

VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Occupational Health and Safety Mentor
Assignment Modality	Standard
Assignment Number	41872
Country	Solomon Islands
Location	Honiara
Partner Organisation	National Referral Hospital
Duration	9 months

Sustainable Development Goals



1. Partner Organisation Overview

The National Referral Hospital (NRH) provides secondary to tertiary health care services to the people and visitors of Solomon Islands. The catchment of the hospital is the total population of the country. The NRH function is designated as secondary care with some tertiary health care services. The NRH has 49 departments and units with 5 proposed new subspecialists (ICU, cardiac unit, renal, ENT & dermatology). Whilst most departments are direct patient care, some are for corporate services and non-clinical public health services. The Solomon Islands Government's overall goal is to meet the minimum standards for Universal Health Coverage in the next decades.

In 2019, the estimated population was 721,000 that is expected to reach 740,934 people in 2020. With around 300 beds available at the NRH, it is estimated to be lower than the national average bed per 1,000 populations of 0.4 and far lower than WHO standard of 5/ 1000 population.

The National Referral Hospital is the major hospital in the country. It admits the largest number of patients around 14,000 per year. The hospital has a nursing education programme that supports the professional development of nurses.

The NRH is seeking a volunteer to support with occupational health and safety.

2. Assignment Overview

The Department of Occupational Health and Safety was recently restructured with a new team of two nursing staff. Occupational Health and Safety is a new area of expertise that staff have had very little previous experience in. An Occupational Health and Safety Mentor is required to help guide and direct the team so that they are able to understand occupational health and safety, and can support staff in the different departments.



The Occupational Health and safety team works closely with the Infection Prevention and Control team to monitor staff hospital acquired infections and patient hospital acquired infections. The challenge is that currently there is little structure or scope for the staff team and there are no defined safety and quality standards in the hospital setting.

3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

Goal

National Referral Hospital staff and patients are safe and healthier based on improved patient handling techniques to reduce unintended staff injuries or accidents.

Outcome 1

NRH OHS staff are making decisions on steps to be taken to contribute to the health and wellbeing of all NRH staff.

Working alongside the OHS team leader and staff;

- Observe and work alongside OHS staff to gain understanding of current practices;
- Review current OHS practices, policies and procedures (both written and verbally communicated in line with legislation and hospital guidelines);
- Gain understanding of work-related injuries, and sick leave opportunities for staff;
- Document patient and staff related medical errors and process for addressing these;
- Assist with data collection to assess safety and quality levels of care
- Provide a report with recommendations on steps to be taken to improve occupational health and safety.

Outcome 2

OHS staff are receiving training and mentoring on OHS quality standards, policies and procedures.

- Assist in developing the basic structure and scope of role of the Occupation Health and Safety staff;
- Assist in the development of safety and quality standards in the hospital;
- Develop a process to assess and address medical errors in relation to the process of performing a role, rather than the technical medical requirements of the role.
- Assist in the development of a plan for healthcare quality improvements and initiatives
- Develop training resources on OHS for specific roles.
- Develop safety and quality standards, policies and procedures to do with OHS.
- Design templates, processes and procedures for activities such as health promotion to highlight relevant health and safety issues, health assessments for existing and/or potential employees, perform health assessments on employees whose work area or practices are identified as risky;
- Develop resources to provide information and advice on OHS to staff and how and to whom to make referrals to.

Outcome 3

NRH has staff and patients are safe and healthier.

- Provide training and mentoring to staff in the OHS and other teams to ensure there is understanding of OHS throughout the hospital.
- Support OHS staff in socialisation of safety and quality standards, policies and procedures.
- Support staff to develop and strengthen relationships with key departments including pharmacy, infection prevention and control, laboratory, medical and surgical teams.



- Help with organising the current system for monitoring and managing hospital staff on assessment
- Support staff to organise their workplace for ergonomics and efficiency
- Support OHS team to provide written and verbal reports.

4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

The volunteer will work closely with the Department of Occupational Health and Safety staff. The volunteer will be supervised by the Infection Prevention & Control Nurse Manager and be accountable to Director of Nursing.

The volunteer will support professional development of NRH staff by sharing knowledge, supporting in-house training and development, and provide on the job mentoring as appropriate.

The volunteer and NRH will have an ongoing relationship with the VSA Programme Manager in terms of assignment monitoring, reporting, professional advice and personal support.

As needs on the ground may change over time, the volunteer is encouraged to review and update the Assignment Description on arrival in consultation with the partner organisation and VSA Programme Manager. By their very nature, development situations can involve significant change, so it is advisable that the volunteer periodically reviews and reflects on the Assignment Description throughout the Assignment to ensure the best development outcomes are being achieved.

5. Selection Criteria/Position Requirements

Professional Specifications

Essential

- Have a medical qualification or related field, or qualification in occupational health and safety
- At least three years' experience in OHS in a hospital or care facility
- Experience developing quality and safety standards
- Ability to analyse and report on data

Desirable

- Experience mentoring and conducting on-the-job training
- Past experience working in a Melanesian country or context where there are limited resources

Personal Specification

Essential

- Willingness to learn and speak pijin
- Mature and experience working with people from different cultures.
- Excellent problem-solving abilities.
- Great organisational and communication skills.
- Friendly and flexible
- Transparent
- Easy to work with and allows constructive critique of their work.
- Supportive and inspiring.



6. VSA Essential Attributes

- Commitment to volunteering, to VSA and to the partner organisation
- Cross cultural awareness
- Adaptability and a willingness to approach change or newness positively
- Able to form good relationships, both personally and professionally, with work colleagues and in the community
- Resilience and an ability to manage setbacks
- Initiative and resourcefulness
- An ability to facilitate learning through skills exchange

7. Country Context

For more information, see <https://vsa.org.nz/what-we-do/countryregion/solomon-islands/>.

8. Living and Working Situation

Honiara is the business centre of Solomon Islands and as such is a melting pot for people from all the island groups that make up the diverse nation. A hot and dusty place, Honiara offers most facilities albeit in a rudimentary form. You are strongly encouraged to build relationships in the local community and socialise with Solomon Islanders at every opportunity, as this will enrich your experience of living in Solomons. However, entertainment options are few and far between so there is also a very active expatriate social scene. There are various clubs and social groups in Honiara, which you will get to know with time.

VSA will provide basic, furnished accommodation with gas facilities for cooking. In Honiara, you will have access to power (although power outages can occur), phone, internet, piped water, restaurants, a variety of shops and a large expatriate population. Public transport is very cheap within Honiara. The local bus service is provided by a plethora of vans, and some larger buses. A single fare of SBD3 applies, regardless of the length of the trip. Taxis charge a moderate fare (currently SBD10 per kilometre) but it is wise to establish a fare before commencing a journey.

Most volunteers feel safe in Solomon Islands, but it is important to know the risks and take personal responsibility for your safety. As in many countries, foreigners tend to be the target of petty crime, so always be alert and take precautions. In general, there are no problems moving around the majority of Honiara during the day, but it is not safe to walk or catch public transport alone in Honiara after dark.

Additional Information

Residency status

VSA volunteers must be New Zealand citizens or have New Zealand permanent residency status, and currently living in NZ.

Pre-departure briefing

As part of the volunteer's contract, successful candidates will be required to take part in a pre-departure briefing course run by VSA in Wellington and complete all required pre-reading.

Final appointment

Final appointment will be subject to satisfactory medical and immigration clearances (costs covered by VSA), partner organisation acceptance, and successful completion of the pre-departure briefing course.



Family status

VSA supports partners to accompany volunteers on assignments of six months or longer. However, volunteers with accompanying dependents will not be considered for this assignment.

Fundraising

VSA funding stakeholders are both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and donors. We ask volunteers and accompanying partners to fundraise to help cover the cost of sending volunteers throughout the Pacific and beyond. Fundraising can be as simple as doing something you enjoy with a group or friends, and our Fundraising team is available to help you every step of the way.

Vaccination requirements

Potential volunteers are advised that VSA's insurers require volunteers to be vaccinated, prior to departure, in accordance with the instructions of VSA's medical adviser. VSA covers the cost of any required vaccinations.

Children's Act

While on assignment, VSA volunteers may be required to work with children and/or may choose to participate in informal activities in their own time that involve interactions with children (such as coaching teams or teaching English). VSA is committed to the protection of vulnerable children and adults, which also includes meeting our commitment under the Children's Act 2014.

The information requested during the application process is necessary to assist VSA to determine applicant suitability to work and/or interact regularly with children, and is part of a series of pre-selection checks undertaken on all applicants for VSA assignments.

Volunteer package

The volunteer's package includes the following:

Reimbursements and grants

1. Volunteers will receive an establishment grant of NZ\$375 to help them set up in their country of assignment. For volunteers with an accompanying partner (whether or not that partner is also a VSA volunteer), VSA will pay an establishment grant of NZ\$550 per couple.
2. A resettlement grant of NZ\$200 will be paid for each month the volunteer is on assignment. This is payable on completion of the assignment.
3. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of SBD7,500.

Accommodation

Basic, comfortable furnished accommodation will be sourced by VSA. In some circumstances volunteers may be asked to share accommodation.

Airfares and baggage allowance

VSA will provide the volunteer with economy airfares to and from New Zealand for their assignment plus a baggage allowance.

Insurance

VSA will provide travel insurance to cover baggage and personal property, and non-routine medical expenses for the duration of the assignment. Further details of the insurance cover will be provided during the volunteer pre-departure briefing.



Utilities

VSA will reimburse volunteers reasonable expenses for household utilities while on assignment.

Final terms and conditions relating to the specific volunteer assignment will be confirmed in a personalised volunteer contract.

