



A Career Framework for the Health and Disability Workforce in New Zealand

Consultation document

DHBNZ



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Foreword

I am pleased to ask you to comment on this Career Framework for the Health and Disability Workforce in New Zealand. The Career Framework describes the structure of and progression within the health and disability workforce with the aim of supporting individuals and organisations to develop careers and career pathways, and to inform and improve health and disability workforce planning.

New Zealand's population is ageing, and so is the workforce. We need to think creatively about these issues or the health system will not be able to look after the health and disability needs of New Zealanders. The number of people over 65 in New Zealand is projected to increase from 495,600 (2006 census count) to nearly 800,000 by 2021. The ethnic make-up of New Zealand's population is also changing, with an increase in Māori, Pacific and Asian populations. At the same time many of our current workers will be retiring and there will be a smaller population of younger workers to replace them. All of these drivers mean that we need to find ways to retain and recruit more workers with appropriate education, training and experience and find different ways to provide services.

In September 2006 the Health Workforce Advisory Committee recommended that a Career Framework be developed, in particular to give structure to the unregulated workforce. At the same time the Ministry of Health and District Health Boards were discussing the possibility of a Career Framework for the whole health and disability sector. The project has developed from there.

The Ministry and District Health Boards have undertaken preliminary consultation with the sector on building the Career Framework. This has involved regional sector workshops and consultation with individual stakeholder groups that have informed the development of this document. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of all the people who have participated in developing the Career Framework.

I encourage you to comment on this consultation document.

Hon Pete Hodgson
Minister of Health

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1 Introduction

This discussion document proposes a Career Framework for the health and disability sector. Development of the Career Framework has been jointly led by District Health Boards (DHBs), as part of their Future Workforce programme, and by the Ministry of Health. The draft framework presented here is based on significant input from key sector stakeholders at three regional workshops held in November 2006, and on subsequent discussion with a range of sector groups. Sector feedback has been supportive of the Career Framework concept.

The Career Framework describes the structure of and progression within the health and disability workforce with the aim of:

- supporting individuals and organisations to develop careers and career pathways
- informing and improving health and disability workforce planning.

The Career Framework is one of a number of initiatives that will guide workforce planning and development in the health and disability sector. Other initiatives include the Health Workforce Information Programme (HWIP), the health careers brand, and the review of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003. The Career Framework will also help to align the career pathway development objectives contained within national, regional and local health and disability workforce strategies and action plans (eg, public health and mental health workforce development plans). These, together with other initiatives, provide a comprehensive set of tools supporting health and disability workforce development.

Changing service needs and a changing workforce

People are our greatest asset – *the* most important resource in the health and disability sector. Effective workforce and careers planning is essential to support and retain the present health workforce and to attract future health workers to the sector.

The current and foreseeable environment clearly indicates workforce supply and demand challenges. In their 2004 report, *Ageing New Zealand Health and Disability Services: Demand projections and workforce implications, 2001–2021*, the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research signalled that future health and disability sector workforce shortages are likely. Unless we think and act differently about workforce planning, and about supporting and developing staff, we will not be able to meet the future demand for services.

This increased demand for services is being driven by an ageing population, increased complexity of need, a predominance of chronic illness management, consumer choice, lifestyle factors and technological developments.

As New Zealand's population ages, health and disability services are increasingly dominated by the need to effectively manage long-term conditions. This has major implications for future service delivery and for the health workforce. A different health and disability workforce is required, one that is capable of working in new ways to meet changing demands.

Not only is the population ageing but so is the workforce. An ageing workforce creates an environment that requires a more systematic approach to planning for and supporting our workforce to ensure sustainable services. The retirement of the existing workforce will reduce the available pool of workers – both nationally and internationally – and will impact on the entire workforce pool, not just the health and disability workforce. Attracting workers of all ages is an increasing concern.

Significant changes to the ethnic composition of New Zealand's population are projected, and this will have an impact on both the services required and the workforce needed to provide those services. It is important that our future health and disability workforce reflects the population they support and care for. For example, although progress has been made, Māori practitioners currently make up only 2.7 percent of the medical workforce and 7 percent of the nursing workforce, compared to 15 percent of the population who identify as Māori. Similarly, for Pacific people the figures are 1.1 percent and 3 percent for medicine and nursing respectively (currently 6.9 percent of New Zealand's population identify as of Pacific origin). There is also a need for workforce participation to reflect New Zealand's increasing Asian population.

To meet changing population health needs and future service demand, the health and disability workforce will need to become more flexible and responsive. There will be a need for new ways of working together, extended scopes of practice, new types of practitioner and new roles. Achieving change will involve DHBs and the Ministry working closely with all parts of the health sector as well as with providers of education and training.

To attract and recruit the future health workforce, strongly and visibly positioning health and disability careers in an increasingly competitive labour market will be a key strategy. Attracting and retaining workers of all ages and developing our existing workers is a high priority. We also need to make health and disability careers accessible and appealing to a wider range of people who may not previously have considered working in the sector.

New Zealand's health and disability sector is characterised by a diverse workforce made up of many occupations. This diversity is essential to be able to provide the range of services required to meet population health outcomes. The diverse workforce groups in the sector work alongside each other and value and acknowledge each other's unique contribution, but also have some cross-over of shared competencies.

New scopes of practice and new workforce configurations will be required in future to meet changing demands, but adjusting these configurations can be constrained by existing ways of doing things. New approaches and co-ordinated workforce development are needed *now* to grow and develop our workforce effectively and efficiently. Some occupational groups have already made significant progress in developing career pathways, acknowledging the importance of a structured approach to career and competency development. These have been designed for specific occupational groups, generally developed in isolation from the wider workforce.

Career pathway development is very important for all sections of the workforce, but there are benefits to this happening in a more 'joined up' way. The Career Framework will be used to coherently map workforce groups and positions; illustrate relationships between core educational requirements, scopes of practice and levels of expertise; and incorporate existing occupational groups' frameworks.

2 Developing a Framework

This consultation document outlines the core components of a proposed Career Framework as a beginning point for discussion and future development. Once we have settled on an initial framework concept, more detailed work will be needed to develop and enable it to be applied in the sector. The next stages of the Career Framework project are detailed in section 4, 'Ongoing Development of the Career Framework', on page 15.

Sector feedback has emphasised that the Career Framework should:

- enable responsiveness to population needs
- be community and consumer centred
- value diversity
- include all health and disability workforces
- be nationally recognised and sustainable
- build on current strengths
- be future focused
- be simple, clear and transparent.

A career framework for all?

A key principle identified by many sector stakeholders was that the Career Framework should be developed to be inclusive of all workers in the New Zealand health and disability sector. This includes clinical and non-clinical workers, in both disability and health and the regulated and unregulated workforces, and covers management and leadership roles.

A universal Career Framework will help to ensure workforce development is not constrained by current workforce configurations. For example, community workers in disability, mental health, public health and care for the older person have some common competencies. Mapping these roles will not only recognise their unique contributions, but will also identify shared competencies and open up opportunities for professional development and career progression. Assisting people with common skills to move into a different or new area while recognising and valuing their current skills and shared competencies could be a key retention tool for this workforce.

Some groups were split on the issue of who the Career Framework should cover and whether New Zealand needs two frameworks – one for disability and one for health. There was also a division over whether both clinical and non-clinical roles ought to be included. This paper supports the view that the Career Framework should be universal. Coverage is a fundamental issue in developing a Career Framework.

1. What are your views on a universal Career Framework for health and disability workers?

Proposed career framework principles

Sector feedback has identified a number of core principles to be incorporated in the Career Framework. It was emphasised that the principles need to support and develop the flexibility of health and disability careers, provide for multiple entry points to the workforce, describe the development of competence, and enable career choices. The proposed core principles of the Career Framework are to:

- show progression through learning and competency pathways
- recognise shared competencies and transportability across workforces
- enable new types of worker and new and overlapping roles between occupational groups
- enable multiple points of entry and movement between workforce groups
- value knowledge and skills by recognising competency and prior learning
- recognise the unique bodies of knowledge held by individual professions.

2. Do you agree with the principles on page 9?

3. Are there any principles that are missing and should be added?

4. Are there any principles that should be removed?

What will the Career Framework be used for?

The Career Framework will be used to:

- support individuals and organisations in the development of careers and career pathways
- inform and improve health and disability workforce planning.

Careers development

The Career Framework will be a resource for those involved in marketing health and disability careers when developing materials profiling the health and disability sector as an attractive career option. People may use future versions of the Framework to help them consider and plan their career in the sector.

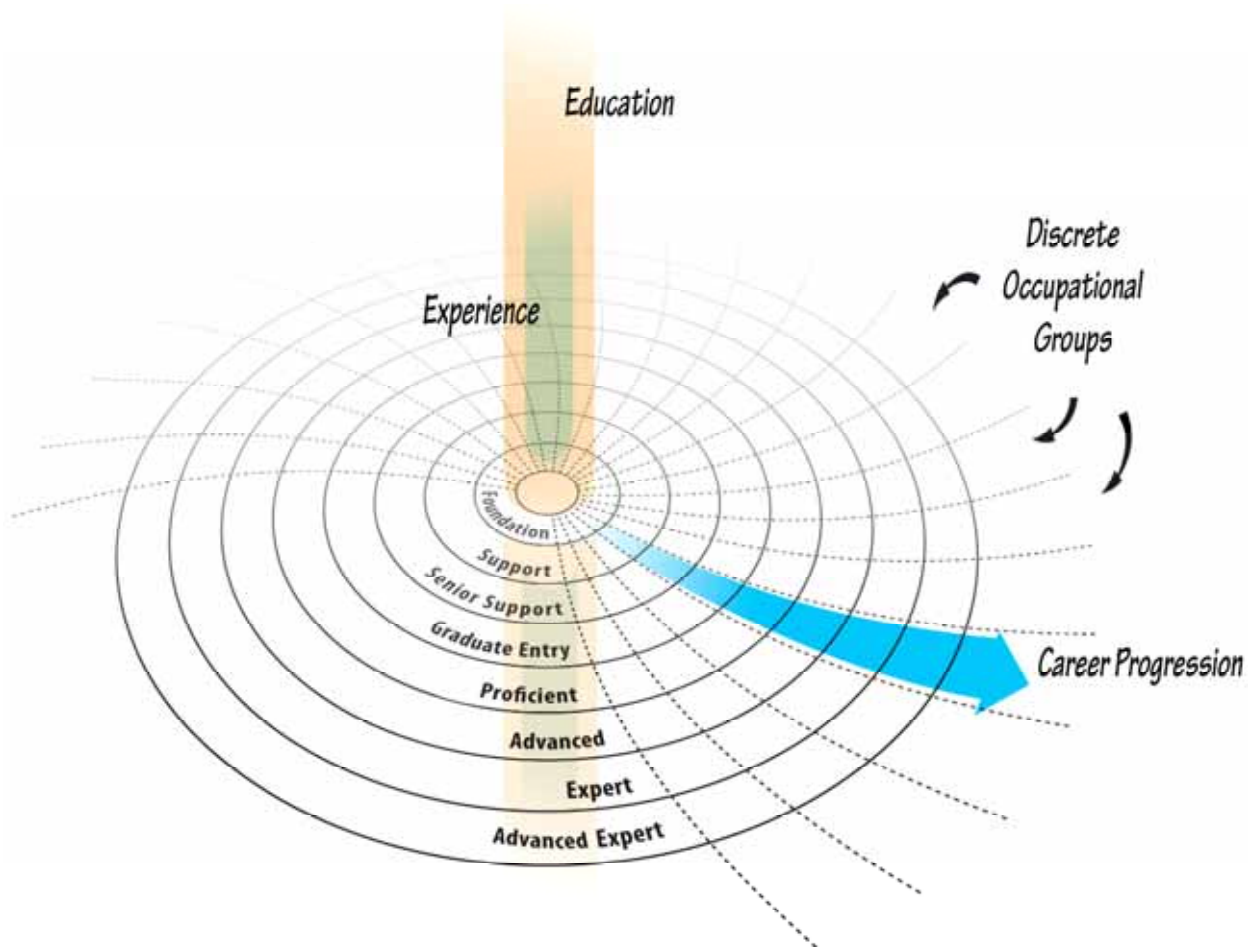
Workforce planning

The Career Framework will be able to be used at the local, regional and national level for workforce planning by supporting service development. For example, the Framework could be used to describe the range of occupational groups and competency mix of staff required for a specific service. Regulatory authorities could use the framework to link competency development to professional pathways, providing consistency across professional groups. Health and disability policy makers could use the Framework to provide advice to the education sector on the effective structuring and delivery of training programmes, by, for example supporting the recognition of prior learning and current competence.

3 The Career Framework

The Career Framework must reflect the wide range of occupations that provide career opportunities in the health and disability sector. It needs to demonstrate the array of career opportunities and to capture the complexity of the health and disability sector in a simple and understandable way. This represents a challenge. Progression and linkages within the Career Framework can best be represented pictorially.

Figure 1: Career Framework overview



A Career Framework for all

The overall concept of the Career Framework is depicted in Figure 1 above. The circular design captures the connectedness of the workforce. Each segment represents a discrete occupational group (eg, medical radiation technologists, nurses, care and support workers, doctors, and clerical workers). As emphasised by sector consultation, the circular concept reduces any tendency to hierarchy while still acknowledging separate occupational groupings.

The core of education and experience

The Career Framework explicitly recognises the dynamic relationship between education and experience. In the diagram these are shown as an inner core. Note that education includes both formal and informal learning. The Framework also explicitly recognises current competence and prior learning. Both education and experience influence opportunities for movement along career pathways, and this continues throughout an individual's working life.

Career progression

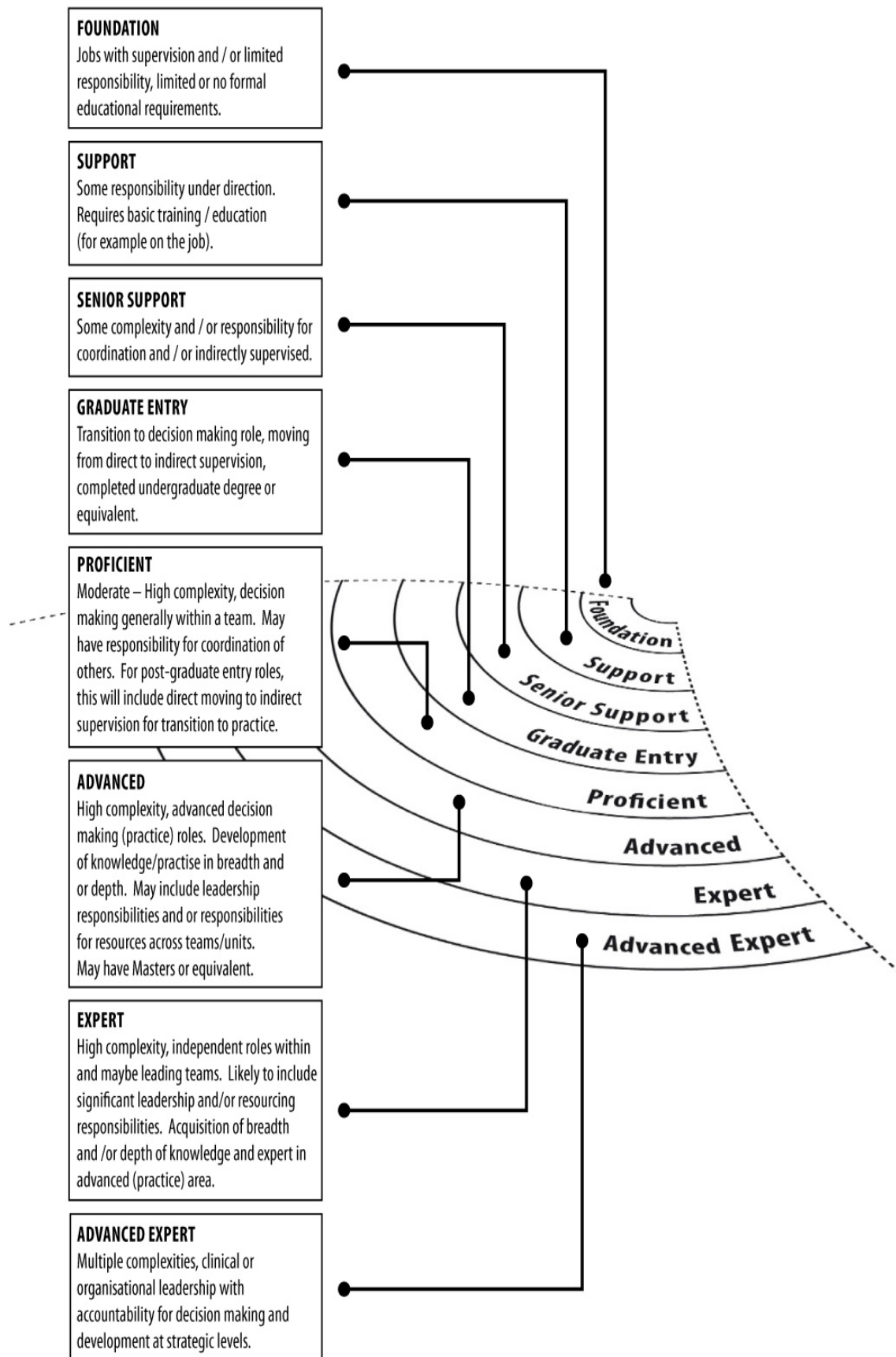
The Career Framework adopts a beginner-to-expert pathway, as shown by the concentric bands in Figure 1. The eight Career Framework bands reflect differing levels of expertise, practice, and professional and educational competencies. The bands are broadly aligned to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) framework. The NZQA framework defines these educational levels, but it is important to remember that some people's careers progress mainly through the development of competence based on experience. Currently, occupational groups do not necessarily describe career progression on a novice-to-expert continuum.

Linking into the NZQA framework and other external standards will enable appropriate recognition and understanding of equivalence between roles where there are similar levels of competencies. Identifying equivalence of education and experience in extended roles is particularly important when planning for new services, especially to bridge workforce gaps, and to allow individuals to identify points of entry and opportunities for movement within and between workforce groups. The Career Framework will also enable the identification of shared competencies between workforce groups. Progression in the Career Framework is further described in Figure 2 below.

The concept underlying the Career Framework is that the development of a health and disability sector worker will no longer necessarily follow a traditional linear progression. Development will be more of a mix, with workers moving between education/training and paid employment/unpaid work, in order to achieve a work/leisure/lifestyle balance.

The eight bands in Figure 2 describe increasing complexity and levels of responsibility linked to learning and career experience. For example, foundation roles are characterised by 'on the job' learning. Entry can either be as a school leaver, or as a worker from outside the health and disability sector. The foundation worker may undertake educational and workplace training that results in undergraduate-level qualifications (eg, certificates or diplomas). Examples of these roles are pharmacy assistant, disability support worker and needs assessor.

Figure 2: Bands with level descriptors



Many workers enter the health and disability workforce with undergraduate degrees as graduate-entry workers. Typically the graduate-entry worker enters their first year of practice as a candidate in an intern or new graduate programme. In clinical roles these programmes usually lead to registration to practise by the professional organisation regulating that workforce group. For the graduate entry workers, like foundation workers, competency development occurs through practice and 'on the job' training. In addition, the graduate-entry worker may undertake educational, professional and workplace training which results in postgraduate-level equivalent qualifications (eg, postgraduate certificates, diplomas or professional qualifications, masters and doctoral qualifications). Managerial and policy positions often have similar development pathways.

In some occupational groups workers progress into bands at more senior levels without completing a degree.

The Framework offers flexible transition across career bands. For example, a care and support worker undertaking an undergraduate programme to become a registered health practitioner could expect to have the competencies gained as a foundation worker recognised on entry to an undergraduate programme. Alternatively, some workers may choose to broaden and deepen their practice without engaging in graduate-level work.

5. We would appreciate your comments about the design of the Framework. It may help you to consider this under the following headings:

- a) the use of the circular design to capture the depth and breadth of the workforce without being too hierarchical**
- b) the division of the workforce into eight bands**
- c) the wording of the descriptors**
- d) any other comments.**

4 Ongoing Development of the Career Framework

Following development and finalisation of the Career Framework concept there will be a significant implementation phase. The next stages of work are likely to involve:

- identifying and linking the Career Framework to related workforce initiatives (eg, the Health Workforce Information Programme, Pay and Employment Equity and the health careers brand)
- inviting occupational/professional groups to populate the Career Framework to reflect their competency development and progression pathways
- identifying a representative sample of occupational roles that can be mapped to reflect competency levels within and across bands, including a moderation process.

Development of the next stages of the Career Framework project will require significant ongoing engagement with the sector.

6. Do you have any suggestions for other work in the next stages of the Career Framework implementation?

5 Next Steps

Consultation

Health and disability sector stakeholders need to be involved with designing the Career Framework if it is to be useful. Already some groups have been involved in developing this consultation document. We are seeking in-depth comment through the consultation held on this document, which will run from mid-June to 31 July. To facilitate this process, discussion questions have been included throughout this consultation document. These questions are also attached in a separate document which can be typed onto directly and returned. Please use the template provided to help make the submissions analysis phase manageable. Please send all submissions by 31 July 2007 to:

Career Framework Submissions
PO Box 5013
Wellington
careerframework_submissions@moh.govt.nz

The final document will be completed by 31 October 2007 and work on further project stages as outlined in the previous section can commence.

Career framework project timeframe

The Career Framework project is an ongoing piece of work. The key phases of stage 1 of the project are summarised below.

Phase	Action	Time scale
Phase 1: Scoping	Preliminary consultation workshops with the sector Analysis of November 2006 workshops	November 2006 January 2007
Phase 2: Document creation	Selected sector consultation on project Development of the Career Framework discussion document	March/April 2007 April 2007
Phase 3: Cabinet	Discussion document to Cabinet	June 2007
Phase 4: Consultation	Sector-wide consultation on draft Analysis of submissions	June 2007 August 2007
Phase 5: Final document	Final draft of Career Framework DHBNZ Workforce Group sign off Cabinet approval Publish final document	September 2007 October 2007 October 2007 October 2007

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