## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Objectives</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Structure</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement Requirements for Host Workplaces</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Considerations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entitlements</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainees will be employed under the Health &amp; Human Services (Tasmanian State Services) Award</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preceptors and Mentoring</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further Information</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glossary of Terms</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graduate Trainee Program

Background

In 2009 the Department of Health and Human Services’ (DHHS) Departmental Executive (DE) recognised the importance of identifying and nurturing the next generation of leadership talent within Tasmanian healthcare and established a leadership development program targeted at recent graduates with a demonstrated and ongoing commitment to work in the Tasmanian public health care and human services area.

The developed Graduate Health Management Trainee Program offered a structured, two year period of academic and experiential learning. This program will come to an end in December 2012.

Commencing in January 2013 a broader graduate trainee program (the program) will be offered, incorporating eight graduates placed in a variety of areas within the DHHS.

- Two Health Management Graduates
- Two Finance Graduates
- Two Human Resources Graduates
- Two Policy and Information Graduates

Graduate trainees will undertake four six-month work placements in business units of DHHS state-wide to develop their knowledge, expertise and leadership skills. Work placements include at least one six month placement in the North West of Tasmania, with other placements based in the North and/or South.

During this time trainees will be provided with significant professional development opportunities, including being mentored by and shadowing senior DHHS staff, participating in training events and attending healthcare forums and conferences.

Program Aims

The Program aims to provide a pool of personnel with specific expertise to Tasmanian healthcare organisations, and to raise the profile of health and human services careers in Tasmania.

The broad aims of the Program are to:

- Attract highly motivated and talented graduates from a diverse range of professional disciplines
- Offer a combination of academic and experiential exposure to support participants to develop a passion for the challenges and issues confronting health services and their communities
- Facilitate the development of the skills and knowledge necessary to manage, plan and develop health services within the rural and regional health context
- Develop leadership that is committed to the Tasmanian health sector.

The Program sources candidates who have completed an undergraduate degree. On completion of the Program candidates will be equipped to take on a junior role in the Tasmanian health system.

Governance

The Leadership& Management Development (M &L) unit DHHS manages and administers the Program. An Advisory Committee provides advice in relation to the Program.

M&L is responsible for the orientation of trainees and provides guidance in every stage of the Program. Meetings with graduate trainees are organised regularly to discuss placements, workplace challenges and other issues. The business unit is responsible for the work environment orientation.
The Senior Consultant provides a local point of day-to-day contact for the trainee and is responsible for the coordination of placements. In addition, the Senior Consultant conducts three visits per placement with each trainee and their preceptor: one at commencement; one in the middle; and one at the end of each placement.

The first visit establishes the work area to which the trainee will be assigned and the learning objectives to be used to assess the trainee’s performance. The second visit is to review the trainee’s progress against the earlier determined learning objectives. The final visit reviews the trainee’s overall performance against the learning objectives to determine which objectives have been met during the placement.

The Senior Consultant is also responsible for the recruitment, communication and marketing of the Program.

The preceptor

Learning Objectives

Prior to or at the commencement of each work placement, learning and project objectives should be communicated and agreed with the trainee and their preceptor. The objectives are recorded at the beginning of the placement, and take into account the overall placement goal/s.

Program learning objectives

To provide participants with knowledge and understanding of:

- The Tasmanian health system: both metropolitan and rural (including services of various sizes, acute, sub-acute, aged care, community health, etc); and their relationship with DHHS
- The key stakeholders within the Tasmanian health system
- Issues facing communities and health services management in relation to accessing health services.

To support participants to learn and develop:

- To be employable in a health management or policy role upon completion of the Program.

Individual learning objectives

- To develop a working relationship with relevant employees in host work places and gain knowledge of their role and how this fits within DHHS.
- To gain an understanding of the day-to-day operations of host workplaces and knowledge of the different skills required in different service areas / business units.
- To become involved and active in meetings with key personnel.
- To work and collaborate on independent projects that will provide trainees with new skills and a knowledge base, as well as a visible outcome.

Program Structure

- **Experience Component:** Four six-month work placements, carried out over two years (with the exception of the finance graduates).
- **Education Component:** Graduate Diploma in a relevant field, studied part time by distance education over two years.
Education

The Program includes a strong educational component. This focus not only helps to develop the skills of the trainee, but also provides an incentive to participate in the Program.

Trainees are expected to commit to work towards a post graduate qualification in a relevant field, studied part-time by distance education through UTAS.

To assist Trainees to obtain a post graduate qualification, DHHS will provide two and a half days study leave each semester. Stationery, textbooks and related costs are the responsibility of the trainee.

Professional Development

Another component of the Program is a professional development allowance provided to trainees to undertake professional development activities that are aligned with individual and program learning objectives.

The professional development allowance forms a part of the trainee’s overall package of remuneration. Trainees are entitled to a professional development allowance of up to $2,000 per annum or $1,000 per half-year work placement.

Placement Requirements for Host Workplaces

There are certain criteria which need to be addressed to ensure that the placement is mutually successful for both the trainee and their host workplace.

The requirements of a work placement are as follows:

- The trainee is to be given responsibility for work that has real value and contribute to the organisation.
- The host workplace and the trainees agree to the work to be undertaken prior to the placement beginning.
- The placement provides the trainee with a degree of autonomy, enabling the participant to form their own profile within the host workplace and amongst colleagues in the community.
- Access to a computer, printer, email, internet and phone to enable the trainee to complete distance education requirements, maintain contact with peers, and complete work placement projects and tasks.
- The focus should be on personal development and work experiences.

Financial Considerations

The total value of the Program equates to approximately $68,000 a year per trainee. This is comprised of salary, superannuation, professional development allowance.

Trainees are responsible for arranging their own accommodation and relocation. Any costs involved are payable by the Trainee.

Entitlements

Trainees will be employed under the Health & Human Services (Tasmanian State Services) Award.

Preceptors and Mentoring

During the placement, the trainee’s preceptor has responsibility for ensuring that the trainee is exposed to a number of work place experiences, attendance at meetings, assisting and interacting with other staff within the organisation.
In addition, the Senior Consultant will identify local members as mentors to provide support and encourage development for the trainee during the course of their placement.

Further Information

Contact

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Glossary of Terms

Preceptor

A preceptor is an experienced practitioner who:

- Supervises the trainee in their day-to-day work
- Provides the induction into the workplace
- Provides guidance and support project during the specific placement.

Graduate Trainee

The person employed as a trainee through the Program, as outlined in the position’s Statement of Duty.

Work Placement

The service area or business unit to which the trainee is allocated, usually for a period of six months. Placement will be in the North, North West and/or South of the State.
Appendix 1: Graduate Health Management Trainee Program Roles and Responsibilities

**DHHS:**

**Responsibility for Program coordination and work placement:**

- Coordination and provision of Status Reports on trainee work placements
- Coordination of preceptor meetings
- Coordination of trainee recruitment and human resource management
- Coordination and provision of host workplaces and preceptors
- Management of communication and marketing activities
- Coordination of Orientation Day for trainees and preceptors
- Provision of a central point of contact for all Program queries
- Support for trainees to publish articles in DHHS publications
- Provision of advice to DHHS DE, Directors and Managers on the Program
- Evaluation of each cohort upon completion of the Program

**Graduate Trainees:**

**Responsibility for self and contribution to Program development:**

- Responsibility for the duties of the tenure, as outlined in the Statement of Duties
- Responsibility for raising difficulties or issues of concern in carrying out the trainee position with their preceptor or mentor
- Responsibility for the selection of external professional development activities (within the allocated professional development allowance) in consultation with their workplace preceptor
- Maintenance of a professional development diary for provision to the DHHS program coordinator on completion of each work placement
- Responsibility for actively seeking and contributing to in-house professional development opportunities, including organising a professional development day for all trainees during their second year in the Program.
- Responsibility for completing the requirements of a Graduate Diploma and for monitoring progress and workload towards achieving this.