

Vanuatu Initiative for Improving Nursing Education (VIINE) – Phase 3
Provision of technical support to strengthen nursing education and practice

Brief 2: Visit to Port Vila, Vanuatu 23-26 June 2025

Background

The Vanuatu College of Nursing Education (VCNE), under the Vanuatu Ministry of Health's Corporate Services, is working towards registration and accreditation of undergraduate degrees in nursing. VCNE's key priority for this work is to review and implement the Bachelor of Nursing (BN) (Conversion) and review and upgrade the existing Diploma of Nursing to a BN. This includes the development of teaching and clinical guides and ensuring both curriculums meet the national qualification standards.

Phase 1, commencing in 2018, involved the design, development and submission for the accreditation of the BN (Conversion) and the delivery of the BN (Conversion) course to the first cohort of VCNE tutors and Vila Central Hospital (VCH) senior clinical nurses. Twenty (20) students graduated in 2020, however there has been no further intake of BN cohorts due to the major disruptions caused by COVID-19.

Phase 2 focused on the preparation and development of subject components for the proposed three-year BN course at that time, and submission of associated accreditation documentation to the Vanuatu Qualifications Authority (VQA). Mentoring of VCNE staff throughout this process was included as part of faculty development.

Building on the previous phases of the project, Phase 3 commenced in April 2025 to review existing courses to comply with accreditation requirements. This includes revising and upgrading the BN (Conversion) curriculum, review of the

three year BN curriculum and expanding this into a four-year accredited course with teaching and clinical guides for semesters 2 to 8. The team from the WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Development at the University of Technology Sydney (WHO CCNM UTS) are providing ongoing technical support to VCNE to assist them with delivery to the first cohorts of undergraduate nursing students, and enrolment of students into the BN Conversion program.

Purpose

This brief provides an update on recent activities of the Vanuatu Initiative for Improving Nursing Education (VIINE) following the signing of the contract in April 2025.

Professor Di Brown from WHO CCNM UTS visited Vanuatu on 23rd-26th June 2025. The purpose of the visit was to:

1. Finalise and deliver a clinical teaching workshop for clinical instructors who will be supporting students in the Advanced Diploma of Nursing;
2. Commence development of clinical assessment tools for use by VCNE, students and clinical instructors;
3. Conduct a Clinical Course Advisory Committee (CCAC) Meeting for the BN (Conversion);
4. Update key partners on the project progress to date.

Day 1 Tuesday 24th June:

Meeting with VCNE Principal Evelyne Emile & Quality Coordinator Keliza Maialong.

An initial meeting was held with the VCNE Principal to plan and agree on the program for the visit. The

need for an invitation letter from the Deputy General of Health was discussed to enable WHO CCNM UTS staff to organise business visas for future visits.

Prof Di then met with the VCNE clinical teaching team to finalise plans for the clinical teaching workshop planned for Wednesday 25 June.



Di Brown with Rosaria Maurice, Ptilyn Fangaria, Johanne Thain, and Nevaline Samson - VCNE Clinical Teaching Team.

Day 2 Wednesday 25th June

Meeting with the Clinical Course Advisory Committee (CCAC)

The BN (Conversion) CCAC met to review the revised BN (Conversion) program and to provide feedback regarding the proposed structure, subjects and outcomes. There was discussion about the value of having a part-time program to enable staff to continue to work in their roles whilst undertaking the program.

It was suggested that there be two cohorts of participants enrolled in the semesters to enable more staff to attend these intensive schools. The need to take the program to the outer islands to make it more accessible was also raised.

Clinical Course Advisory Committee Meeting

Positive outcomes agreed from the meeting were as follows:

- The BN (Conversion) program will be conducted as a mixed-mode offering. This allows students to attend two intensive classes in each semester and then study remotely. This

will enable participants to continue their work roles and not deplete the workforce in any prolonged way.

- It was also agreed that the program would be offered in two sites: Port Vila and Santo. This will reduce staff travel time, increase program accessibility and increase the numbers of enrolments.



Meeting with the Clinical Course Advisory Committee (CCAC).

Clinical Teaching Workshop

This was attended by thirty-one (31) nurses (19 females 14 males) from a range of health facilities. The group included registered nurses, nurse managers, hospital supervisors and clinical educators. The purpose of the workshop was to:

1. Clarify the role of the Clinical Instructor (CI) and how it differs from the role of the Nurse Educator;
2. Understand the ways students learn and how best to assist them to learn on clinical placements;
3. Evaluate how prepared workshop participants feel for the role of CI;
4. Review assessment standards and practices;
5. Evaluate current practices for managing failing students.



Participants at the Clinical Teaching Workshop

Initial feedback indicated that the workshop was very well received. Participants found the information and teaching and learning processes interesting and useful.



Participants at the Clinical Teaching Workshop

Discussions about the role and expectations of a CI clarified expectations from both VCNE and clinical sides. Time spent analysing student learning and how this can be maximised on clinical placements was also valuable with participants reporting that they felt more informed about what is needed from CIs and how to better support student learning.

Evaluations at the end of the workshop indicated a need for further similar workshops. As a result, a further workshop was provisionally planned for September 2025 before the first group of students go to the clinical settings.



Emele Duituturaga GEDSI Support Office, Di Brown and Berlinerose Nimbtik GEDSI Advisor

Day 3 Thursday 26th June

Meeting with Berlinerose Nimbtik, GEDSI Advisor Vanuatu Health Partnership (VAHP):

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss current activities in relation to GEDSI and its integration into the BN (Conversion) program. To gain advice

and support from Ms Berlinerose and VAHP to identify suitable representatives from Organisations for People with Disabilities (OPDs) who could be part of course advisory committees and subject development advisory groups.

Meeting with DFAT

Ms Mary Hay, DFAT Health Advisor and Ms Patricia Fred from the Australian High Commission came to VCNE to spend time with the staff to hear their views on the clinical workshop conducted on Wednesday and feedback about how the program is going.

Further Meeting with clinical teaching team VCNE

Prof Di Brown met with the VCNE clinical teaching team to discuss details of the proposed clinical assessment and clinical competency standards. They discussed the format of the assessment criteria, how clinical practice will be marked and how clinical instructors can be evaluated by students.



Meeting with clinical teaching team VCNE

Meeting with Ms Harriet Sam, Principal Nursing Officer (PNO)

The purpose of this meeting was for Prof. Di Brown to update Ms Sam on the project activities to date, and to develop a communication strategy between VCNE and the PNO to ensure that both partners are aware of current and future program activities.

Next steps

1. The VCNE will finalise the BN (Conversion) document for submission to the Vanuatu Nursing Council and Vanuatu Qualifications Authority (VQA) for approval.

2. WHO CCNM UTS will continue to work with the clinical team to further develop clinical logbooks, clinical standards and competency frameworks for use in the revised Diploma program.
3. WHO CCNM UTS team will continue to work with the VCNE staff on developing the subjects in the Advanced Diploma of Nursing to ensure they are ready to teach as soon as the semester starts.
4. A further visit will occur in July 2025 and in the meantime online meetings and support will continue.

