Policy on Allocation of Students to Clinical and Practicum Environments

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Policy for Workplace-based Placements (Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences).

The education program in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences at UWA is grounded in the principles of experiential learning, with an emphasis on learning by participating in the health and human sector industries. A significant amount of teaching and learning occurs in teaching hospitals and other clinical and allied health environments.

The particular health issues available for learning in each environment vary. A general principle is that students need to be exposed to a range of environments to ensure they receive the diversity of experiences required to achieve the stated objectives of the graduate outcomes for each course.

- **Doctor of Medicine (course code 90850)**
  
  In the Doctor of Medicine, almost all teaching is conducted in hospitals and clinical environments which are located in Perth and elsewhere in Western Australia, including rural locations. In all years of the course, students are required to travel to various clinical environments associated with UWA. This includes at least four weeks in a non-metropolitan setting and for some students involves 12 months in a non-metropolitan setting during Year 3. Your placement may require you to sleep over, or undertake evening, weekend or night shifts.

- **Doctor of Dental Medicine (course code 90860)**
  
  In the Doctor of Dental Science (90860) the teaching of Level 1 and 2 units is split between the main university campus (at Crawley) and the clinics in the Oral Health Centre of Western Australia (OHCWA).
  
  During Levels 3 and 4 of the course, students spend the majority of their time at the OHCWA, with a small portion of time spent in teaching hospitals across the metropolitan area.
  
  During Level 5 the placements are split between the OHCWA and other teaching hospitals, community Dental Clinics and Private Practice. Options are undertaken in a range of environments including rural and remote areas, interstate and overseas.

- **Doctor Podiatric Medicine (course code 90870)**
  
  In the Doctor of Podiatric Medicine course, teaching occurs on the main Crawley campus and Park Avenue Site of the University and in hospitals and clinical environments that are located across the metropolitan area. Some short rural placements may also be available.
  
  During Levels 1 and 2, students undertake the in-house clinical component of their training at the UWA Podiatry Clinic, located at the Park Avenue building. Level 1 students are required to visit podiatry departments of teaching hospitals and community podiatry clinics in the metropolitan area.
  
  During Level 3, students are mostly on external placements in metropolitan teaching hospitals, secondary hospitals, community podiatry clinics, and private podiatry practices.

### 1. Clinical and practicum environments associated with the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

Below is a listing of the clinical and practicum sites used by the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences.

**Clinical Sites**

- Royal Perth Hospital
- Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital
- Fremantle Hospital
- Fiona Stanley Hospital
- Bentley Hospital?
- Graylands Hospital
- King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women
• Princess Margaret Hospital
• Osborne Park Hospital
• Armadale Health Campus
• Rockingham Hospital
• Swan Districts Hospital
• Midland Health Campus
• Joondalup Health Campus
• Peel Health Campus
• Rural Clinical School
  ➢ Albany
  ➢ Broome
  ➢ Bunbury
  ➢ Busselton
  ➢ Carnarvon
  ➢ Derby
  ➢ Esperance
  ➢ Geraldton
  ➢ Kalgoorlie
  ➢ Karratha
  ➢ Kununurra
  ➢ Narrogin
  ➢ Northam
  ➢ Port Hedland
  ➢ Any other site deemed suitable by the Rural Clinical School and in consultation with the Faculty and the Department of Health and Ageing
• A range of privately owned clinical environments including private hospitals and primary care practices in both urban and rural locations throughout WA
• Oral Health Centre of Western Australia
• UWA Podiatry Clinic
• Community based Dental Clinics
• Community based Podiatry Clinics
• Any site deemed suitable by the Head of School of Dentistry in a rural, metropolitan, interstate or overseas location (90860 course only).
• Any site deemed suitable by the Head of the Podiatric Medicine Unit in a rural, metropolitan, interstate or overseas location (90870 course only).

Practicum Sites
• Non-Government Organisations
• Local Councils
• Department of Health and other State Government Organisations
• Commonwealth Organisations
• Private Aged Care providers
• Any site deemed suitable by the in a metropolitan or rural area within Western Australia. In exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Course Coordinator and Dean of the Faculty, students may complete a practicum elsewhere.

2. Aims of the policy on allocation of students to clinical and practicum environments
2.1 The process of allocation of students to clinical and practicum locations should be transparent.
2.2 The policy must allow the Faculty to meet its objectives to:
   (a) ensure each student obtains a range of experiences;
   (b) balances student allocations with the ‘placements’ available at each location; and
   (c) meets any required targets set for UWA by the Australian Government.
2.3 Subject to 2.2, the Faculty will generally attempt to meet an individual student’s first preference; however this cannot be guaranteed (see Section 5).

3. Awareness and acceptance of the policy
3.1 The Faculty has a responsibility to ensure that students are aware of the allocation policy prior to their entry into, and during their progress through their course. Students have a responsibility to understand the policy and to sign off on it prior to commencing their course.
3.2 The number and composition of ‘placements’ available at each location is determined by the Faculty, based upon factors such as teaching resources, availability of supervisors and patient case mix, and may vary from year to year.

3.3 Decisions about the allocation of students to clinical and practicum environments is the responsibility of the Faculty, and students have a responsibility to accept and abide by these decisions.

3.4 In accepting a place in any courses within the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, students accept that they may be required to undertake a ‘placement’ at a location or locations other than their first preference. Furthermore, in accepting a Commonwealth supported MD place, MD students will be aware that they may be required to undertake up to 12 months of clinical learning in a rural environment.

4. Student participation in allocation decisions (not relevant to DPM)

4.1 Each student may be given the opportunity to indicate his/her personal preferences for allocation to particular locations by submission of the appropriate preference request.

4.2 It will be assumed that a student has no particular preferences if he/she does not submit a preference request.

4.3 The Faculty will provide each student with information on its teaching/supervisory environments to assist him/her in indicating preferences.

4.4 A student who provides false or misleading information, especially about his/her residential address during university sessions, will have preferences ignored and may be referred to the Professional Behaviour Advisory Panel.

5. Allocation decisions

5.1 The following factors will be considered in allocation decisions:
   (a) number of available ‘placements’ at individual locations.
   (b) student preferences as indicated on the submitted form (not relevant to DPM).
   (c) a student’s previous clinical/practicum location.
   (d) where relevant, ensuring a balance of gender and academic levels between locations.
   (f) when allocating to extended rural clinical experiences, whether or not the student is a local Commonwealth supported student (see Section 7) (not relevant to DMD or DPM).
   (g) special consideration as detailed in 5.2 below, details of which must be submitted at the same time as the preference form.

5.2 Special consideration may include (in respect of the student):
   (a) major health problem(s) requiring frequent and ongoing specialised treatment which is only available in certain locations.
   (b) being a parent of a dependent child or children.
   (c) involvement in sport or music at an elite level (state or national).
   (d) being a primary or secondary carer for a dependent.

5.3 Examples of circumstances concerning the student that are not classed as special consideration:
   (a) lack of access to a motor vehicle or inability to drive.
   (b) other transportation issues.
   (c) relationships without dependents.
   (d) religious grounds.
   (e) ownership or rental of accommodation.
   (f) other accommodation issues.
   (g) employment.
   (h) financial issues.

As UWA is a publicly funded university, it is also subject to various government requirements. One such requirement of the Australian Government, the Rural Health Enhancement Policy, requires UWA to achieve the following outcomes:

6. With respect to admission of students to the MD

Approximately 25% of local Commonwealth supported student admissions to the Program should be students of rural ‘origin’, as defined in the guidelines of the Rural Student Entry Scheme.

6.1 With respect to rural clinical placement whilst undertaking studies:
   (a) 25% of local Commonwealth supported UWA medical students must undertake a minimum of 12 months of their clinical learning in residential rural environments, termed Extended Rural Clinical Experience (ERCE).
   (b) All other students must undertake a minimum of 4 weeks of community-based clinical learning in a rural location.
7. Extended rural clinical experience for MD students

As stated in Section 6, the Australian Government has a Rural Health Enhancement Policy that requires 25% of local Commonwealth supported UWA medical students to undertake a minimum of 12 months of their clinical learning in structured residential rural environments. The format and structure of this Extended Rural Clinical Experience (ERCE) is determined by the Faculty in consultation with the Rural Clinical School of Western Australia (School of Primary, Aboriginal and Rural Health Care).

Unless otherwise stated, the following clauses only apply to local Commonwealth supported students.

7.1 Allocations to an ERCE will be made according to the general principles described in this policy.

7.2 Students considering undertaking an ERCE are strongly encouraged to liaise with the School of Primary, Aboriginal and Rural Health Care, which organises information sessions about the School, conducts student rural excursions, and supports the students’ Rural Health Club.

7.3 International (fee paying) UWA medical students can apply for an ERCE as part of their clinical training, but the Faculty will allocate local Commonwealth supported students to an ERCE to achieve the government-imposed target of 25% of students per year cohort before considering applications from International Students.

7.4 Students wishing to undertake an ERCE must submit an application form during Year 2, which should be completed in consultation with an appointed staff member of the Rural Clinical School of Western Australia.

7.5 All applications for an ERCE will be considered by a committee consisting of:
   - Head of the Rural Clinical School
   - Two academic staff members of the Rural Clinical School
   - One undergraduate student representative nominated by SPINRPHEX (the rural student club)

7.6 Students applying for an ERCE will be interviewed by the selection committee prior to a final decision being made.

7.7 The following factors will also be considered in allocation decisions:
   (a) student preferences.
   (b) a student’s commitment to serving their allocated community
   (c) preferred study partners if indicated by the student.
   (d) issues such as rural background and knowledge of or demonstrated interest in rural health.

7.8 Acceptance into an ERCE guarantees allocation to a rural location for 12 months only.

7.9 If there is still a shortfall in ERCE placements, then the Faculty will decide which other students will fill those places. Although the Faculty anticipates receiving more applications for ERCEs than available ‘placements’, if insufficient applications are received to achieve the targeted number of ‘placements’, the Faculty reserves the right to allocate any local Commonwealth supported student to an ERCE.

7.10 If the government-imposed target of 25% of students per year cohort is not filled, the allocation will be randomly selected from the remaining students in the cohort, excluding International students.