AN ASPIRATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY FOR ENROLLED NURSES: A CURRICULUM MAPPING AND GAP ANALYSIS APPROACH

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Educational pathways offer a seamless transition to higher degree programs, career mobility and educational advancement. One such articulation is for Enrolled Nurses (EN) who hold a Diploma of Nursing and seek recognition towards degree studies. To ensure rigor in assessing and awarding credit for previous studies and recognition of prior learning, a quality assurance process is required (AQFC, 2013). A four phase curriculum mapping (Bester & Scholtz, 2012) and gap analysis (Fater, 2013) was employed to highlight similarities and differences in curricula. Complexity, professional competencies and the extent of knowledge and skills required was extensively examined to construct an appropriate pathway from the Diploma of Nursing- Enrolled Nurse (EN) to a Bachelor of Nursing (BN).

The curriculum from both educational programs was comprehensively compared using the Australian Quality Framework (AQF) and Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC). Comparison of curricula showed clear differences in knowledge, skills and application, length of study, number of units and hours of study and clinical practice. The Bachelor of Nursing program showed increasing depth and breadth of knowledge over time reflecting AQF.

Gap analysis of competencies of both qualifications showed differences in attributes and professionalism; responsibility; clinical skills; and knowledge. Requirement for competencies differed according to number of domains, role and function. Variance was noted in the areas of professional and ethical practice; critical thinking and analysis; management of care; and enabling. Key stakeholders from the vocational education and training sector, clinicians and academics provided feedback at two stages in the process. The revealed gaps highlighted evidence and impetus to develop unique units of study that provided a distinctive second year transitional pathway into the third year of a specific Bachelor of Nursing Program. This presentation details how the curriculum mapping and gap analysis was undertaken, the ANMAC approved pathway design and its introduction.

References
