


VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Clinical Nursing Mentor
Assignment Modality	In-Country
Assignment Number	42065
Country	Papua New Guinea
Location	Kokopo, East New Britain
Partner Organisation	Divine Word University (St Mary's School of Nursing)
Duration	12 Months
Sustainable Development Goals	

1. Partner Organisation Overview

St Mary's School of Nursing, based in Kokopo, East New Britain Province, Papua New Guinea, provides a Diploma in General Nursing programme. This programme enables graduates to register as professional nurses with the Nursing Council of Papua New Guinea. Affiliated with Divine Word University (DWU), the school's nursing programme is accredited by the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology of Papua New Guinea (DHERST).

Divine Word University (DWU) is a highly respected tertiary institution in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific region, renowned for its dedication to value-based teaching and learning, academic excellence, research, social responsibility, diversity, and community engagement. DWU operates multiple campuses and offers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across a wide range of disciplines, including education, business, medicine and health sciences, social sciences, and tourism and hospitality.

The university is deeply committed to providing a superior education that fosters intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth. It equips students with the skills to become responsible leaders and citizens in their communities. DWU has a diverse student body, with students from Papua New Guinea, other Pacific Island countries, and around the world. The university offers a range of services and support to help students succeed, including academic advising, counselling, and career services. DWU is known for its strong commitment to academic excellence, community engagement, and the holistic development of its students, maintaining its reputation as a highly respected institution in Papua New Guinea and the wider Pacific region.

2. Assignment Overview

Papua New Guinea's healthcare sector faces considerable challenges, significantly affecting service delivery and health outcomes. These challenges include high rates of communicable diseases, insufficient healthcare infrastructure, workforce shortages, and geographical barriers. The acute shortage of trained healthcare professionals exacerbates the situation, as many healthcare facilities are under-equipped and lack essential medical supplies. The COVID-19 pandemic has further strained the healthcare system. Enhancing the clinical capacity and capability of healthcare workers, especially nurses, is essential for improving overall healthcare delivery in PNG.

The Clinical Nursing Mentor position is part of a collaborative initiative supported by the VSA Programme in PNG, aimed at enhancing healthcare outcomes through improved clinical capacity and capability among nurses and allied healthcare workers. This initiative focuses on targeted training and mentorship to equip nursing students and healthcare professionals with essential skills for effective patient care. The Clinical Nursing Mentor will provide expert guidance, training, and mentorship to nursing students and healthcare professionals in East New Britain, with the objective of enhancing clinical competencies, improving patient care practices, strengthening healthcare service delivery, and identifying and addressing gaps in clinical nursing education and practice. This volunteer position combines clinical expertise with teaching skills to ensure that nursing students receive high-quality, hands-on learning experiences in real healthcare settings. Whenever practicable, the mentor will also support the strengthening of management and leadership capabilities among healthcare workers to improve service delivery and operational efficiency.

The role of the Clinical Nursing Mentor contributes to nurturing the next generation of nurses and ensuring high standards of care and professionalism in healthcare settings.

3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

Goal

St Mary's School of Nursing enhances its capacity and capability to improve the clinical competencies of nursing students, while also supporting nurses at neighbouring health facilities to enhance their clinical skills and capabilities. This contributes to improved patient care practices and better health outcomes.

Outcome 1

Enhanced Clinical Competencies: Nursing students demonstrate improved clinical competencies, including patient assessment, treatment planning, and intervention skills.

Work collaboratively with St Mary's School of Nursing's teaching staff:

- Conduct needs assessments to identify gaps in clinical nursing education, skills, and practices within healthcare facilities.
- Work with the clinical leadership team, participating local healthcare teams and stakeholders to prioritise areas for improvement and development.
- Provide mentorship and hands-on training to nursing students and healthcare professionals to address identified gaps and enhance clinical skills and competencies.

Outcome 2

Participating students at St Mary's School of Nursing and clinical staff at healthcare facilities have gained knowledge, skills, and understanding of quality improvement in healthcare, focusing on creating a safer environment for patients through enhanced clinical practices, protocols, and patient-centred care.

- Collaborate with healthcare facilities to review and enhance standardised SOPs for clinical practices and patient care protocols, ensuring alignment with best practices in quality improvement and patient safety.
- Facilitate quality improvement sessions in collaboration with students and clinical staff, targeting specific areas such as infection control, medication management, and patient communication.

- Assist in monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of these interventions to gauge their impact on patient safety and clinical outcomes.

4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

The volunteer will be engaged in capacity-building activities for the duration of their assignment, including:

- Capacity strengthening through upskilling, training, and mentoring.
- Training (including demonstrations) to inform and upskill nursing students and clinical staff at other healthcare facilities.
- Transfer of knowledge and skills in real healthcare settings to ensure students gain valuable experience and develop necessary skills.

The volunteer will be accountable to the Head of Nursing Department and work closely with the teaching and learning leadership team, including all relevant staff. Additionally, the volunteer will establish working relationships with people from the Provincial Health Authority and clinical staff from participating health facilities in East New Britain.

The volunteer and St Mary's School of Nursing will maintain an ongoing relationship with the VSA Programme Manager for 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

- Registered Nurse with a valid practising licence and extensive clinical experience in a hospital or healthcare setting.
- Proven track record in clinical mentoring and training, ideally within nursing education or capacity-building programmes.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, capable of effectively mentoring and supporting diverse groups of healthcare professionals.
- Commitment to delivering quality patient care, adhering to evidence-based practice, and pursuing professional development.

Desirable

- Familiarity with healthcare systems and the challenges of resource-constrained environments.
- Previous work experience in any of the Pacific Island nations.

Personal Specifications

Essential

- Excellent relationship management skills (ability to relate well to people from different backgrounds and cultures) combined with a respectful and culturally sensitive demeanour.
- Ability to work independently, possibly remotely, and be self-motivated.
- Solution-oriented.
- Ability to work collegially and collaboratively.
- Patience, flexibility, and tolerance when working in a multicultural context.
- Willingness to learn and use Tok Pisin.

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 Papua New Guinea, see [VSA in Papua New Guinea](#)

8. Living and Working Situation

A furnished house will be provided for the volunteer close (5-10mins drive) to St Mary's School of Nursing, which is located in the centre of Kokopo, down the road from a large supermarket. The volunteer may be required to share accommodation.

The volunteer will need to bring his or her own laptop for work and will have use of an office space situated at one of the participating partner organisations.

Additional Information

Standard Assignment (12 months or more)

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. 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 [living allowance amount] .

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.