



FIONA MCCULLOUGH

University of Nottingham,
UK

Opportunities to diversify dietetics practice placement opportunities and overcoming the barriers

Abstract:

In the UK it is recommended that dietitians diversify careers and embrace technology advances to optimise emerging role opportunities. Hence students should experience a diverse range of placements, not just clinical. The aim was to establish a process by which all students would experience a non-traditional 2 week practice learning block, within one 12 week practice education block. A range of 20 new placement opportunities were identified, staff approached, then trained and light touch quality assurance put in place prior to students selecting and embarking on the experience. Fifteen placements were added to the database. The range of settings includes freelance dietitians, public health, coaching organisations and charities, which enabled some student choice. Students complete a range of tasks and projects, selected by the placement lead. University staff provide long arm supervision. Additional student and staff resources were developed, and a collaborative and inclusive approach was adopted throughout. Barriers and challenges were also considered. Outcomes and Impact-All students undertook this placement opportunity and successfully progressed to the next stage of training afterwards. Feedback from practice educators indicated good and very good levels of satisfaction with the process, highlighting support from the placement team and the students' strong knowledge and professional approach as particularly outstanding. Student comments were 100% positive. In conclusion, the inclusion and effective embedding of a non-traditional, compulsory practice education block has enhanced our dietetic students experience of the variety of potential dietetics' workplace settings and has been positively embraced by both students and clinical practice educators.

Biography

Fiona McCullough is the Professor of Dietetics at Nottingham, where she has been leading dietetics education for over 20 years. She completed a PhD on vitamin A deficiency in children and has research metabolic syndrome and non-communicable disease, alongside curriculum development and innovation. Fiona is a past chairperson on the British Dietetic Association.