

# Allied health students, people with disabilities and the NDIS project



## Context

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is rolling out across Australia with multiple organisations now providing allied health services. Direct and health professional workforce capacity and readiness has been [identified as a key issue](#) during NDIS transition. The resulting move to fee-for-service models and a shortage of allied health professionals (AHPs) is impacting both NDIS service provision and the range of student placements available within the sector. These placements are a key aspect of AHP education, enabling students to develop their skills in a range of service settings with NDIS participants. It is essential that AHPs providing services to NDIS participants educate students on placement. This not only enables NDIS participants to contribute to the education of allied health students, but ensures the students gain experience working in the sector, increasing their likelihood of seeking employment within the NDIS on graduation. Successful allied health student placements require support from management, as well as clear guidance from the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

The project allowed universities, partner NDIS provider organisations (including their AHP staff and managers), and NDIS participants (stakeholders) to collaboratively document targeted and effective strategies and resources that aim to grow the future allied health workforce. These stakeholders from four states (NSW, SA, VIC and WA) took part in research facilitated by university staff.

## Key findings

- Some NDIS participants and providers are currently involved in successful allied health student placements. These placements
  - utilize a range of supervision models beyond traditional discipline-specific one to one supervision
  - are offered by placement educators who are supported within their organisation and by universities
- Successful placements involved:
  - an understanding of the reality and benefits of allied health student placements in the NDIS
  - collaborative preparation for the implementation of placements by all stakeholders
  - established and maintained mutually beneficial collaborative partnerships
  - good communication practices using multi-modal methods (face-to-face, video-link, writing)
- A range of innovative supervision models for practice education, adding value to participants' plans through longer or additional sessions without additional charge to the participant
- Consolidating and improving these areas across the sector in an extended range of organisations would facilitate the necessary conditions for sufficient placements to support development of NDIS ready workforce.

## Recommendations

1. All Stakeholders developing greater understanding of placements in the NDIS
2. Practical support to establish placements with providers, including support on these challenging areas:
  - clarity and further guidance from the NDIA around billing when students are involved in delivering part of a participant's NDIS-funded supports
  - a streamlined process for placement preparation for providers
3. All stakeholders working collaboratively to establish and maintain mutually beneficial partnerships
4. Clear, multi-modal and efficient communication practices between all stakeholders
5. Available exemplar supervision models for placement education, as no single supervision model fits all services
6. Providers, Participants and NDIS planners should add value to participant services by considering the design of NDIS plans and support utilisation that may include student-delivered services. NDIS local area coordinators and service planners were not included in this project and will require additional information or training regarding the NDIS policy guidance and range of strategies for NDIS participants considering the inclusion of students in supports purchased through NDIS Plans.