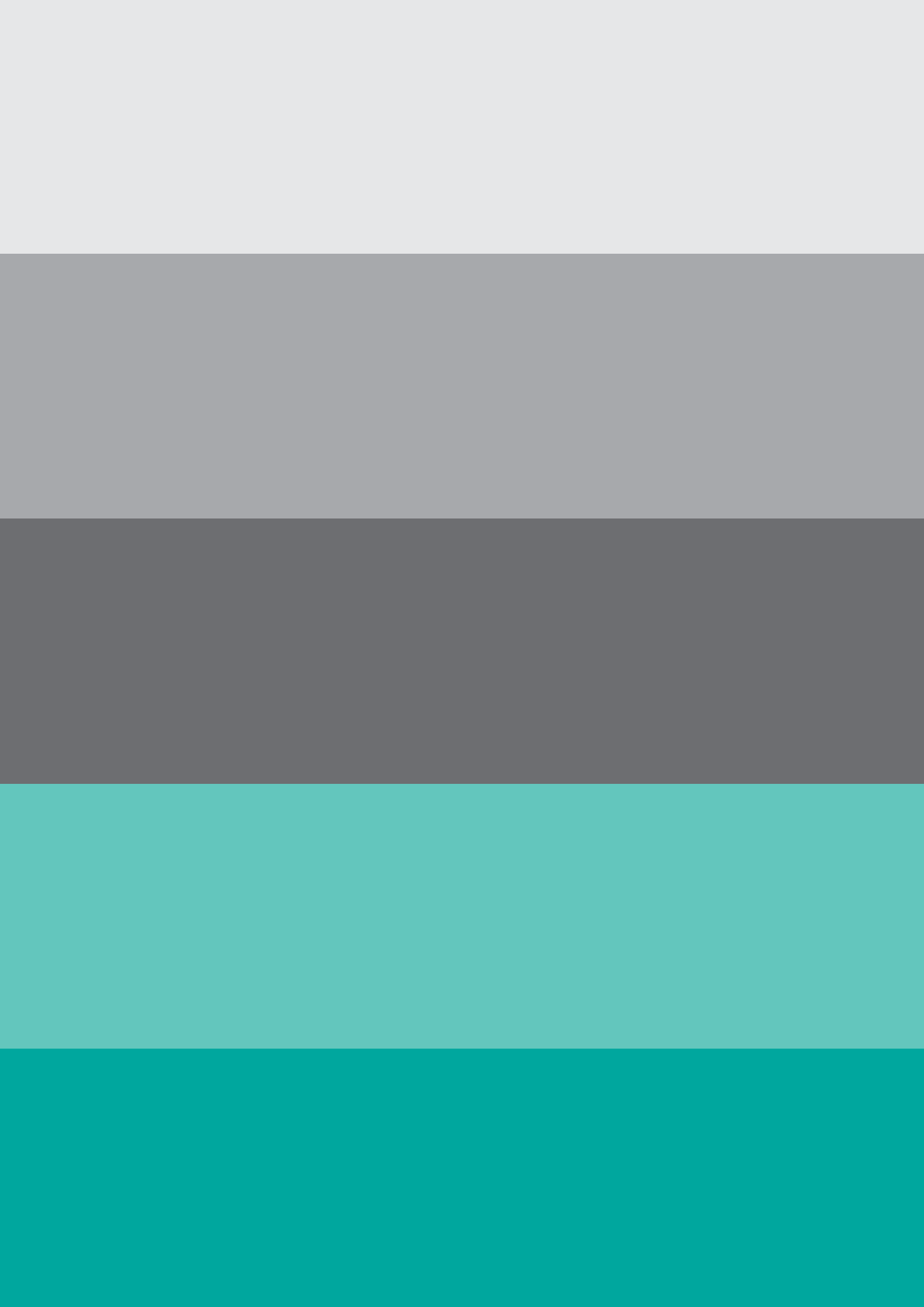


Transforming and scaling up health professionals' education and training

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
GUIDELINES 2013



World Health
Organization



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WHO Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Transforming and scaling up health professionals' education and training:
World Health Organization guidelines 2013.

1.Health personnel – education. 2.Health manpower – organization and administration
3.Health manpower – economics. 4.Education, Medical. 5.Education, Nursing.
6.Health policy. 7.National health programs. 8.Guideline. I.World Health Organization.

ISBN 978 92 4 150650 2

(NLM classification: W 76)

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Design and layout Upwelling.

Printed in Switzerland

Foreword



With this publication, WHO issues its first guidelines for ‘Transforming and Scaling up Health Professionals’ Education and Training’. The guidelines are expected to give rise to regional and country based policy and technical dialogues with key stakeholders in education, health, finance and labour, on how best to finance health professionals’ training and prepare health professionals for the 21st century.

The guidelines draw on the most recent evidence on what underpins the concept of transforming health professionals’ education to frame the recommendations. The global health community has been made aware through reports, global meetings and policy dialogues, that there is a severe health workforce crisis in 57 countries globally as stated in the 2006 World Health Report. However these workforce shortages are by no means confined to the 57 countries most severely affected. In virtually every country, shortages have been accompanied by an imbalance in skill mix of teams and uneven geographical distribution of health professionals, leaving millions without access to health services.

More professional health workers are needed, but it has become clear that efforts to scale up health professionals’ education must not only increase the quantity of health workers, but also address issues of quality and relevance in order to address population health needs. Educational institutions need to increase their capacity to teach in terms of infrastructure but also: improve the competencies of existing staff and increase their numbers; reform admissions criteria; strengthen health professionals’ competencies by revising and updating curricula on a regular basis; and link the disease burden to training needs. For persons wishing to change careers mid-stream, or even students of other disciplines wishing to become health professionals, there should be pathways that make these changes possible. The international community has an important role to play by partnering in support of country-led efforts to achieve these reforms.

These recommendations should attract strong political commitment to regular and structured mechanisms for better collaboration between the education and health sectors, other national authorities and the private sector with the intent to improve the match between health professionals’ education and the realities of health service delivery. There are therefore recommendations which address: political commitment to reform of health professionals’ education; formal collaboration and shared accountability between ministries of health, education and other related ministries; linkage to a national planning process; and the creation or strengthening of national and sub-national institutions.

It is the intention that these guidelines spark many dialogues in the public and private sector, including non-governmental organizations and fuel a growing movement to tackle the challenges facing the professional health workforce and contribute to a new era for health professionals’ education.

Dr Margaret Chan
Director-General
World Health Organization

Contributors and acknowledgments

These guidelines are part of the World Health Organization (WHO) programme on the Rapid Scaling Up of the Health Workforce. This programme is an essential component of WHO's efforts to support the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, strengthen health systems and achieve universal coverage in the context of primary health care.

These activities have been supported by Margaret Chan, Director-General of WHO and Carissa Etienne, formerly Assistant Director-General for Health Systems and Services. Manuel M. Dayrit, Director, of the former Department of Human Resources of Health (HRH), Francesca Celletti formerly leading the guidelines development process and Rebecca Bailey of the former Department of Human Resources of Health and more recently by Mario Dal Poz, former Coordinator, HRH.

The writing of these guidelines and recommendations was shared by a team from the WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Workforce Policy and Planning, Portugal, led by Gilles Dussault (Instituto de Higiene e Medicina Tropical, Lisbon) with Claudia Leone and Inês Fronteira.

The WHO headquarters team was led by Erica Wheeler with support from Mwansa Nkowane. Editorial assistance was provided by Joanne McManus (independent consultant, UK) for all aspects of the writing of the guidelines. The guidelines were copy edited by Diana Hopkins (independent consultant, Geneva).


Core Guidelines Development Group: The members of the Guidelines Development Group are acknowledged below. A complete list with contact addresses is at Annex 9 of these guidelines.

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WHO Secretariat: WHO Secretariat: From WHO departments at headquarters the expert consultation meetings were chaired initially by Manuel M. Dayrit, Director of the former Department of Human Resources for Health (HRH) with support from Francesca Celletti and latterly by Wim Van Lerberghe, Director for Health Policies, Systems and Workforce of which department the Human Resources for Health Team is now a part. Logistical support for the expert consultation meetings was provided by Virgie Largado, formerly of the HRH Department, and Regine Guin. The following staff members in WHO's regional offices were actively involved in the expert consultations meetings: Walid Abubaker (WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, Egypt); Silvina Malvarez (WHO Regional Office for the Americas, USA); Ezekiel Nukuro (WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific, the Philippines); Galina Perfilieva (WHO Regional Office for Europe, Denmark); Buddiharja Singgihit (WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia, India).

The initial scoping of the area of health professionals' education to obtain as broad an understanding of the areas on which to focus was undertaken by George Washington University in the USA led by Fitzhugh Mullan and Seble Frehywot.

Grade methodologist: Methodological support for producing the GRADE evidence tables and the balance worksheets was provided by Elie Akl (American University of Beirut, Lebanon; formerly State University of New York, Buffalo, USA) who was also involved in drafting the recommendations.



Declaration of Interest: All participants who were members of the Guideline Development Group signed a declaration of interest. These interests were not considered to conflict with participation in the development of the guidelines.

Peer review: The guidelines were peer reviewed by: Prof. Jan De Maeseneer, M.D., Ph.D. Head Department of Family Medicine and Primary Health Care, Ghent University, Belgium; Dean Fernando Caballero, School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, Madrid, Spain; Dr. Juan Perez-Miranda Department of Institutional Relations, School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, Madrid, Spain; Jean-Luc Eiselé, Executive Director, FDI World Dental Federation, Geneva, Switzerland; Dr Joy Fraser, Associate Professor, Athabasca University, Athabasca, Canada; Julian Fisher, Assistant Professor, Dental Faculty, University of Lyon, Lyon, France; and Margareta Skold, WHO Representative, Kingston, Jamaica. Their comments were sent electronically to the HRH team. The WHO Secretariat then made all the appropriate amendments/and or modifications to the text following discussion or email exchanges with peer reviewers. A complete list with contact addresses of peer reviewers is in Annex 10 of these guidelines.

Financial support: Financial support for the production of these recommendations was received from the the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and is gratefully acknowledged. Support for the Core Guidelines Development Group meeting in Washington March 2012 was also provided by IntraHealth and CapacityPlus for which we express sincere appreciation.

The views expressed in these guidelines can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of PEPFAR, USAID, IntraHealth, CapacityPlus or any partners involved in their development.

Abbreviations

CGDG	Core Guidelines Development Group
CPD	Continuing professional development
GHWA	Global Health Workforce Alliance
GRADE	Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation
HRH	Human resources for health
ICM	International Confederation of Midwives
ICN	International Council of Nurses
MEPI	Medical Education Partnership Initiative
PEPFAR	The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PICO	Population/intervention/comparison/outcome
WFME	World Federation Medical Education
WHO	World Health Organization

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