



UNIVERSITY of
TASMANIA

Building capability of supervisors of nursing students in rural areas:

**Whole of Community
Facilitator Model of Support**

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Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Programme (RHMT)

Nursing, Allied Health and Dentistry - Professional Experience Placement (PEP) Rural Expansion Project

Scope: To expand and support rural and remote student professional experience placements

Objective: To identify, implement and evaluate ways to better support rural professional experience placements (PEP) for dentistry, nursing and allied health undergraduate students in rural Tasmania

Evaluation

- **Evaluation of the WOCF role began in 2012 with the pilot, followed by extensive evaluations in 2017, 2018 and 2020, completing the cycle of evaluation initiated in 2012.**
- **There has been strong endorsement of the role following feedback from students, supervisors and host organisations, growing with each subsequent evaluation as the roles developed, indicating commitment and support of the WOCF model.**
- **Many host managers and supervisors in 2020 particularly suggested strong commitment to the initiative and extensive support for the role, often referring to 'Our WOCF' or 'Our go-to person', they embraced the initiative claiming it was 'invaluable', stating they could not provide PEPs without the support from the initiative**

Tasmania – a unique place and context



Challenges to student supervision in rural areas

Limited ability to backfill those undertaking more formal supervisory roles

Perceived lack of support from relevant education providers

Many healthcare agencies support a maximum of one or two students per placement

A range of students attending PEP

- **Variety of disciplines**
- **Varying requirements for support, assessment, and learning and teaching**

Whole of Community Facilitator (WOCF) Model across Tasmania

WOCF model - 14 rural regions with 12 WOCFs (two vacancies) offering support for:

- **Students**
- **Supervisors**
- **Organisations**



WOCF Model of Support

Focussed on building the capability of organisations to host students, WOCFs:

- **Work within a geographic location, rather than a single facility;**
- **Are employed across a calendar year;**
- **Are mainly Tasmanian Health Service (THS) employees – collaborative employment process;**
- **Support students from multiple disciplines;**
- **Hold one-year contracts with hours of facilitation negotiated based on number of students allocated.**

WOCF Model of Support

- **WOCFs provide direction, guidance and mentorship to health students and their supervisors across a diverse range of placement settings, including:**
 - General Practices
 - Multipurpose Centres
 - District Hospitals
 - Mental Health settings
 - Community Nursing agencies
 - Residential Aged Care facilities
 - Paramedicine Ambulance facilities
 - Private Hospitals
 - Community Pharmacies

WOCF Network

The WOCFs have a facilitated state-wide network where they are encouraged to communicate and support each other, and debrief in a safe environment.

A supported TEAMS space, which is used as a resource repository, professional chat-space, lead facilitator updates, sharing learning and information about workshops or conferences attended.

There is an annual whole group face-to-face workshop/ meetings and annual smaller groups in three areas across Tasmania.

All of the above support:

- **WOCF professional development**
- **Resource development and sharing**
- **Evaluation of year to date**
- **Strategic planning for the following year**
- **Planning use of non-student time**

WOCF Supervisor Support: Education and Professional development

- **Identify the education needs of supervisors in local area**
- **Facilitate access to and provide professional development opportunities that meet priority needs, such as: provision of feedback; student assessment requirements; how to effectively supervise**

WOCF Supervisor Support:

- **WOCF ensures all agencies are well-informed and prepared for the commencement of PEP**

WOCF Supervisor Support:

- **WOCF role at own work-base varies from the role with other agencies**

WOCF Student Support:

- **Notification of student details received from Tasmania Placements (UTAS) 3-4 weeks prior to PEP**
- **WOCF sends out welcome emails 1-2 weeks prior to PEP commencement**

WOCF Student Support:

- **At Deloraine District Hospital the WOCF is responsible for a range of activities to support both students and staff**
- **At other agencies the WOCF visits weekly to liaise with students and supervising RNs**

WOCF support

- **Single point of contact – whether everything is going well or there are challenges to resolve – the WOCF is the conduit between the host agency and the University for students, staff and organisations**

College of Health and Medicine PEP Website

Professional Experience Placement Website:

<https://www.utas.edu.au/health/professional-experience-placement>

