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CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

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Key steps in pre-course planning for ‘Nurse Practitioner’

Deakin University, a regional University with a city campus at Burwood, commenced the Master of Nursing Practice (Nurse Practitioner) in 2006 as an off-campus course following accreditation by the Nurses Board of Victoria (NBV). The course guidelines of the NBV and its defined categories of ‘Nurse Practitioner’ (NP) are therefore, adhered to. We acknowledge that while endorsement as a NP is often the focal point for candidates, careful consideration of future directions for this very important role is also required. Potential applicants and their organisations are recommended to ask themselves the following questions. Will the endorsed NP enhance existing services? Second, will the NP offer new services or assist in meeting changes to service demands such as those for the ageing population and where there is increased incidence of chronic disease? Third, will there be a move to an increase of ambulatory models of service delivery? While these questions may be obvious ones, it is our experience that they have not always been considered by either applicants or their organisations. Our advice for potential applicants for the Master of Nursing Practice (Nurse Practitioner) include for example, identification of a need for a NP role in the workplace and a congruence between the NP role and their employer/organisation’s strategic direction. It is critical the organisation has capacity to provide support of the NP candidate at both unit and executive levels; access to patient/client care for the development of extended practice and support from other health professionals in the form of mentorship. Further, it is recommended strong collaborative relationships are developed between education providers and organisations to ensure graduates are adequately prepared for NP endorsement. NPs are expected to be leaders and clinical experts and they deserve the best possible support during their course.