Learning Courses and Programs

Provider	Discipline	Courses	Award	Duration
Fiji National University through POHLN (note: FNU is migrating from POHLN to FNU Moodle)	Selected courses in undergraduate public health programs.	e.g. Semester 1 2016 EPI806 Biostatistics for Health, Research and Data Analysis	Credited towards FNU Certificates, Diploma and Bachelor in Public Health	1 Semester Credit towards qualification
		e.g. HSM 801 Human Resources Management for Health Services		1 Semester Credit towards qualification
FNU programmes On-line through FNU Moodle or the CMNHS web site.	Individual courses in Public Health, Health Services Management, Epidemiology, Physiotherapy, Medical Laboratory science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Epidemiology UG and PG Public Health PG Health Services Management PG Health Promotion UG Primary care Practice PG Medical Laboratory Science UG Physiotherapy UG 		Each course 1 Semester
Pacific Open Health Learning Network (WHO) providers	Communicable Diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antimicrobial Stewardship Programmes in Hospitals Tuberculosis Chest X-Ray Reading Course Comprehensive STI Case Management in the Pacific HIV-AIDS / TB Mosquito-Borne Diseases WHO Leprosy Training: Monitoring and evaluation WHO Lymphatic Filariasis program: Monitoring and Evaluation Infection Prevention and Control 		Ranging from 12 to 30 hours
Global Health e learning Centre	Public health/medicine/ nursing & health sciences	More than 50 courses		1-3 hours
POHLN providers	Dental	Dental Care courses (50 courses)		3 hours
POHLN providers	Health Information	ICD-10 International Classification of Diseases		
George Mason University		Health informatics courses		
Pacific Islands Health Officers Association		Introduction to Information and Computer Science		Self-paced

Global Health eLearning Centre - Health Systems	Health Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fostering Change in Health Services Human Resources for Health (HRH) Basics M&E Frameworks for HIV/AIDS Programs M&E Fundamentals Commercial Private Health Sector Basics Healthy Businesses Logistics for Health Commodities (Updated) 	1-3 hours each
POHLN providers		Risk Communication	21 hours
POHLN providers		Patient Safety	24 hours
POHLN providers		Gender in humanitarian situations	3-5 hours
POHLN, WHO, UNICEF	Maternal & child Health Care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Global Health eLearning Center's Essential newborn care Integrated Management of childhood illness computerized adaptation training Tool (ICATT software) Programming for infant and young child feeding 	Package 2 hours
POHLN provider	Mental Health	Psychosocial Health: Emergencies & Disasters	24 hours
Suicide Prevention Resource Center		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locating and understanding data for suicide prevention Counseling on access to lethal means (calm) Choosing and implementing a suicide prevention gatekeeper prevention program Planning & evaluation for youth suicide prevention Research evidence for suicide as a preventable public health issue 	1 hour each
Cornell University	Nursing	Nutrition (Earns continuing education credit)	
Global Health eLearning Center courses		As above	1-3 hours
Medscape Education		Medscape Nursing Courses	1-3 hours CME points
Lippincott Nursing Centre		Nursing Center Courses (Lippincott offer over 1000 continuing education resources.)	
UNFPA & University of Canberra	Pharmacy	Hospital/Health Services Pharmacy Support	
POHLN provider		Introduction to Clinical Pharmacy	3-5 hours
POHLN provider		Essential Medicines Management in Pacific Island Countries	
POHLN provider	Radiology	Learning Radiology	Large learning resource
Medscape		Medscape Radiology Courses	1-3 hours CME points

PART D: Inventory of Pacific Region Health Professions Education Authorities.

1. Pathways to Accreditation

As Pacific countries are currently in process of developing higher education accreditation systems some have neared completion, some are still underway, and others continue to rely on older systems. As the move towards offering health professions education through universities continues, the processes of university accreditation will increasingly become the norm.

Accordingly, some variation in accreditation authorities and accreditation processes occur in the Pacific Region both between countries and within some countries that are on a pathway to establishing new systems and authorities.

1.1. Universities established under their own Act or Decree.

These providers have several pathways to accreditation within their own processes.

- a. Internal Review conducted by the University's academic staff that results in a programme submission to Senate for approval.
- b. Internal Review conducted by the University's academic staff in conjunction with national professional bodies, such as medical or nursing councils who endorse the programme for employment in their professional discipline and advise Senate of their endorsement.
- c. Internal Review conducted by the University's academic staff in conjunction with national level industry stakeholders.
- d. External Review conducted by international accreditation reviewers who make recommendations to Senate for accredited or conditional accreditation.

1.2. Nursing Colleges registered as approved providers by Ministries of Health

Nursing colleges are accredited by national professional councils created by statute with certain powers of academic audit and programme assessment. Professional councils are primarily concerned that the courses available are suitable to produce graduates that they can licence in the profession. Increasingly, as nursing schools are aligned with universities (a global trend) the processes of accreditation follow those of the university, but which continues to obtain endorsement by professional councils.

2. National Organisations Involved in Provider and Programme Accreditation

FIJI

The Fiji Higher Education Commission allows for 2 pathways for accreditation depending on the legal status of the education provider. If the provider is established under its own legislation the Commission requires only registration of the programmes accredited by the University's Senate. If the programme is provided by other non-statutory providers a process is required that entails both the registration of the provider and accreditation of the programme.

Senate of the Fiji National University. University and Student Regulations, 2013, Part IV: Program Approval and review pp.35. 1.2 No programme shall be offered by any College unless such programme has been approved by the Senate. p.36. 2.3 Programmes shall be externally reviewed every 4 years, except for the MBBS programme which should be reviewed every 6 years. For programmes, which are externally accredited, reviews shall also be conducted as per accreditation requirements. (Note: this comment may reveal some misunderstanding of the role of external assessors – they don't accredit courses directly but make recommendations to the Senate).

Council of the University of the South Pacific: Charter of the University of the South Pacific 1970 - (d) To provide through programmes and courses of study and otherwise instruction and training at such levels and by such means, including extramural tuition, as the University may think fit and to make provision for consultancy and research and for the maintenance, advancement and dissemination of knowledge in such manner as the University may determine. Statutes of the University of the South Pacific: *Powers, Duties and Functions of the Council - 21 - (f)* On the recommendation of the Senate, to institute degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions or awards; *29 Powers of the Senate - (b)* To recommend to the Council the institution of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other distinctions and awards.

The University of Fiji: The University was established in the NGO sector. The original Charter was replaced in August 2011 by The University of Fiji Decree 26 of 2011 which makes the following provisions: *University Council.* Part 4, 15:2 The Council shall have the powers to....(i) on the recommendation of the Senate to institute degrees, Diplomas and Certificates and other academic distinctions or awards; (j) on the recommendation of the Senate to approve new programmes of study and the structure of such programmes. *Senate.* Parts 5, 28:2 The Senate shall have the powers to (a)

regulate and control all teaching programmes and courses of study under which persons may qualify for the various Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates(b) make recommendations to the Council for the institution of Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates and other distinctions and awards.

Fiji Medical Council and Fiji Dental Council: Fiji Medical and Dental Practitioners Decree 2010. 13.- (1 & 2) Each Council (Medical and Dental) must establish a Professional Standards Committee consisting of appropriate professional and other representatives.(7) The functions of a Professional Standards Committee are to— (a) monitor every training course for medical or dental students, as the case may be, within tertiary education facilities in Fiji; (b) make recommendations to the relevant Council concerning recognition of degrees awarded, in Fiji or elsewhere, as qualification for registration on the appropriate register; qualifications. *Qualifications for registration:* 40.- (1) Each Council must specify the academic or professional qualifications and clinical experience that are required for registration on the medical or dental register and for inclusion in a vocational category. (2) Each Council must specify the medical or dental training courses in Fiji that will be recognised for registration as a medical or dental student, as the case may be. (3) The qualifications and courses that have been recognised by each Council must be published in the Gazette and on the Council or Secretariat website. (4) In specifying qualifications and courses under this section, each Council must be responsive to global developments in the sciences, and in registration and licensing requirements for the medical and dental professions.

SAMOA

The integration of nursing courses into the National University of Samoa has not been without difficulties, predominantly by the inclusion of nursing with the TVET subjects of applied sciences.

Samoa Qualifications Authority Act (No 9 of 2010). 4. Functions of the Authority, d). regulate qualifications and quality standards for all Post School Education and Training (PSET).

Council of the National University of Samoa. Subject to the National University of Samoa Act 2006 and to the Corporate Plan: (i) The freedom of the University to regulate the courses, and the subject-matter of courses, taught at the University; and (ii) The freedom of the University to teach and assess students in the manner it considers best promotes learning. 25. Statutes-(1) The Council may make such statutes, not inconsistent with this Act, as may in its opinion be necessary or expedient for the administration of the affairs of the University. (2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), the Council may make statutes with respect to: (h) The programmes and courses of study provided by the University and procedures for the assessment of student performance in those programmes and courses of study; (i) The degrees, diplomas, certificates or other awards that may be granted by the Council and the requirements for those awards.

Council of Nursing and Midwifery (CNM): The Council of Nursing and Midwifery in Samoa is established by the *Nursing and Midwifery Act 2007*. The Functions and Powers of the Council are predominantly related to professional standards and competencies but include the powers to: “recognise courses of nursing education offered at the National University of Samoa as the basis for an entitlement to registration under the Act”; and “to advise the Ministry, the National Health Service and other Government agencies in relation to matters related to the provision of nursing services and the education of nurses and midwives in Samoa.” [http://www.parliament.gov.ws/documents/acts/Nursing and Midwifery 2007 - English1.pdf](http://www.parliament.gov.ws/documents/acts/Nursing%20and%20Midwifery%202007%20-%20English1.pdf)

TONGA

Tonga National Qualifications Accreditation Board (TNQAB) accredits all higher education providers in Tonga. The TNQAB also manages the processes of implementing the Tonga Qualification Framework (TQF), which includes all post-compulsory education and training qualifications available in Tonga. The TQF has ten levels and is compatible with the PQF and qualification frameworks developed and implemented by other Pacific nations.

The Queen Salote Institute of Nursing and Allied Health offers 2 accredited programmes – the Diploma of Nursing and the Advanced Diploma in NCD Nursing. The Queen Salote Institute is the only health professions training facility in Tonga.

The Nurses Board of Tonga is established under the *Nurses Act 2001*. Section 3 (2) of the Act identifies the functions of the Board as primarily related to professional standards and competencies but includes “to set standards for the education and training of nurses and midwives; and to advise the Minister on any matter relating to nurses and midwives”.

Senate of the University of Sydney. The Master of Paediatrics offered by the University of Sydney is approved for delivery in Tonga due to the availability of a faculty member and due to recent difficulties in the relationship with FNU.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Solomon Islands University. Solomon Islands National University Act 2012. 21:2 (a) “The University on the advice of the University Senate may establish fellowships, degrees, diplomas, certificates and other awards.” 43: 3, The University Senate may make or amend policies for(b) “all academic matters to do with the academic activities of the University including programmes of study ,,,and quality assurance and accreditation of academic programmes.”

Nursing Council of the Solomon Islands: Nursing Council Act 1987, 5 – Functions. (a). To arrange and regulate examinations and courses for the training of nurses, midwives and auxiliary nurses and for persons wishing to be registered as nurses, midwives and auxiliary nurses. (h). to approve training courses run by institutions for nurses, midwives and auxiliary nurses.

Medical and Dental Practitioners Act 1988 established the Medical and Dental Board whose responsibilities include 2: b “to regulate training for provisionally registered medical and dental practitioners in accredited public hospitals, c. to appoint examiners to conduct examinations or otherwise of otherwise examine persons for registration as a medical or dental practitioner.”

VANUATU

Vanuatu Quality Authority (VQA): The VQA is in the process of implementing the Vanuatu Qualifications Framework (VQF) which is consistent with the 10 levels of the Pacific Qualifications Framework. Institutions/Providers are required to meet quality audit standards for organisational registration (qualifications of staff, teaching resources, facilities) and the programmes to be accredited undergo a review for compliance with standards for the accreditation of programmes. The review is conducted by the VQA in consultation with the appropriate professional body.

Nursing Council of Vanuatu: Nurses Act 2000, Part 2. Vanuatu Nursing Council. Functions of the Council: (h) to determine standards for accreditation of courses conducted by the Vanuatu Centre for Nursing Education which provide qualifications for registration purposes; Part 6, Accreditation of Courses; Accreditation Process 31. (1) The Vanuatu Centre for Nursing Education (“the Centre”) may apply to the Council for accreditation of a course or courses conducted by it that are a requirement for registration under this Act. (3) The Accreditation Committee must consider the application and make a recommendation to the Council to accept or reject the application. (4) The Council may only accredit a nursing course if it is satisfied that it is conducted at a high standard. (5) The Council may grant accreditation to a nursing course in a form that it considers appropriate, including: (a) interim, temporary, provisional or full accreditation; (b) accreditation subject to conditions or recommendations for improvements. (6) If, immediately before the commencement of this Act, a course was necessary for registration in any division of the register, the course is taken to be accredited for 12 months starting on the day on which this Act commences. Review of Accreditation 32. (1) The Vanuatu Centre for Nursing Education must apply for a renewal of the accreditation of a course within the period specified in the original accreditation. (2) If the Council finds that an accredited nursing course is not being conducted at an appropriate standard, the Council may cancel or vary the accreditation. (3) The Council must give written notice of the cancellation or variation to the Vanuatu Centre for Nursing Education.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Papua New Guinea is in the process of drawing higher education and TVET providers within the responsibility of the Department of Higher Education, Science, Research and Technology (DHESRT) as detailed in the following extract. The process is continuing and may require some adjustment to legislation and organisational responsibilities to allow professional oversight of programmes and avoid duplication of programme endorsements.

The Papua New Guinea Nursing Council (2014) states it “is determined to continue to carry out accreditation audits of new and existing educational institutes” quoting the Secretary for Health“we need to maintain the standard of healthcare in PNG. For this reason, health worker training providers must be accredited through the PNG Nursing Council and Medical Board. This is a legal requirement for the graduates to practice in the PNG health sector.....”.

This extract suggests that the distinction between accrediting programmes (and the advisory role of professional bodies in that process) and the licensing of individuals may require further clarification in PNG, as does the definition of ‘external’ reviewers.

Extract: <http://www.dherst.gov.pg/higher-education-research-science-and-technology-in-papua-new-guinea/> 9/03/17

“The *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014* provides the foundation for ensuring that the qualifications offered by our universities, colleges and other providers are of high quality, responsive to the needs of PNG, and internationally-recognised.

Under the Act, the National Higher and Technical Education Board (NHTEB) is the peak body responsible for integrated quality assurance for all tertiary education. It is responsible for quality assurance and regulation of tertiary institutions; setting national standards; registering institutions, accrediting their programs; and maintaining and updated the PNG National Qualifications Framework.

A key requirement under the Act is for all tertiary education institutions to be on a national register.....In order to be registered, the institution must meet a set of national standards, and undergo regular external quality assurance reviews against these standards.

In general, all programs of study must also be accredited externally for a defined period. Accreditation is undertaken against national standards. Where a program is part of an approved national curriculum, the program does not need separate external accreditation.

The exceptions include universities, which under the Act are able to self-accredit (or internally accredit) their programs. Other institutions that have a good track record may become eligible to apply for limited authority to self-accredit their programs.

Other agencies with significant accountabilities for higher and technical education in PNG include the Ministries of Education and Health, which have responsibilities for the funding and management of TVET and teachers’ colleges, and nursing colleges, respectively. They also include the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations and, in particular, the National Training Council (NTC), responsible for the policy and quality assurance measures of private TVET providers, and the National Apprenticeship and Trade Testing Board (NATTB).

It is an offence under the Act to offer higher or technical education if the institution is not registered.”

Church nursing schools. The situation in the health sector is confounded by the role of church organisations and the processes they employ to allow entry to programmes. “It is important to be aware that Church organizations run 6 of the 9 nursing schools and all 14 of the community health worker training schools.....there is no formal contractual arrangement with the government for this, and no clear links with overall national health workforce planning or requirements” (WHO & NDH, Papua New Guinea Health Service Delivery Profile, 2012).

Medical Registration Act 1980 established the Nursing Council of Papua New Guinea: Part 3 Division 1 - Establishment of the Papua New Guinea Nursing Council. Division 7 – Training Schools for

Nurses and Nurse Aides: 109. Approval of training school. (1) Subject to this Division, the Council may approve a training school for the purposes of providing a prescribed course of studies in nursing or nursing work. (2) Approval under Subsection (1) may be given subject to compliance by the training school with such conditions as the Council considers appropriate. (3) When granting approval under Subsection (1) the Council shall specify– (a) whether graduates of the school will be registered as nurses or enrolled as nurse or nurse aides; and (b) in the case of graduates who will be registered or enrolled as nurses–the prescribed category of nursing in which they will be registered or enrolled.

COOK ISLANDS

The New Zealand Qualification Framework (NZQF) applies in the Cook Islands across all sectors as Cook Islanders hold New Zealand citizenship. Many Cook Islanders reside in either New Zealand or Australia and prefer to obtain professional education in these countries rather than attend a regional health professions training institution.

The Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute (CITTI) offers a Diploma in Nursing run through the Ministry of Health and accredited by CITTI.

Health professions regulation needs strengthening and plans are made by the Ministry of Health to create a Health Professionals Council to underpin all registration, monitoring, credentialing and disciplinary process of all health workers in the Cook Islands.

NAURU

Nauru has affiliations with Fiji, Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Papua New Guinea for the training in Bachelor of Nursing programmes. The Ministry of Health offers in-service training which provides a Nursing Certificate but it is not recognized outside of Nauru.

The Health Practitioners Registration Board is under the auspices of the Ministry for Health covering doctors, nurses, midwives and dentists. The Board was established to regulate the practice of health practitioners and to provide for their registration.

KIRIBATI

The Kiribati School of Nursing is governed by the Ministry of Health and is the only school for nurse education. The training course is 3 years in length and now leads to a Diploma in Nursing (New Zealand) since 2010, which was developed with assistance of WHO and Auckland University. A combined post-basic course in midwifery and public health leads to further training as a medical assistant.

The Medical and Nursing Councils are established under the *Kiribati Medical Services Act 1996*. The Act provides the Nursing Council with powers in relation to establishing and maintaining registers and roles; admitting qualified people to the register or role; approving courses and taking disciplinary action. The **Medical Council's** requirements for registration include that the candidate "has successfully completed a university course of study in medicine and surgery at a university approved by the Medical Council" – which does not amount to programme accreditation, whereas for nurses it does: **Part IV** relates to the recognition of training schools by the 'controlling authority' (the **Nursing Council**), which "must be compliant with conditions imposed by the controlling authority" and be certified by them as a provider of nursing or paramedical training.

MARSHALL ISLANDS, PALAU and FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

In the universities of the Northern Pacific the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) is the accrediting agency for tertiary education providers.

Medicine programmes are accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) of the Association of American Medical Colleges and the Council on Medical Education of the American Medical Association.

Emergency medicine programmes are accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of Education Programs for Emergency Medical Service Professionals.

Pathology programmes are accredited by the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP).

Dentistry programmes are accredited by the American Dental Association, Commission on Dental Education (CDE)

Laboratory science programmes are accredited by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS)

Radiology programmes are accredited by the Joint Review Committee on Education and Radiologic Technology

HAWAII

As a State of the United States of America Hawaii conforms to USA accreditation standards and processes – consistent with USA affiliated States of the Northern Pacific above.

Conclusion

The finding of a large number of health professions programmes (250+) with expected variability in content and in instructional and institutional capacities, and with a need for common quality assurance mechanisms, identifies an urgent need for the production and retention of competent, fit for practice and fit for purpose graduates to provide quality health services across the region in order to achieve the Healthy Island Vision.

Health professions education in the Pacific region is undergoing structural changes driven by the need/desire to conform to similar international standards: the transfer of programmes previously governed by ministries of health to ministries of education and from colleges to universities, the need to ensure programmes are of good quality and compare internationally, and the changing organisational arrangements required to manage these changes into the future. At present the region is in a state of transition, where country educational systems, providers and methods of assessment still differ to a considerable degree.

The health sector in most Pacific countries also suffers from major human resourcing issues, the implications of which impact directly on population health. Staff shortages result from insufficient production or retention and some disciplines rely on overseas recruitment, while other disciplines are left to manage with significant shortages as their health system deteriorates over time. A comparison of staffing levels across the region would reveal major variations, with countries such as Fiji and Tonga doing reasonably well and others such as Vanuatu in crisis. In this situation, the issue of regionalism offers some hope for the future.

In summary, health professionals' education standardisation meets all of the seven criteria for inclusion in the Pacific Framework for Action. While it does involve a service that the private sector can supply, the private sector is only a minor player with limited reach; the public sector is the major reliable supplier while the private sector remains relatively untested. It is evident by their actions that the countries, not regional bodies, have decided to attempt regional conformity. It would bring substantial net benefits in simplifying process and creating common standards. It will require political oversight to bring about the organisational changes required (i.e. political leaders should direct the establishment of new systems.) It is a systemic change that can be managed to reduce risk and direct (and attract) resources for sustainability, and rather than duplicate a current effort, it consolidates many.

The seventh item is regionalism. *The proposal to standardise health professions' education in the region meets all of the criteria for a regional approach*; i.e. that it should establish a shared norm or standard, establish a common position on an issue, deliver a public good which is regional in scope, realise economies of scale; overcome national capacity constraints; complement national governments where they lack capacity, facilitate economic or political integration, and that where benefits accrue sub-regionally the contribution to broader regionalism should be clear.

This proposal is open for discussion among Pacific health leaders, partners and stakeholders who, collectively, could lobby the Regional Forum to entertain further discussion on the logistics of how this might come about.

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