

Call for expressions of interest

from academic institutions interested in running a Masters degree
with a focus on *Health Workforce Development*

The proposed new programme

The World Health Organization (WHO), supported by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), is calling for expressions of interest from academic institutions who would be interested in running a competency-based postgraduate degree with a focus on health workforce development.

The *World Health Report 2006: working together for health*, recognized the centrality of the health workforce for the effective operation of country health systems, and outlined proposals to tackle the global shortage of 4.3 million health workers. There is increasing evidence that this shortage is interfering with efforts to achieve international development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration and those of WHO's priority programmes.

The health workforce crisis in developing countries derives principally from inadequate educational opportunities, inappropriate planning and poor working conditions. This critical situation is true for many African countries.

In this context, the proposed Masters programme (e.g. MSc, MA, MBA, MPH) with a focus on Health Workforce Development would aim to contribute directly to the rapid response that is required in order to address the critical situation, aiming to generate leaders who will spearhead the production and management of the health workforce for years to come.

Interested institutions must:

- be based in the WHO African Region or be part of a consortium of institutions with a strong African presence;
- have the capacity to offer the tuition in English, French and, ideally, Portuguese; and/or otherwise be prepared to work in partnership with another academic institution that can offer the tuition in the other language(s);
- aim to maximize the number of students;
- be able to ensure the sustainability and expansion of the educational program over the next 5 years;
- be able to establish an inter-country network of personnel, who are trained in health workforce management and capable of acting as local academic mentors;
- have the capacity to launch the programme within a maximum of 10 months from receiving the award.
- be registered with national authorities as an educational establishment and able to award a Masters degree.

Potential students will be graduates from the health, biological and social sciences, preferably already working within district and/or national level services throughout Sub Saharan countries. For this reason, the proposed curriculum must be heavily focused on learning by distance. The pedagogic structure should be based on: printed materials, electronic files, periodic email and regular mail contacts. In addition the network of mentors must provide continuous and accurate supervision of the educational process.

Application procedure

Step 1

Interested institutions should submit an expression of interest of no more than three pages **by 2 May 2008** to WHO by email at petrakovaa@who.int.

The expression of interest should outline the proposed course arrangement, including:

- a competency based course description, clearly demonstrating that the above mentioned criteria can be met;
- a main budget plan for the initial first year (including salaries, fellowships, travel, materials, etc) with an expanding projection over 5 years;

- a provisional descriptive list of main academic and supervisory staff available for the course;
- a description of the proposed governance of the programme within the institution(s);
- a basic description of the evaluation strategy to measure aspects such as the graduates' ongoing completion of competencies and the effectiveness of the programme as a whole over time;
- evidence of the institution's registration with national authorities as an educational establishment and also of its ability to award a Masters degree;
- the rationale behind the proposed number of graduates per year.

Step 2

Short listed applicants will be contacted by WHO within a month of the first submission deadline and will be given two months to deliver a more detailed proposal for final selection. The successful applicant(s) will be notified one month after the submission of that detailed proposal.

The expressions of interest and subsequent detailed proposals will be reviewed by an expert panel. They will be evaluated considering institutional capacity (including faculty experience); coherence of the proposal; educational and evaluation strategies; and the feasibility of sustaining the proposed programme. The shortlist will comprise a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 6 considered candidates.

It is planned for the successful candidate(s) to receive a grant of support for the first 2 years of their programme and technical backup from WHO. This support and back-up would be withdrawn in the case of deviation from the original agreement between WHO and the selected institution.

The submission of more detailed proposals and the final selection procedure will be subject to the same terms and conditions as those outlined above.

Terms and Conditions

WHO reserves the right not to select any expression of interest for inclusion in the shortlist. Expressions of interest will be evaluated by WHO in its sole discretion, taking into account the criteria outlined above.

WHO may request applicants to submit complementary information. Any possible requests to submit complementary information and/or to submit a more detailed proposal, as well as any discussions ensuing therefrom, will be exploratory only, and do not mean that the institution(s) concerned will actually be selected and/or receive any support from WHO.

Incomplete applications and applications submitted after the deadline will, in principle, be disregarded (unless WHO, in its sole discretion, decides otherwise in respect of any such incomplete or late application).

WHO will not be held to offer applicants any explanation or justification as to why their expression of interest has been rejected and/or why they have not been selected for inclusion in the shortlist. The shortlist will not be made public and the outcome of the selection process will not be open to appeal. Each applicant will be notified by WHO in writing (by email) whether or not it has been selected for inclusion in the shortlist.

Any and all costs and expenses incurred in relation to, or ensuing from, the submission of an expression of interest (including the possible complementary information and/or a more detailed proposal, if so requested by WHO) will exclusively be borne by the applicant. The application and selection process set forth in this document will not be subject to claims for financial compensation of any kind whatsoever.

Applications and queries should be submitted as e-mail attachments to petrakovaa@who.int by 2 May 2008 at the latest.