University Centre for Rural Health
LISMORE CAMPUS

2013
Student Placement Information
UCRH –About us

The Northern Rivers University Department of Rural Health (NRUDRH) was established in 2001 and is part of the School of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine of the University of Sydney and run in collaboration with Southern Cross University. The NRUDRH main office is located in Lismore, northern New South Wales (228kms south of Brisbane), with smaller offices in Murwillumbah and Grafton.

In 2011 the NRUDRH changed its name to the University Centre for Rural Health (UCRH). The Centre is a multidisciplinary centre of excellence in health education and research relevant to the health needs of communities situated within the Northern Rivers region of NSW. We contribute to innovation in education, research and service development through collaborations with Universities, Health Services and professional and community organisations.

The aims of the UCRH program are to:

- increase & improve the rural experience for undergraduate and postgraduate students in the health professions including medical, nursing and allied health disciplines;
- provide training and support for preceptors so that the rural experience for students is of high quality; and
- provide support and continuing education opportunities for existing rural health professionals.
Dear Students,

It is with pleasure that I welcome you to the University Centre for Rural Health. It is our hope that as you take these steps of your formative journey with us, that you grow – in knowledge, in wisdom and in understanding. We will do our best to assist you in doing so.

You have come to a place of great beauty. My own calling to the region was awakened by the historic protests of Terania Creek during my university days. I was absorbed by the magnificence of the forest revealed in news footage back in 1979. I welcomed the invitation to take my resident placement here several years later, providing an immersion not only in the beauty of the place, but also in the embrace of its people and its cultural and geographic diversity.

And there was more than that. I came to a Hospital that was steeped in pride of its role in the community, and committed to the quality of its service. There was a curious blend of country folk, and family welcome in the work environment, a fitting foundation that exclaimed our work should be a place of optimism.

In the 27 years hence, Lismore, and the Northern NSW district, has solidified its place as one of the finest health services of the country. The range and quality of services has continued to grow, providing an extraordinary learning opportunity for aspiring health professionals.

The University Centre for Rural Health, initially as a Department of Rural Health of Sydney University, was established a little over a decade ago in recognition of these opportunities. In its short history, it has grown to become a major hub of education and research in rural Australia. The Centre hosts students from 14 universities across a range of health professions. Students are supported in all aspects of their personal and professional development, with a support and administration team, and a faculty rich in experience and depth.

As you walk with us, you walk on the land of the Bundjalung nation. I urge to hear the stories of its people, listen to their wisdom and know of their challenge. It is expected that your time in northern NSW should bring a greater appreciation of the matters that have impacted, and continue to impact upon the health of the first peoples of this land. Likewise, it is our hope that you learn not just the technical elements of your professional calling, but be cognisant of the broader role that you will play in the community: as a professional, as a leader, as an advocate for equity – particularly so in a rural environment.

Go confidently as you walk. Seek the experience of rurality, seek the personal and professional developmental opportunities, and seek the wisdom of your mentors. And mostly, seek the meaning of your experience with us, and allow it to shape your vocational pathway, as it has done mine over many years.

Michael Douglas MB BS FAFPHM, FACRRM, MPH, IDHA, DipRACOG
Director of Education University Centre for Rural Health

January 2013
The UCRH Student Co-ordination Team at Lismore is located in the main building at 61 Uralba Street, located directly opposite Lismore Base Hospital.

Office hours are Monday to Friday 9:00 AM-5:00 PM.

**KEY CONTACTS – STUDENT CO-ORDINATION TEAM LISMORE**

Frances Barraclough  
Program Manager, Clinical Education

Tracey Piccoli  
Executive Assistant to the Director Education and the Program Manager, Clinical Education

Libby Kelly & Christine Everett  
University of Wollongong, University of Western Sydney medical student coordinators

Kate Van Dommele & Karen Wilson  
University Sydney medical student coordinators and contact for other university medical short term placements

Thi-Anh Smith  
Allied Health student coordinator

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Administration Assistant to the student coordination team

You can contact us on: studentcoord@ucrh.edu.au or 02 6620 7570
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About the North Coast

The Northern Rivers is also known as the Rainbow Region because of its exceptional natural beauty.

Whilst on placement in the Northern Rivers, you may be required to attend any of the hospitals and other facilities within the Northern NSW Local Health District. This is part of your rural placement. You cannot assume that your placement will be only at Lismore Base Hospital.


Facilities that are part of Northern NSW Local Health District:

- Ballina
- Bonalbo
- Byron
- Casino
- Coraki
- Grafton
- Kyogle
- Lismore
- Maclean
- Mullumbimby
- Murwillumbah
- Nimbin
- Tweed
- Urbenville
- Tweed Heads
- Murwillumbah

Lismore

With a population of over 45,000 Lismore is nestled on the banks of the Wilsons River between rainforest and the sea. It is a university city that boasts the culture and convenience of a major regional centre and is the economic and cultural hub of the Northern Rivers region.

Lismore is 45km inland from Byron Bay, 100km from the Gold Coast and 198km from Brisbane.

Lismore’s climate is mild in winter with cool evenings and pleasant days. The average winter temperature in Lismore is 20 degrees, whilst the average minimum is 7 degrees. Summer in Lismore can be very hot with temperatures in the mid to high 30’s.

For more information, see the Lismore Visitors Information Centre Tourism site for further information at www.visitlismore.com.au
**Lismore Base Hospital**

Lismore Base Hospital is a regional referral, level 5 base hospital providing care to over 23,700 patients every year. Specialist services provided include Emergency, General Medicine & Surgery (including sub specialities), Cancer care and radiotherapy, Paediatrics, Critical Care, Obstetrics, Aged Care and Mental Health. The hospital undertakes over 8,100 surgical procedures annually. The total ED attendances for Lismore Base Hospital in 2011-2012 was 29,377.

Lismore Base Hospital is a teaching hospital and provides a comprehensive medical training experience.

For more information about Lismore Base Hospital please visit;

“I got to spend a plenty of time with the consultants and the consultants were great with teaching and answering questions.” (LBH)

**BALLINA**

Ballina is a coastal township located on the Pacific Highway 40 minute drive from Lismore and boasts some of the most beautiful surfing beaches and picturesque headlands on the east coast of Australia. Ballina District Hospital is a local community, level 3 rural hospital within the North Coast Area Health Service providing care to over 8,300 patients every year. Services provided include Emergency, General Medicine, Aged Care & Rehabilitation and Surgery. The hospital undertakes over 860 surgical procedures and sees over 17,800 Emergency attendances annually.

Students have the opportunity for hands on experience in the busy Emergency Department and a comprehensive Geriatric placement and Paediatric Clinic experiences.

The Ballina Dental Clinic is collaboration between the University of Sydney Dental School, University of Griffith Dental School and the Local Health District. The Clinic provides an opportunity for dental students to live and work in a rural setting whilst also helps to reduce public dentistry waiting lists.

“Our Ballina dental placement has undoubtedly been one of the most useful learning experiences of our degree to date. Such a new a refreshing take on ‘real world’ dentistry”

Our new student accommodation in Ballina is due to open early 2013. Any of our students from any discipline can be located in this accommodation. It is not just for students on placement at Ballina.
CASINO

Casino is one of Australia's leading country centres. It is known as the Beef Capital of Australia and is the Centre for agriculture for the Northern Rivers. Casino is a 30minute drive from Lismore.

Casino and District Memorial Hospital is a local community, level 3 rural hospital within the North Coast Area Health Service providing care to over 2,800 patients every year. Services provided include Emergency, General Medicine, Aged Care and Surgery. The hospital 940 surgical procedures and sees over 14,500 Emergency wonderful opportunity for students to experience rural medicine.

“I had a fantastic experience in Casino, and finished my placement with an even more positive outlook on rural general practice, especially in the fields of Aboriginal health and obstetrics. The activities were incredibly diverse. Monday I’d spend doing Obstetrics and seeing a completely different (and, in my opinion, much more rewarding and personal) perspective on pregnancy and the birthing process as compared to hospital obstetrics. Tuesday I would see a surprisingly diverse range of patients both by myself and with the GP; all incredibly open, patient and willing to help me learn. The rest of the week I’d spend time with the doctors and staff at the AMS, both in Casino and on outreach, and developed an important insight into Aboriginal health. The doctors, staff, and community members were incredibly inviting, literally inviting me into their homes (on farms!), encouraging me to try procedures (on them!), throwing birthday/farewell parties, and telling stories to inspire and teach, both from medical, social and spiritual perspectives. I saw a beautiful part of the world; friendly country town surrounded by gorgeous country, and so many interesting tales to tell.”

BYRON BAY

Cape Byron is Australia’s most easterly point and deserves its international reputation as a superb beach resort. With numerous beaches, unspoilt hinterland, and relaxed lifestyle, Byron Bay is a busy town and a must see for many visitors to the region.

Byron Bay District Hospital is a local community, level 2 rural hospital within the North Coast Area Health Service providing care to over 1,400 patients every year.

Services provided include Emergency, General Medicine, Aged Care and Day Surgery. The hospital undertakes over 430 surgical procedures and sees over 12,300 Emergency attendances annually. Byron Bay is approximately 45 kilometres from Lismore.

http://www.visitnsw.com/area/Ballina_Byron_and_Surrounds.aspx
GRAFTON

The commercial hub of the Clarence Valley at the Southern end of the Northern Rivers region is the beautiful city of Grafton. Grafton has historic architecture, excellent accommodation, shopping, restaurants and a vibrant artistic community.

Grafton Base Hospital is a valley referral, level 3/4 base hospital within the North Coast Area Health Service providing care to over 12,500 patients every year. Specialist services provided include Emergency, General Medicine & Surgery (including sub specialities) and Aged Care. The hospital undertakes over 3,300 surgical procedures and sees over 24,700 Emergency attendances annually. Grafton is approximately 129 kilometres from Lismore.

For more information about what to do and see whilst in the Clarence Valley, visit the following website http://www.clarencetourism.com/main.htm

MURWILLUMBAH

Murwillumbah has a beautiful rain forest setting and is surrounded by world heritage-listed national parks. It is in close proximity to the Gold Coast and the stunning beaches of the Far North Coast NSW. Murwillumbah District Hospital is a local community, level 3 rural hospital within the North Coast Area Health Service providing care to over 6,200 patients every year. Services provided include Emergency, General Medicine, Aged Care and Surgery (including sub specialities). Murwillumbah is approximately 84 kilometres from Lismore.

For more information about Murwillumbah, visit the following website http://www.murwillumbah.com.au

There’s more

For more information about the other amazing towns you can explore in the Northern Rivers please visit the following website http://www.riversoflife.com.au

The other hospitals in the area which students may visit include Maclean, Nimbin, Coraki and Mullumbimby when on GP placements.

Incorporating students from different disciplines that attend placement in mental health is encouraged. This includes Social Workers, Occupational Therapists (OTs), Nursing Students, Psychologists and Medical Students.

“As a first year medical student my 3 week experience in the Northern NSW Coast Health was inspiring and served as great introduction to the demands and workings of rural health. I’d like to thank the Nimbin Hospital Staff who welcomed me to their community and encouraged me to practice my skills in the Emergency Department and gave me the chance to assist the community nurses in the areas of mental health, drug rehabilitation, palliative care and needle exchange. It’s hard to imagine that a metropolitan hospital experience could be as personal and as far reaching. My downtime was equally fantastic with several trips to the coast and some fun nights out in Byron Bay. I’m envious already of the next batch of student placements.”
Allied Health Program

The number of Allied Health students that come through the UCRH program has increased significantly. We run very strong Dentistry, Radiography, Pharmacy, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy programs. We take students from the Nursing, Psychology, Social Work, Speech, Dietetics, Midwifery, Radiology, Nuclear Medicine, Pathology, Exercise Physiology, Podiatry and Radiation Therapy. We are very fortunate to have the support from Clinicians within the local health district and are expanding into private practice student placements.

Allied health students are encouraged to contact the UCRH Student Coordination Team as soon as you are aware of your placement assignment. That way we can assist with pre-placement requirements and make a smooth transition into your clinical placement and link you into opportunities for interprofessional learning and social activities.

UCRH North Coast

In 2011 we implemented a comprehensive student lecture program aimed at all our long term students from all three collaborating universities to help equip students for internship as well as cover content of their curriculums. This program continues and is conducted every Wednesday from 4 – 6pm. The lectures are video conferenced to our hubs at Grafton and Murwillumbah. Short term students are also encouraged to attend.

Broad topic areas covered included anaesthetics, pharmacology, emergency, medicine, surgery and radiology. This was a great opportunity to bring all of our students together for clinical teaching. Overall students rate their placements very well.

Clinical Skills sessions with Dr John Graham

Here are some extracts from an end of year evaluation;

“The things that I enjoyed most about my placement were the diversity of the medicine and lifestyle available. Establishing a culture of togetherness between long-stay students from different unis is a good idea”

“I loved the placement. It was amazing to live in a small town and to meet so many people. I frequently went over to Doctor’s farms/houses for lunch/dinner. People were so friendly. Every Wednesday we went to trivia with other medicos: allied health, registrars, etc. It was great. And I was very close to Byron Bay which was awesome”

“Meeting other students, the clinical experience, getting to know better the other students from my
course, I particularly enjoyed the teaching sessions that ran on Wednesday and Friday afternoons”

“The things that I enjoyed most about my placement were the guidance given by the UDRH, it felt as though they were giving us more support than uni was”

“The things that I enjoyed most about my placement were the relaxed atmosphere of the North Coast, the scenery, my rotations and the doctors who taught me”

“Overall, I had a great time!! I felt very well supported”

“I vastly enjoyed my medical learning in Lismore and hope to be able to engage in further training and perhaps practice in the Northern Rivers Region in the future”

**Strengthened Cultural Awareness Activity**

All of our students have the opportunity to attend an Indigenous Cultural program conducted by National Parks and Wildlife Rangers and Aboriginal Educators from the Bunjalung Arakwal people. The activity includes a cultural walk and talk, information about bush tucker and is followed up by a social BBQ. The Aboriginal staff meet with the students at Byron Bay light house and take them on an informative tour from the lighthouse, down to Wategos Beach and then across to The Pass. They point out surrounding sites of cultural significance and share their peoples’ stories about certain landmarks. Along the walk students are shown and get to try some bush tucker and medicines and are instructed on their harvest, preparation and uses. One student commented “I think the cultural walk was a wonderful way to introduce these concepts. Concepts which only really sing in the outdoor setting and which try as we might cannot ever be accurately passed on in the class room or lecture hall”.

We also provided a unique opportunity for some of our students to participate in other community activities.

**2011 Cultural Walk at Byron Bay Lighthouse**
Social engagement
All of the students across disciplines and universities are encouraged throughout the year to socialise together. UCRH events such as welcome dinners, inaugural soccer match and cultural walks were well attended as well as outside the UCRH the students organise bushwalking trips, weekly trivia, surfing, fishing, diving and participate in local events such as the Byron Bay Ocean Swim.

Students will be expected to participate in a student led grand rounds program hosted by the UCRH. This program will have a multidisciplinary approach and will include students from a range of disciplines. A number of our clinicians received outstanding achievement awards from our partner Universities. These awards are based on excellent feedback from students. Both the surgical teams at Lismore and Grafton received these awards.

Implementation of Long case/short case student presentations
The UCRH has implemented a program to assist medical students in long and short case presentations. Weekly sessions of 1 hour are provided to all students (from all universities). Presentations focus on content as well as presenting skills, with each student assessed by two educators; peer feedback and individual feedback by each of the educators is provided.

Wellness Day – for long stay Medical students
Each year we conduct a program to promote a healthy approach to working in the medical profession for the long term medical students from all our universities who are based Lismore, Grafton and Murwillumbah.

Lismore Accommodation
The UCRH owns limited accommodation houses within walking distance to the Lismore Base Hospital and we will also have student accommodation at Ballina in 2013. We utilise onsite accommodation at Lismore Base Hospital for short term students. **Please note - due to very limited availability of accommodation we cannot guarantee that we are able to provide accommodation for ALL students.**
We strongly encourage students to come to placement with a vehicle – students need to be able to travel between placement and accommodation sites if necessary and public transportation is very sporadic in this region.

Returning students will need to be aware that the UCRH offers varying types of accommodation and it is highly unlikely they will be placed in the same accommodation they occupied previously.

All accommodation has shared facilities such as kitchen, dining, living room, bathroom and laundry, and is supplied with cooking utensils, towels and linen. You have your own bedroom with a desk and access to the internet. A cleaner will come in to service the common areas regularly. Your room will only be cleaned professionally when you leave. Arrangements for long term medial students are different and university specific. These students are on placement for up to 32 weeks of the year.

What you need to bring
- smart casual clothes or your uniform for placement including covered shoes (sandals and jeans are not appropriate on placement)
- your University ID card
- beach towel
- toiletries and other personal items

Collecting your room key

You will collect your room key from a dispensing machine in the foyer behind the Emergency Department, Lismore Base Hospital. You will need to enter your mobile phone number and your key will drop down. You will have received some information about your accommodation and placement via email before you arrive.

We have a student support line you can ring after hours in case there are any problems with key collection or accommodation - 0435 962 515

There is a shopping centre about 1km down the road from your accommodation.

There is an ATM in the foyer of the Lismore Base Hospital located directly opposite the UCRH.

Orientation

We conduct a short orientation for all short term students at 9am Monday morning before you go to placement. This is a compulsory session.
We will help with any accommodation and internet access issues and advise you of lock out procedures. We will let you know of any upcoming education and social events. We will conduct a Hospital and Library tour and issue ID/Access cards for the Hospital. It is also a great way to meet the other students who are going on placement.

Transport

Do I need to bring a car?
Having your own transport is strongly recommended as public transport in the area is minimal, with reduced services running on the weekends. You will be expected to travel to and from your placements which may not be at the site where you are living. Not all of your placements will be at Lismore Base Hospital.

If travelling by car always plan your journey to avoid driving at night due to the very active night wildlife. Click on the following websites for further advice regarding travelling on country roads

The Going Places website (public transport information and timetables) is here:


What if I am doing a community placement such as general practice, and I don’t have a car?
Community placements usually occur outside the Lismore area, and up to an hour’s drive away. To ensure your smooth transition into these rotations, vehicles are very strongly recommended. Public transport is very limited especially to get to the more rural sites. The UCRH will not be responsible to get you to and from your placement.

How can I get to Lismore?
For transport options on getting to Lismore, please see the following link for more information

What about public transport in and around Lismore?
Timetables and further information is available for Northern Rivers Bus Lines at
www.nrbuslines.com.au
Lismore Taxi’s can be contacted on phone: 131 008 or info@lismoretaxis.com.au

Air services
There are regional airports at Grafton, Ballina and Lismore which all have regular flights to Sydney. Coolangatta airport on the Gold Coast has national and international flights.
Lismore is serviced by REX (Regional Express Airlines) who offer 52 flights per week between Lismore and Sydney. Lismore Regional Airport is a short 5 minute drive from the town centre and offers taxi, bus and hire care services available.

Ballina is the home of the major airport for the region with many links to many of the eastern state capitals and regional airports, with Rex, Jetstar, and Virgin Blue each operating services.

**Bus Services**
As well as local bus services there are buses connecting to Brisbane and Sydney along the Pacific Highway.

Should you wish to travel by bus, there are several operators who provide services to Lismore. For more information, contact the Lismore Transit Centre on 02 6621 8620.

**Train**
Country Link Train services are also available from Sydney to Casino with a bus interchange from Casino to Lismore. Country Link timetables are accessible from [www.countrylink.info](http://www.countrylink.info)

**Entertainment**
In the wider region, the Northern Rivers caters for every need including surfing and kayaking on the many beautiful beaches, hiking in the hills and partying in one of Byron Bay’s many night clubs. The region is fortunate to host top musicians from all over the world particularly at the Byron Blues Festival held at Easter each year.

Many students have joined local sports clubs and have had good experiences playing with local teams, others have played with the city orchestra.

Many of our students have made the most of being in this region learning to surf, dive and kayak, climbing local mountains, fishing, running in the Gold Coast Marathon and swimming in the Byron Bay Easter Classic swim.

Ask what he did at weekends one student said that he “played tennis, basketball and indoor soccer weekly in teams, swam, surfed and kayaked in the ocean, fished, went white water rafting and watched local bands.”

**What is there to do in Lismore at night and on weekends?**

Lismore also has a Birch Carroll and Coyle cinema with four screens. To see what movies are on, go to [http://www.yourmovies.com.au/cinemas/?venue_id=239241](http://www.yourmovies.com.au/cinemas/?venue_id=239241)
Most of our students like to participate in weekly Trivia Nights at Mary Gilhooley’s pub or the Richmond Hotel in Lismore.

There are also local swimming pools (indoor and outdoor), gyms, shopping centres, a cinema and an art gallery to visit whilst you’re in Lismore. Once a month there is a car boot market held on Sunday at Lismore Shopping Square. In the wider region there are many beautiful places to discover such as Bangalow, Byron Bay, Ballina, Lennox Head and many, many more. There is also amazing scenery such as Minynon Falls, Rocky Creek Dam, Rummery Park and Mt Warning if you’re a keen bushwalker.
Photos above of Byron Bay Classic Swim and University of Sydney students enjoying Byron Bay Lighthouse

Photos above of Minyon Falls and students at a learn to surf session at Byron Bay

University of Western Sydney and University of Wollongong students prepare for a friendly game of soccer
Frequently Asked Questions

What do I need to bring?

- Your own uniform or work wear including covered shoes
- Criminal Record Clearance/Vaccination documents (please note that you will **NOT** be allowed into health facilities without original documents being sighted)
- Student ID card from your University
- And your car!

How is my application processed?

- All students are required to complete an online application form
- Once the application form is received and completed in full (i.e. all documentation requested is provided), the application will be reviewed and discussed by the student placement team
- Negotiations with key contacts regarding placement with respective health facility takes place
- Upon completion of a successful online application and vaccination clearance, you are forwarded an email confirming same. An additional email is sent to the student regarding details of accommodation, and other relevant information. If the student is unsuccessful in their application, they will also be notified in writing.

How to apply for a placement

To apply for a placement you will need to complete an online application through the UCRH website [http://www.ucrh.edu.au/student-placement-form.html](http://www.ucrh.edu.au/student-placement-form.html) and upload copies of the following documentation, which is a compulsory requirement of NSW Health.


When you complete your online application you will be required to attach all the requested documentation. **Without this, your application will not be complete and you will therefore not be guaranteed a placement.** Please note that applications must be completed at least **4 weeks before** the placement is due to begin.
**Documentation required to complete an application**

1. Completed online application

2. Vaccination records showing evidence of protection including copies of serology (see attached list for vaccinations required) Information Sheet 2 - Checklist - Evidence required from Category A applicants

3. Completed TB assessment form Form 2 - Tuberculosis (TB) Assessment Tool

4. Completed Student Undertaking/Declaration form Form 3 Student Undertaking/Declaration

5. NSW Health Criminal Record Clearance card/letter or a National Criminal Records Clearance letter and a copy of your Working with Children card (or equivalent)

6. University student ID Card

If you are successful in your placement application, you will need to read NCAHS Code of Conduct before commencement of your placement. To obtain a copy of the conduct, please see the following link http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2012/PD2012_018.html

**IMPORTANT - Student Immunisation**

All students coming on placement to UCRH North Coast are required to comply with both the University Centre for Rural Health and NSW Health policies on immunisation/vaccination status. Students will be assessed in accordance with NSW Health policy and must receive a “clearance” before they can commence their placement in any NNSWLHD facility.

Failure to meet these policy requirements may result in students being refused access to NNSWLHD facilities.

Policy Directives can be found in the UCRH or NNSWLHD websites, as per following links;

UCRH: http://www.ucrh.edu.au


Students are required to produce evidence of their vaccination status upon request while on placement at NNSWLHD facilities.

**Failure to comply with any of the requirements listed above may result in access to NNSWLHD facilities being refused.**

**IMPORTANT - Student Survey**

All students coming on placement to UCRH North Coast are required to complete a student placement survey at the end of their placement. This survey is part of our Commonwealth reporting requirements. All of our programs including student placements rely on Commonwealth funding therefore your assistance in completing this survey cannot be underestimated. The survey can be found at http://ucrh.edu.au/node/add/placement-survey
Students at a plaster workshop

Students at a chest drain workshop

Students at an envenomation lecture

Below: Students at a joint injection education session