

Dear Minister Clare,

### Universities Accord and Paid Placements

I write to you regarding the recent recommendations in the Universities Accord on behalf of the Health Services Union (HSU).

The HSU represents over 102,000 workers in health, care and support and community services sectors, as well as allied health professionals in every state and territory, and is pleased to see Recommendation 14 of the Accord, that proposes *“funding by governments for the nursing, care and teaching professions, and funding by employers generally (public and private) for other fields”* *“to introduce financial support for unpaid work placements”* with

The HSU queries how care is defined in this recommendation and is firmly of the belief that allied health forms an essential part of the care and support economy. To name a few examples:

- Speech pathologists play an increasing role in the NDIS through early intervention.
- Psychologists are an integral part of the acute and community mental health system.
- Occupational therapists are critical to improving the mobility of older Australians.

The Accord rightfully highlights that unpaid placements are pushing students into financial hardship. They also disproportionately impact women and exacerbate workforce shortages. JSA lists all the below allied health occupations as in nationwide shortage (many outside “nursing and care”) which all have onerous placement requirements and a workforce of 75-95% women:

- **Sonographer:** minimum of 2000 hours (Australian Sonographer Accreditation Registry),
- **Medical Radiation Science:** 1400-1600 hours ([Medical Radiation Australia](#)),
- **Medical Imaging:** up to 2500 hours
- **Social workers:** 1000 hours ([Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards](#))
- **Occupational therapists:** 1000 hours ([World Federation of Occupational Therapy Guidelines](#))
- **Psychology:** 300 hours (5+1 pathway), 1000 hours (Masters) and 1500 hours (Doctorate) ([AHPRA](#))
- **Physiotherapy:** Ranges from 750-1368 hours ([Physiotherapy Council](#))
- **Dieticians:** Can range from 4-10 weeks
- **Speech pathology:** usually 400 hours

Allied health does not feature clearly in the Accord’s deliberations about placements. As it moves to respond to the final report of the Accord, the HSU requests that the Government clarify:

1. That allied health professions are included in funding for unpaid work placements as part of the “care sector” in Recommendation 14
2. How it intends to expand paid placements for other allied health professions with even higher placement hours (e.g. sonography, radiation therapy and medical imaging)

We thank the Government for its work in this area. We are happy to meet to discuss the above further and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



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