Author's response to reviews

Title: Enhancing research capacity across healthcare and higher education sectors: an integrated model

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Response to Reviewers

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Enhancing research capacity across healthcare and higher education sectors: an integrated model

Anne Whitworth, Shona Haining and Helen Stringer

We are delighted that our manuscript has been accepted for publication. We also believe that the earlier comments and changes have made this a stronger paper and would like to thank the reviewers for their time in providing these. We have addressed the issues raised in your recent letter and have set out our comments below.

1. The paper will be of interest to an international readership seeking to develop research capacity. However, the paper is overly parochial in places. Please check through, making any changes to ensure that international readers will be able to easily follow the UK-based nature of the work, particularly (but not only) in the policy context section.

Many instances that refer to detail within the UK context have been removed to increase the applicability to an international audience. A decision has however been made to retain a number of references. It was considered that the removal of all the historical drivers for current health policy in the UK would be considered a serious omission. By gaining an understanding of the historical influences, many of which readers in other countries will be able to draw parallels with, a more full understanding of the current context and motivations is possible. We have however reviewed the wording throughout to ensure that the paper has greater appeal to international readers.

2. I’d like to recommend your paper for publication as a Debate article. If you are happy to proceed on this basis then please refer to the journal guidance and reframe the paper in line with these. This will require authors to make it clear up front that this is a descriptive piece and rework the final section, removing the ?Results and discussion? heading and reframing as e.g. evaluating outcomes, discussion, conclusion.

We have considered this and have been happy to change the orientation of the article from a report to a debate. We have made the necessary alterations to the format and inserted text that continues to flag the debate. We feel this is a positive alteration and in keeping with the guidelines.

3. In a number of places the paper assumes a normative position e.g. the RAE/REF is cited as having promoted, evaluated and rewarded high quality research (p5), whereas such statements are open to debate and need to be reframed accordingly.

This statement has been changed to reflect more transparently an “intention” rather than a fact, i.e.

“Similar activity around research excellence has been present within the University sector where the Research Assessment Exercises (RAE) (http://www.rae.ac.uk) and, latterly, the Research Excellence Framework (REF) (http://www.ref.ac.uk) have been set up to promote, evaluate and reward high quality research.”
We have carefully considered the remainder of the text and are happy that no other instances remain.

4. The paper is rather wordy in places. Please edit down, reducing the overall word count to under 5000 (including figures and references).

We have reviewed the entire article and deleted all redundant wording. The model presented here is a complex one with many facets. It has been our express intention to support our proposals with exemplars and evidence where ever possible – this is in keeping with the intention of other professional groups gaining awareness of the importance of local factors as well as having clear examples to consider within their own context.

We have therefore reduced the wording where possible but would like to request that the current word count be accepted. This has not been raised before throughout the review process and would require a full reworking of the paper, resulting in a dilution of the content which we believe would be to its detriment. We also believe the current content will facilitate fruitful debate in the area.

5. There are several places where authors start sentences with "This is.....". Please check through the paper and qualify what you mean by ?this? in such instances.

There is one instance of “This is...” beginning a sentence. On page 6, the referent has been added to emphasise this to the reader, such that “relationship” has been inserted (and the tense changed):

“This is supported by...” to “This relationship has been supported by...”

We have however ensured throughout the paper that any ambiguity has been deleted.

We trust that you will be happy with these alterations. Do please contact Anne Whitworth, at anne.whitworth@curtin.edu.au, if there are any outstanding points to discuss.

Anne Whitworth, Shona Haining and Helen Stringer
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