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WNF Naturopathic Educational Program Guide

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Naturopathic Educational Program Guide

One of the mandates of the World Naturopathic Federation (WNF) is to promote accreditation of naturopathic educational programs and the highest educational standards for the naturopathic global profession.

Based on detailed analysis of global naturopathic educational programs there are two main types of naturopathic educational programs emerging globally – the doctorate-level (naturopathic doctor) training programs at over 4,000 hours – which currently represents 52% of all programs – and the practitioner-level training programs at 2,500 hours.

Full members of the WNF are national naturopathic associations that recognize the highest educational standards in their country. Although the WNF recognizes a 2500-hour and 4000+-hour program, the expectation and recommendation is that each country adopts only one standard; the highest naturopathic educational standard permitted in their country.

Naturopathic Learning Modules

All naturopathic educational programs must include the following six learning modules:

- naturopathic history, philosophies, principles, and theories.
- naturopathic medical knowledge.
- naturopathic therapeutic modalities, practices, and treatments.
- supervised clinical practice.
- ethics and business practices; and
- research.

Learning Module	2500-hour program	4200-hour program
Naturopathic history, philosophies, principles, and theories	300	350
Naturopathic medical knowledge	650	1400
Naturopathic modalities, practice and treatments	950	1200
Supervised clinical practice	500	1000
Ethics and business practices	50	100
Research	50	150
Total	2500	4200

Please note that the hours provided are an estimate and that different naturopathic programs will vary slightly. Also, the 4000+ hour programs range from 4000 to 4500+ hours. For this guide, we have based the hours on a 4200-hour program.

Naturopathic history, philosophies, principles, and theories

The key subjects in naturopathic history, philosophies, principles and theories includes:

History: origin of naturopathic profession, history by WHO Region

Philosophies: *vitalism* and *holism*

Principles:

- First, Do No Harm (*primum non nocere*)
- Healing Power of Nature (*vis medicatrix naturae*)
- Treat the Cause (*tolle causam*)
- Treat the Whole Person (*tolle totum*)
- Doctor as Teacher (*docere*)
- Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
- Wellness and Wellbeing

Theories including Naturopathic Therapeutic Order, Emunctory Theory and Theory of Complex Systems, as well as others.

Other considerations between the naturopathic educational programs:

- 2500 hours: ~300 hours; 4200 hours: ~350 hours
- Although a portion of this aspect of the curriculum would include a stand-alone course, aspects of this program are incorporated into all aspects of the naturopathic programs.
- [WNF White Paper on Naturopathic Philosophies, Principles and Theories](#) provides an overview of the information for this aspect of the curriculum.

Naturopathic Medical Knowledge

One of the main differences between the 2500 and 4200-hour naturopathic educational programs is the hours dedicated to naturopathic medical knowledge.

- Naturopathic medical knowledge includes aspects of medical knowledge including basic sciences, clinical sciences, laboratory and diagnostic testing and naturopathic assessment.
- The depth and breadth of naturopathic medical knowledge is dependent on the prerequisites for the naturopathic program and length of the naturopathic program. The longer naturopathic educational programs often include some basic sciences as a prerequisite.
- Other considerations between the naturopathic educational programs:
 - 2500 hours: ~650 hours; 4200 hours: ~1400 hours
 - Laboratory and diagnostic testing and naturopathic diagnosis are more likely associated with the 4200-hour naturopathic programs. Also, there would be differences between the nature and scope of naturopathic assessment in the two programs.

Naturopathic Modalities, Practices and Treatments

The naturopathic workforce is known for its diverse and flexible therapeutic approach as it employs a range of therapeutic modalities in their individualized and multi-modal integrative approach to patient care. It is common for naturopaths / NDs to perform or prescribe four or more different naturopathic therapeutic modalities or practices during a naturopathic visit.

The use of a complex intervention approach to care allows naturopaths/NDs to utilize the synergistic properties of various treatments and to treat the psychological, functional, and structural aspects of each patient.

The core naturopathic therapies, modalities and practices that are included in most naturopathic programs includes:

- Applied nutrition
- Clinical nutrition
- Herbal medicine
- Lifestyle modification
- Mind-body medicine counselling
- Naturopathic physical medicine
- Hydrotherapy
- Other therapies such as homeopathy, tissue salts, yoga, etc. may be included based on jurisdictional regulations and naturopathic education.
- Other considerations between the naturopathic educational programs:
 - 2500 hours: ~950 hours; 4200 hours: ~1200 hours
 - In some jurisdictions, advanced training would include modalities such as acupuncture, intravenous therapy, ozone therapy, injection therapies and prescribing rights.

Supervised Clinical Practice

Supervised clinical practice is an integral part of all naturopathic educational programs.

- Other considerations between the naturopathic educational programs:
 - 2500 hours: ~500 hours; 4200 hours: ~1000 hours
 - The longer naturopathic educational programs often have a patient clinic associated with their educational institutions.
 - In some jurisdictions, naturopathic educational institutions offer community clinics as part of their clinical supervised practice opportunities.

Ethics and Business Practices

The naturopathic workforce generally works in private clinics either alone or with other health care providers. Ethics and business practices is generally about 50-hours in the 2500-hour and 100-hours in the 4000+ hour naturopathic educational program.

Research

Knowing how to interpret naturopathic research and various research methodologies is an important aspect of evidence-based naturopathic care.

Naturopathic researchers have investigated a broad range of health conditions and a diverse array of naturopathic treatments utilizing all types of research designs including randomized control trials, observational studies, reviews and case studies.

- Other considerations between the naturopathic educational programs:
 - 2500 hours: ~50 hours; 4200 hours: ~150 hours
 - In longer naturopathic educational programs, it is common for a naturopathic research department to be part of the educational institution and for naturopathic students to engage in naturopathic research.

Numbers and Distribution of Naturopathic Educational Programs

There are 131 naturopathic educational programs globally with 38% residing in the region of South-East Asia, 27% in the European region, 22% in the region of the Americas, 9% in the Western Pacific region and 4% in the African region.

The doctorate-level programs exist in most WHO Regions - primarily in North America, Asia (India) and Western Pacific. There is diversity in naturopathic educational programs in some WHO Regions, especially Europe and Latin America, however the trend is towards two distinct naturopathic educational programs globally – the 2500-hour practitioner program and the 4000+ hour naturopathic doctor-level program, as outlined above.