

# INTERNATIONAL CHIROPRACTIC EDUCATION ALLIANCE



WORLD FEDERATION OF  
CHIROPRACTIC

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# INTRODUCTION

2024 marked 127 years of chiropractic education of chiropractic education. From the establishment of the Palmer School and Cure in 1897, chiropractic education has expanded across the globe.

There are currently over 50 educational institutions around the world offering chiropractic training.

Historically, it was the case that the majority of these programs were housed in North America, with the United States being the largest provider of chiropractic education by far. For decades, the U.S. was the only option for training as a chiropractor until programs were established in Canada and beyond.

There are now institutions delivering chiropractic education in each of the WFC's seven world regions. More chiropractic programs now exist outside North America than within it.

Yet despite this proliferation of global chiropractic education, there has existed no organization that represents all institutions and has provided a forum for discussion and advancement of chiropractic education internationally.

In a profession such as chiropractic, the WFC has recognized the need to rectify this shortcoming. The needs of patients and the public are such that there must be a constant awareness of trends,

innovations, opportunities, challenges and threats to the delivery of chiropractic training. This can only be achieved through effective dialogue, the exchange of information and a coordinated platform for the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

This paper describes the establishment the International Chiropractic Education Alliance under the banner of the World Federation of Chiropractic.



# BACKGROUND

The WFC has, since its inception, championed high standards of chiropractic education as a means of strengthening and advancing the chiropractic profession. It has long been recognized that the growth and development of chiropractic was fundamentally linked to education and training that was externally validated and accredited.

In many countries, the professional status of the chiropractor is recognized in law. Robust systems of regulation ensure that the public is protected by unqualified charlatans whose substandard training presents a danger to patients. Regulators govern the practice of chiropractic by establishing threshold standards of competence and professionalism, which guide requirements for pre-qualifying education and training.

In 2005, the World Health Organization published its *Guidelines for Basic Training and Safety in Chiropractic*. This landmark document, translated into official and unofficial languages of WHO, served as a template for the development of chiropractic, assisted in formal recognition of the profession by nations around the world, and afforded the profession international legitimacy and credibility.

In 2021, it was agreed that these



Guidelines should be updated and, in accordance with WHO's similar documents, revisions would be referred to as Benchmarks. The Benchmarking project has been funded by a donation of the WFC, which in turn has collected contributions from global stakeholders who support the development of chiropractic education and training.

Until now, there has existed no global organization that serves as an umbrella to support, promote and

## BACKGROUND (CONTINUED)

assist in the development of chiropractic education. The Association of Chiropractic Colleges (ACC) has decades of experience representing the interests of principally North American institutions, despite having admitted into membership educational providers from France and New Zealand. However, there remains no over-arching organization to represent the interests of all international educational stakeholders.

The ICEA aims to fill this void and provide a forum for chiropractic educational institutions throughout the world.

For over 20 years, the WFC has, in association with the ACC, delivered a biennial chiropractic education conference. These conferences have covered a range of themes and have

attracted attendees from both within and outside the chiropractic profession. They have resulted in consensus statements being developed and published for the benefit of institutions worldwide.

The composition of chiropractic educational institutions has changed significantly over the years. From being single-program colleges, many now offer a wide range of health sciences programs and have diversified to meet the needs and expectations of modern health care education. Some chiropractic programs are housed in public universities, marking a transition from the days where chiropractic education was regarded as separate and distinct from any other health professions training.

## OBJECTIVES

The ICEA serves as the overarching international body representing the interests of chiropractic educators around the world. It provides a forum for discussion, sharing of best practices and advocacy for high and consistent standards of education.

As a single body, operating under the WFC, the ICEA serves as an apolitical organization with a core aim of ensuring that chiropractic education remains fit for purpose, keeping an eye

on identifying trends, innovations, and meeting challenges through active discussion, and consensus building.

The ICEA also serves as a platform for connecting global experts, liaising with accreditation organizations, advising on the establishment of new programs and serving as a specialist voice for chiropractic educators. It is also instrumental in contributing to the planning and execution of global education conferences

# CHIROPRACTIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS BY REGION

## AFRICA

Durban University of Technology  
University of Johannesburg

## ASIA

International Medical University

## EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Bahçeşehir University

## EUROPE

Barcelona College of Chiropractic  
London South Bank University  
Madrid Chiropractic College  
McTimoney College of Chiropractic  
(Hong Kong, Madrid, Manchester, Oxford)  
Health Sciences University  
IFEC (Paris & Toulouse)  
Scandinavian College of Chiropractic  
Teesside University  
University of South Wales  
University of Southern Denmark  
University of Zurich

## LATIN AMERICA

Central University UCEFF  
Feevale University  
Universidad Estatal del Valle del  
Ecatepec  
Universidad Estatal del Valle del Toluca  
Universidad Veracruzana  
University of Anhembi Morumbi  
University of Central Chile

## NORTH AMERICA

Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College  
Campbellsville University  
Cleveland Chiropractic Kansas City  
D'Youville College  
Keiser University  
Life Chiropractic College West  
Life University  
Logan University  
National University of Health sciences  
Northeast College of Health Sciences  
Northwestern University of Health  
Sciences  
Palmer College of Chiropractic (Florida)  
Palmer College of Chiropractic  
(Davenport)  
Palmer College of Chiropractic (West)  
Parker University  
Sherman College of Chiropractic  
Southern California University of Health  
Sciences  
Texas College of Chiropractic  
Universidad Central del Caribe  
University of Bridgeport  
University of Quebec at Trois Rivieres  
University of Western States

## PACIFIC

Australian Chiropractic College  
Central Queensland University  
Macquarie University  
Murdoch University  
New Zealand College of Chiropractic  
RMIT University

# STAKEHOLDERS

Full voting Members of the ICEA shall comprise programs and institutions conferring recognized chiropractic educational qualifications. From the representatives of the Members, a Coordinating Council will be selected. The Member representatives serving on the Council will be afforded full voting rights and will meet in person at least once in every two years at the WFC Global Education Conference.

To be accepted as full Members, programs or institutions will pay modest annual dues, to ensure the financial sustainability of the ICEA.

The ICEA will also offer a category of Associate Membership. This category will comprise organizations that are not of themselves educational programs or institutions but which are intimately involved with the support and provision of high-quality chiropractic education. Examining bodies, jurisdictional regulators, accreditation organizations, examining and testing boards, student bodies and other special interest groups will be invited to join this category of membership. While these organizations will not hold full voting privileges, they will nevertheless enjoy rights of attendance and speaking privileges at meetings of the ICEA, as well as invited representation on specialist task forces.



# TERMS OF REFERENCE

## 1.0 Purpose

The International Chiropractic Education Alliance ("ICEA", "Alliance") shall serve as a global body with principal purposes of strengthening the organizational framework of chiropractic education worldwide and promoting access to high-quality chiropractic education for students from all backgrounds and nations. This is consistent with the mission of the World Federation of Chiropractic's (WFC), to advance awareness, utilization and integration of chiropractic internationally, and its commitment to support high standards of chiropractic education that empower graduates to serve their patients and communities as ethical, high value, and trusted healthcare professionals.

## 2.0 Preamble

### 2.1 Global challenges and the need for an international alliance

Globally, there are over 50 educational programs and institutions conferring chiropractic qualifications. Since the first chiropractic school was opened in 1897, the training of chiropractors has expanded beyond North America and there are now programs being delivered in each of the WFC's seven world regions.

Social determinants of health mean that the needs of communities being served by chiropractors differ from country to country and region to region. Despite this, the expectations of patients and the public, primarily that healthcare professionals are trustworthy, safe and competent, are similar around the world. Consistency in the delivery of chiropractic education and alignment to transparent competencies expected of graduates must therefore be a priority.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified a significant shortfall in the number of health care workers in all parts of the world, especially in low- and middle-income countries. With low back pain having been identified in multiple global burden of disease studies as the single largest contributor to years lived with disability on the planet, and neck pain also featuring strongly, chiropractors are well placed to support patients in need of neuromusculoskeletal rehabilitation and disability prevention through the delivery of an evidence-based, biopsychosocial model of health care. Previous work relating to the identity of the



profession has established that chiropractors are spinal health experts in the health care system, although chiropractors are known for managing a full range of neuromusculoskeletal disorders. It is therefore the case that the global chiropractic profession has an unprecedented opportunity to improve the health of individuals and populations, and to help them overcome spine- and joint-related health deficits, prevent disability and promote rehabilitation as core elements of its work.

Despite the advances in chiropractic education, achieved through a range of initiatives, including partnerships with other higher education institutions, there remains no single global organization that brings chiropractic educators, chiropractic educational institutions and other relevant agencies together to agree strategies for international development and advancement

The establishment of the ICEA shall serve as a vehicle for the growth and development of chiropractic education, harmonization of standards and competencies and a forum for discussion

## **2.2 Rationale for a WFC-hosted International Chiropractic Education Alliance**

The WFC is the global voice of the chiropractic profession. Established in 1988, it represents the national associations of chiropractors in over 90 countries across seven world regions. It is a non-state actor in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO).

Despite substantial progress having been achieved over the years, there remains much work to be done to expand chiropractic education and provide equitable access for students around the world. As the global voice of the chiropractic profession, the WFC is in a position to leverage its strong convening power to further strengthen advocacy efforts and organization in the education sector. Having a WFC-hosted International Chiropractic Education Alliance enables inclusive participation, building cohesion among education stakeholder groups, from affiliated organizations, member and non-member actors, partners, and supporters in all regions.

As the chiropractic education sector evolves, organizational support of a WFC-hosted Alliance will facilitate conceptual clarity and a collective understanding on global organization of chiropractic education, increasing alignment with other WFC activities, and strengthening the coordination, reach and impact of collective actions among stakeholders in addressing the global education challenges of today.

### **3.0 Status**

The ICEA shall exist as an informal network, established under the banner of the WFC, to promote high-quality chiropractic education, expand its professional organizational network, share experiences, and develop chiropractic education internationally.

The ICEA shall derive its status from the WFC and be administered and housed within the framework of the WFC. The operations of the ICEA shall in all respects be administered in accordance with the WFC policies and procedures, including those relating to finance, conduct, administration and the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion.

### **4.0 Vision and Goal**

The ICEA shall serve as the overarching international body convening chiropractic educators, educational programs and institutions around the world. It shall provide a forum for discussion, sharing of best practices and advocacy for consistent high quality standards of education. Operating under the auspices of the WFC, the ICEA shall serve as an inclusive, politically-neutral body with a core purpose of promoting consistency and high quality standards of chiropractic education, underpinned by WFC principles, including the pillars of evidence-based, people-centered, interprofessional and collaborative practice.

The ICEA shall exist as a platform for connecting global experts, advising on the establishment of new programs and shall serve as an expert voice for chiropractic educators, educational programs and institutions.

Biennial WFC global education conferences will continue under the direction of the ICEA, with administrative support provided by the secretariat of the WFC.

### **5.0 Core principles of the ICEA**

The ICEA shall be governed by the following principles:

- Equity, diversity and inclusion in membership and structure, ensuring appropriate representation from chiropractic educational programs, geographical regions, and income settings;
- Transparency in all processes, including operational strategy and activities;
- Alignment of all activities with the core objectives and goals of the ICEA, including its narrative and action areas;
- Dedication to high quality standards of education in chiropractic and alignment with the WFC vision, mission and principles.

## **6.0 Objectives**

### **6.1 Objective 1: Conduct evidence-based advocacy activities that increase support and raise awareness of global chiropractic education.**

To achieve this, the ICEA will:

- Develop a global advocacy strategy for chiropractic education;
- Encourage advocacy commitment and engagement from full and associate Members and other non-Member actors;
- Promote and disseminate information and resources aligned with International Chiropractic Education Alliance, including WFC resources;
- Promote and support, when and where relevant, WFC International Chiropractic Education Alliance events at global and regional level.

### **6.2 Objective 2: Strengthen networking and knowledge sharing within the chiropractic and wider educational sectors.**

To achieve this, the ICEA will:

- Facilitate communication between stakeholder groups of the chiropractic education sector through a common understanding and narrative of education;
- Strengthen and increase communication between ICEA members, with policy and decision-makers and other stakeholders.

### **6.3 Objective 3: Actively engage in the development and promotion of educational research.**

To achieve this, the ICEA will:

- Promote the undertaking of scholarly activity in research relevant to the provision of chiropractic education;
- Play a key role in the design and implementation of WFC Education Conferences.
- Work with key stakeholders in developing seminars to stimulate academic discussion around chiropractic education.

## **7.0 Governance and structure**

The ICEA will comprise: full Members, who shall be educational institutions offering one or more chiropractic programs leading to recognized qualifications;

and Associate Members, who shall be organizations affiliated to, or with an interest in, the promotion and provision of high quality chiropractic education.

Administrative support shall be provided by the WFC Secretariat. A Coordinating Council shall oversee the operations of the ICEA and shall ensure strategic implementation. The governance and structure of the ICEA shall be designed to facilitate coordination of activities, to ensure activities align with the ICEA's overall mission and objectives, and to preclude influences of individual or organization-specific agendas. The ICEA is not intended to be a regulatory authority, nor will it seek to exert control over the work and activities of its Members that occur outside the ICEA.

## **7.1 Secretariat**

The WFC Secretariat shall serve as the secretariat of the ICEA. Its role will be to oversee the day-to-day management of the ICEA's work, including coordination of meetings; to facilitate discussions across stakeholders on priorities and gaps; to prepare draft work plans for consideration by the Steering Committee and/or the Working Groups along with administration; and budget management.

More specifically, key responsibilities of the Secretariat shall be as follows:

- To serve as the interface between the ICEA and its Members;
- To select and manage the ICEA's membership in line with WFC procedures and policies and ICEA Terms of Reference;
- To coordinate the development, implementation and maintenance of agreed ICEA work plans in consultation with the Coordinating Council;
- To oversee implementation of ICEA work plans, in collaboration with the Coordinating Council;
- To monitor and evaluate activities and processes of the ICEA, proposing amendments as necessary, in consultation with the Coordinating Council, with a view to optimizing ICEA functioning and impact;
- To coordinate correspondence with ICEA members, as required, to facilitate participation and collaboration of all members;
- To coordinate ICEA Members' meetings, in collaboration with the Coordinating Council, including development of relevant documentation (e.g. agenda) and logistical support;
- To develop a central repository for the ICEA to house all relevant documents and resources;
- To develop and regularly update the ICEA website/webpage (hosted by WFC).

The WFC Board of Directors reserves the right not to implement any ICEA

recommendation or activity which it determines would give rise to undue financial, legal or reputational liability or is contrary to WFC policies, regulations and procedures.

## **7.2 Coordinating Council**

The Coordinating Council shall comprise of 6 (six) Member representatives, who shall be nominated by ICEA Full Members and ratified by the WFC Board. The Coordinating Council shall consist of a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and two members at large. In addition to its six-person membership, the WFC Secretary-General shall serve as an ex-officio member of the ICEA Coordinating Council.

The selection process shall be subject to the WFC Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Conflict of Interest policies. Coordinating Council decisions will be made through consensus of members. The duration of the term of appointment of Coordinating Council members shall be for an initial term of 2 (two) years, with the possibility of renewal up to a maximum of 3 (three) terms, with the exception of two members who shall serve only a single term.

Key responsibilities of the Coordinating Council are as follows:

- Provide overall strategic direction for the establishment of the ICEA. This includes supporting initial development of the overall ICEA work plans and strategies;
- Approve Member and Associate Member applications;
- Coordinate the establishment of any working groups, approve their work plans, and oversee all working group activities;
- Monitor and evaluate activities and processes of the ICEA, proposing amendments where appropriate.

## **7.3 Working groups**

Working groups will be established by the ICEA Coordinating Council chair where necessary to execute specific work plans, undertake discrete areas of consultation, develop position statements or undertake any such area of work that shall be identified as being appropriate and in accordance with the objectives and goals of the ICEA. Terms of reference for each working group shall be developed individually and be approved by the Coordinating Council.

## **8.0 Membership**

Full Members of the ICEA shall be educational institutions conferring chiropractic qualifications recognized by accreditation agencies, validating professional or statutory regulatory bodies, or jurisdictional authorities.

Associate Membership is offered to any organization with an interest in chiropractic education and wishing to participate in the work of the ICEA and may include, but not be limited to, accreditation agencies, testing organizations, regulatory authorities, educational groups, student organizations, postgraduate education providers and national associations of chiropractors.

### **8.1 Membership applications**

Standardized Membership and Associate Membership application forms and online application processes shall be developed by the Secretariat. Membership and Associate Membership approval will be based on an assessment, due diligence process, and review of submitted documents, in accordance with the eligibility criteria and in accordance with WFC's rules and policies. All applications will be assessed by the Secretariat and approved by Coordinating Council. Following this, membership applicants will be notified of their membership approval (or otherwise) by the Secretariat.

## **9.0 Meetings**

The ICEA shall meet not less than twice in each calendar year; however, additional meetings may be scheduled as necessary. Meetings will ordinarily be held via video conference. During years when the WFC hosts a Global Education Conference, an in-person meeting of the ICEA shall be held.

The Coordinating Council will meet bimonthly to review issues relating to strategic implementation, actions of working groups, policy or position statements, and any other matters relevant to ICEA activities.

Where so determined by the ICEA, the Coordinating Council shall submit proposed amendments to established policy or terms of reference to the Secretariat for consideration by the WFC Board. The WFC Board reserves the right not to implement any recommendation or activity which is considered to give rise to undue financial, legal or reputational liability or is contrary to WFC policies, regulations and procedures.

The structure and frequency of working group meetings will be determined by the lead and co-lead of the respective working group, in coordination with the

Coordinating Council Chair. Working groups will report to the Coordinating Council at agreed intervals.

## **10.0 Termination and withdrawal**

Members have the right to withdraw from membership of the ICEA at any time subject to having paid all necessary dues, providing one month's written notice to the Secretariat and to the orderly conclusion of any ongoing activities.

## **11.0 Evaluation**

The ICEA, will evaluate its overall processes and outcomes and will submit a written report to the Board on an annual basis in order for the WFC to determine whether the ICEA is acting in accordance with its stated objectives and terms of reference.

## **12.0 Communications**

### **12.1 Visual Identity**

To ensure that the ICEA is deliberately communicating with one voice to external parties on topics of substance (principles, priorities, target product profiles, standards, plans and actions, funding, and all confidential information, etc.) any communication in the name of the ICEA will take place through the Secretariat.

The ICEA may develop a visual identifier such as a logo which will help identify the network to its audience. The visual identifier will be accompanied by the statement "WFC Hosted Network". The right to use the logo, including on publications, may be granted to Members on a case-by-case basis with prior written approval of the Secretariat. Members shall not use WFC's name, acronym and emblem without express permission. This includes, *inter alia*, the display of the WFC logo and name on any premises, equipment, as well as on any communication and/or training materials, training certificates, social media tools or publications. Permission shall be obtained from Members for the ICEA to use brand assets prior to publication.

### **12.2 Publications**

The ICEA shall seek guidance and approval from the WFC prior to the finalization of any publication and reserves the right to edit any such publication to ensure

consistency with any WFC policy or strategy.

Members and Associate Members must ensure that the work of the ICEA is not misrepresented.

### **12.3 Alliance website**

The ICEA shall have a web page that is housed within WFC's domain. This web page shall include a list of current Member and Associate Member organizations and information relevant to the activities of the ICEA.

### **13.0 Finance**

Members and Associate Members will pay annual membership dues that shall be set initially by the Steering Committee and reviewed from time to time by the Coordinating Council.

Members will be responsible for their own expenses in relation to all ICEA activities (including participation at meetings), unless agreed otherwise by the Secretariat





