



## Case Study Four:

### A pathway to higher qualifications

This case study is from a higher education provider that offered AHP degrees, and a newly approved undergraduate Certificate in AHA that will articulate to the AHP degrees. The Certificate allowed this provider to have conversations with students about AHP career pathways and assess individual students' capacity to continue into an AHP degree program. It is an effective way for students to determine their suitability for working in allied health, and build their confidence to continue to a degree. Students are using this as a stepping-stone into AHP.

'it's a great confidence booster, and the other side is that it means that they've got a qualification that they can present to an employer to work as an AHA while they're doing their degree in OT' (OT, Senior Lecturer, regional Queensland university).

Students are taught about working within the NDIS throughout the AHP degree. This is integrated into their course assessment; for example, 'students write reports that are specifically an NDIS assessment'. (OT, Senior Lecturer, regional Queensland university).



#### Benefits

Students who obtained a Certificate in AHA could work in the field as they studied. On completion, they could continue in any of the fields covered in this course, 'so it's a great way to see the breadth of allied health professions' (OT, Senior Lecturer, regional Queensland university).

Alternately, they can be employed as an AHA and deliver programs to participants. This suggests the possibility of a stackable degree, or an intermediate qualification, whereby students enrol in an AHP degree and gain an AHA undergraduate Certificate, then a diploma, and then the degree – without having to enrol separately in each component.

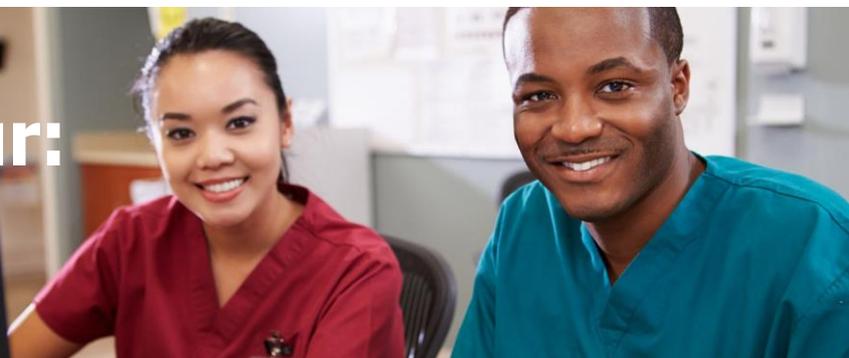


#### Challenges

Students have often entered courses with their own, sometimes inaccurate, views of how the profession worked. Although this provider has always included telehealth as part of their courses, students often saw it as unimportant and something they would not use in their practice. The COVID-19 pandemic changed this perception – students now understood the importance of utilising technology for service delivery, and why they needed to learn how to use it effectively. Telehealth has become a part of most allied health professional practices during the pandemic and it is expected this will continue in the future.

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### Strategies for success

- To prepare students for the workforce they needed to understand the NDIS and its processes. In recognition of this, the provider integrated NDIS information throughout the OT course and assessment.
- As the undergraduate Certificate in AHA articulated into an AHP degree, the provider recognised the potential of the stackable degree. This created a flexible learning environment where students could gain progressive sub-Bachelor qualifications, giving them the option to work in a field directly related to their course while studying, or defer study to work.
- Suitability and capacity to become an AHP was determined while students were completing the undergraduate Certificate course. It is noted that delegation skills need to be included in all AHP courses to better prepare future graduates to utilise AHAs in service delivery.



### Key principles of good practice

- The capacity and suitability of students for AHP degrees was assessed prior to them entering, via sub-degree pathways (including Certificate IV in AHA and undergraduate Certificate in AHA from the university).
- The skills needed for future AHPs to supervise AHAs – understanding the role of AHAs, and how to delegate and supervise AHAs delivering NDIS service – was embedded in the AHP curriculum.
- AHP students' skills in telehealth were developed so they could be utilised to competently deliver services, as well as provide delegation and supervision to AHAs in regional and remote locations, via telehealth technologies.