

VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Emergency Senior Medical Officers
Assignment Modality	In-country
Assignment Number	41995
Country	Samoa
Location	Tupua Tamasese Meaole (TTM) Hospital - Upolu Island
Partner Organisation	Ministry of Health
Duration	6 - 12 months (will consider 3 months)
Sustainable Development Goals	

1. Partner Organisation Overview

Ministry of Health (MOH) is a core government organisation in Samoa, that employs over 1400 employees with a core mandate to deliver health care services for Samoa. The vision of MOH is to “accelerate health and well-being for a healthy Samoa.” The mission is to provide comprehensive people-centred health care services through delivery of preventative, promotive, curative and rehabilitation services whilst empowering the people of Samoa to take ownership of their own health. MOH was formerly known as the Department of Health established under the provisions of the Health Ordinance Act 1959. MOH delivers a plethora of services to achieve our goals and vision as mandated through our MOH Act 2006 – this mandate includes and is not limited to public health services, health promotion, secondary and tertiary care, environmental health services etc.

The mission of MOH is to provide comprehensive people-centred health care services through delivery of preventative, promotive, curative and rehabilitation services whilst empowering the people of Samoa to take ownership of their own health. In our current Health Sector Plan 2020/21 to 22/23 (currently under review) lists 7 underlying key outcomes (KO’s);

1. Improved health systems.
2. Improved prevention, control, and management of communicable and neglected tropical diseases.
3. Improved prevention, control, and management of non-communicable diseases
4. Improved sexual & reproductive health.
5. Improved maternal and child health.
6. Improved healthy living through health promotion and primordial prevention.
7. Improved risk management and response to disasters, public health emergencies and climate change.

2. Assignment Overview

The challenges that MOH is faced with in which this volunteer assignment can assist with are;

- Limited formal training pathways in Emergency Medicine available regionally – as such there is an ongoing need for training and mentorship for our Drs who choose the emergency medicine pathway.
- Funding limitations. Having an in-country expert would greatly assist us in training and equipping our workforce rather than having to invest large amounts of funds in sending a trainee overseas.

- Identifying the current level of knowledge and expertise in the existing emergency care workforce –building upon competencies expected so skill sets for the doctors are of sound professional standards.
- Reviewing the Emergency Department (ED) treatment guidelines and protocols to ensure they are up to date, evidence based and relevant.
- Emergency clinicians need ready access to expert supervision and advice. This has been problematic because of limited senior clinicians in a busy environment.

Emergency Medical specialists and emergency senior medical officers volunteering in-country can assist by building the capacities and training local staff through one-on-one/team sessions, or on the job training and mentoring. Being available on-site at our ED would enable the training and support for existing ED personnel, increasing confidence for the staff in their current skill sets, knowledge base and subsequent management of patients;

- Strengthen referral pathways between General Outpatients & ED, as well as between ED and the inpatient wards.
- Strengthen workforce capability through supervision of emergency trainees and nurses currently undertaking post graduate training in emergency care.
- Strengthen referral pathways between the rural district hospitals and ED.
- Strengthen communication and referral pathways between ED and other partner organisations such as the Samoa Fire & Emergency Services (SFESA), Samoa Red Cross etc.

3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

Goal

The Ministry of Health will be strengthened in the following areas;

- A confident and capable front-line Emergency Department (ED) staff with sound practise.
- Increased confidence in approach and management of patients that present to the emergency department.
- Strengthened ED systems and processes through updated guidelines and referral pathways.
- Strengthened relationships with ED and other in hospital specialties.
- Strengthened relationships with ED and the community.
- Skilled and efficient ED staff who are confident and efficient in operating within the parameters of the formulated guidelines.

Outcome 1

Current ED staff are adequately supported by the Emergency Senior Medical Officer through quality training programmes, mentoring and professional development.

Alongside Senior ED staff;

- Conduct a review of all currently available training programs and educational material.
- Assess the competencies of each staff member, (ie. strengths / areas for improvement) setting about measures to work towards improvement.
- Support ED medical staff in their professional development;
 - completing necessary emergency workshops
 - trainings towards attaining an ACEM Diploma
 - relevant qualification
- Train support and mentor staff in the identified areas that require capacity building.

Outcome 2

Current ED staff are skilled in practising evidence-based Emergency Medicine.

Alongside all ED staff;

- Conduct a training needs analysis and provide relevant training sessions to upskill staff.
- Support ED staff to carry out professional clinical practices that are evidence based and current.
- Assist staff to ensure the referral process for ED patients to other inpatient specialities is clinically appropriate and efficient.

- Work collaboratively with other in-hospital departments to ensure patient care is paramount.
- Train support and mentor staff in the identified areas that require capacity building.

Outcome 3

Improved standards in the overall services throughout the Emergency Department - underpinned by a united team. Ongoing mentoring is provided, giving advice and guidance when required.

Alongside all ED staff;

- Plan and conduct team building activities to boost staff unity and morale, leading to better service delivery.
- Encourage constructive feedback from staff on current processes and practises.
- Provide recommendations on how to improve the standard of existing services.
- Develop user friendly guidelines and desk files for future reference and for new staff.
- Train support and mentor staff in the identified areas that require capacity building.

4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

The volunteer will teach and support medical and nursing staff in the ED department through on the job training, individual and team training sessions and mentoring. He/she will work proactively to strengthen relationships with in-patient teams, with the aim to promote a quality service for patients presenting to the ED. Through this partnership, the volunteer will build the capacity of the local staff, as well as improve systems and processes for the department, making the ED operations more efficient.

The volunteer will report directly to the Head of Emergency Department and will be accountable to the Deputy Director General - Hospital & Clinical Services. On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will predominately work with the medical staff in ED.

The volunteer and Ministry of Health 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

- Proven experience in Emergency Medicine.
- Fellow of ACEM or other professional college or Master of Emergency Medicine.
- Fully registered medical practitioner with the Medical Council or equivalent of home country.
- High standard of written and verbal communication.
- Ability to work as an integral member of a multidisciplinary team.
- Ability to maintain professional relationships respectfully - acknowledging the skills of the local staff.
- Demonstrated ability to work flexibly in a constantly changing and challenging environment.
- Proven cultural competency and ability to work in a resource limited setting.

Desirable

- Experience in conducting research in emergency medicine.
- Experience in quality improvement.

- Experience and post-graduate qualifications in clinical teaching.
- An interest in personal professional development
- An interest in promoting a consumer focus for care delivery.

Personal Specifications

Essential

- Ability to adapt to different working and cultural environment.
- Flexibility, patience, and tolerance given the new living/working context and dynamics.
- Willingness to work with limited resources within a challenging environment.
- Strong organisational skills and attention to detail.
- Effective communicator in cross-functional collaborations with all parties.
- Experience and commitment to teamwork, coaching, and mentoring others.
- Ability to cope with cultural isolation and a different standard of living.

Desirable

- Experience living and volunteering in a Pacific nation or other least developing nation.
- Willingness to gain professional and living experience in a developing country.
- Resilience to work well under pressure and with limited resources.
- Positive and proactive attitude in cross-functional collaborations.

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 about Samoa, see [VSA in Samoa](#).

Refer also to the following links;

- Untold History of Samoa: [Untold Pacific History | Episode 3: Samoa - NZ's Colonisation of Samoa & the Mau Movement | RNZ - Bing video](#)
- New Zealand Aid Programme in Samoa: [MFAT NZ & Samoa-4YP.pdf](#)
- Samoa Government Website: [Government of Samoa \(samoagovt.ws\)](#)
- Samoa Tourism Authority: [Samoa Tourism Authority - Corporate Website](#)
- Pocket Guide of Samoa: [A Brief History of Samoa | Samoa Pocket Guide](#)
- Beautiful Samoa: [Uncover the History of Beautiful Samoa | Samoa Tourism](#)

8. Living and Working Situation

VSA Samoa team will source basic, comfortable, and furnished accommodation in a safe location, that is within the budget of the programme, prior to the volunteer's arrival. Although it is rare in Samoa, in some circumstances volunteers may be asked to share accommodation.

The ED is located at the bottom floor of an air conditioned 3-storey building structure. The hospital is situated 5 minutes from the town area and is readily serviced by public transport. There are local shops across the road from the hospital (like Dairy Shops in NZ). Air conditioned with internet access. Shared staff workstation (at the centre of the ED) or shared office with emergency lead.

Additional Information

ST2 Assignment (6-11 months)

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. The volunteer may be entitled to an establishment grant to help them set up in their country of assignment, and a rest and respite grant after a specified period of active service in-country to encourage the volunteer to take a break away from the immediate assignment location. These grants depend on the length and location of the assignment. The volunteer's contract will specify any grant entitlements.
2. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of SAT \$1900.

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.