Internationalisation in the MBBS and MPH Curricula at the University of Tasmania

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Definition

– “the process of integrating an international, intercultural and/or global dimension into the goals, functions (teaching/learning, research, services) and delivery of higher education”. (Knight 2005)
Murdoch-Eaton et al.’s (2011) transformative approach to internationalisation

Internationalisation ……must shift from a marginal set of programs and activities to a comprehensive, curriculum wide approach (Knight, 2003)
Ways to address internationalization of the curriculum within the discipline of medicine

1. international mobility,
2. global health, and
3. cultural competency.

Stutz et al 2014 Preparing Medical Graduates for an Interconnected World Current Practices and Future Possibilities for Internationalizing the Medical Curriculum in Different Contexts, J International Ed Studies
Conceptualisation of IoC (Leask)

Embraces formal, informal & hidden curricula

Graduate attributes

Development of knowledge skills & attitudes

Educational process

Outcome orientated & inclusive of all students

Contexts
MBBS scope of internationalisation

– social inclusion of international students,
– internationalisation of the classroom,
– student mobility and exchange,
– the teaching of inter-cultural competence,
– collaborative online peer e-learning programs between culturally diverse institutions (RIPPLE), and
– academic and student collaborations in global health programs.
Objective: "For students to learn deeply by sharing and discovering knowledge, through active, engaged, fun and inspired interactions with their peers from diverse cultures"
Scope of internationalisation – Master of Public Health Programs

– The MPH at UTAS is a relatively new program and is delivered fully online

– The course was designed with an international focus

– This creates some challenges for enrolling and engaging international students

– Currently, internationalisation efforts within the MPH are centred around internationalisation of the curriculum
MPH Course Level Intended Learning Outcomes

3. To support the student to develop as a reflective practitioner of public health who is able to engage objectively with public health issues either as individually or as a group member.

4. To facilitate a student-centered approach designed to encourage a breadth of knowledge, depth of understanding, application of skills, synthesis of approaches and originality of ideas within the discipline of public health.

5. To challenge traditional concepts of health and encourage the student to think broadly and laterally about the social, economic, cultural and environmental determinants of health and inequalities and inequities in health at a population level.
Approach

– “Challenging current course content and pedagogy and offering a transformative educational experience to students” (Clifford and Montgomery, 2011)

– Transformative approach has a strong agenda of active global citizenship to equip students to be public health practitioners in a globalized world

– Fostering a global perspective is also a graduate attribute of UTAS

– By its nature, Public Health addresses global health content and critical perspectives on international health policy
Example Unit: CAM618: Needs Assessment and Evaluation in Public Health Programs

- Students undertake 8 Modules, all of which present examples of evaluation programs or plans from existing programs

- Many of these examples are international in order to elucidate the relevance of evaluation practice in international as well as local settings

- For the final assessment piece (Evaluation Plan) students have the option of three topics, of which one is international (Smoke Free Generation, Scotland)

- This unit received over 95% positive feedback from the first cohort. Some of the qualitative feedback related to the range of examples covered during the unit
Challenges to Internationalisation for Online Postgraduate Degrees

– Fully online delivery means that students are ineligible for many scholarships to study in Australia

– Most student engagement takes place via online discussion boards. This can be intimidating for international students

– Time differences can make group activities hard if students are based in different locations, however asynchronous learning tasks can assist with this

– Tasmania is Australia’s least diverse state with 10% of Tasmanians born overseas compared to 25% of Australians. This makes internationalisation “at home” challenging

– Encouraging diversity within student body and IoC has to be explicitly encouraged
Opportunities for Internationalisation in Online Postgraduate Degrees

– Flexibility of delivery means that students can study from anywhere in the world

– Having a diverse group of students in different locations brings a range of perspectives to discussion board tasks when moderated carefully

– Students can undertake an international project for the final MPH research/workplace based project

– Tasmania is an attractive place to visit and has a unique set of epidemiological and other public health problems of interest to the international community
Conclusion

– The current efforts to internationalise curriculum within the School of Medicine at the University of Tasmania seek to be transformative for both staff and students, in order to effectively prepare graduates for Public Health and Medical practice in a globalized, interconnected world.

– Taking opportunities where we can to reform the curriculum - within a rigid, structured competency based curriculum full curriculum, ambivalent academic support

– There is more freedom in the MPH to be creative around IoC than in the MBBS program at this time