

Advancing Chiropractic Education for the Future

WFC Global Education Conference | Friday, 16 October 2026 | 8:30–10:00 a.m.

New chiropractic courses are opening in some regions, while recruitment, affordability, academic capacity, and professional recognition remain challenges. This session examines how the profession can widen access and prepare graduates for ethical and effective practice within local health systems.

The WFC strategic frame

Adjusting to the Future (2024–2029) sets five objectives: create stakeholder value; promote professional consistency; ensure financial sustainability; achieve equitable workforce distribution; and maximize operational efficiency. The plan calls for greater consistency in education and training to strengthen public understanding and confidence. It also prioritizes places where chiropractic is underrepresented, working with local providers to strengthen the workforce.

Questions shaping global education

- **Access and attractiveness.** Tuition and living costs, years of study, relocation, delivery options, and limited visibility of chiropractic as a health career affect enrollment and who can enter the profession.
- **Standards and mobility.** Shared expectations for graduate competence can support educational quality, while regulation remains local. Cross-border recognition often involves repeated extensive assessment, time, and cost, even for experienced practitioners.
- **Capacity and sustainability.** University integration, distributed sites, mixed-mode teaching, and cross-border partnerships may make smaller local cohorts viable. Each model still needs qualified faculty, clinical supervision, research capacity, and adequate resources.
- **Responsible growth.** Competency-focused assessment, accreditation, faculty development, research, and ethical clinical training can support quality as provision expands. Local requirements and workforce needs must shape implementation.

Panel perspectives

Dawn Dane, EdD, MSc(Chiro), BSc(hons). Focuses on the interconnected challenges of access, attractiveness, and professional mobility in chiropractic education, and the role of flexible delivery, collaboration, and shared academic capacity in supporting sustainable growth. Draws on existing educational models that may help advance chiropractic education globally.

Deb Bushway, PhD. U.S. higher education faces a negative public narrative, federal policy changes, and a demographic decline in prospective students. Chiropractic enrollment has also declined; competition from other health careers and limited understanding of chiropractic's contributions may be factors. Requirements based on hours rather than demonstrated competence add time and cost. Some licensing rules are moving toward competencies, and programs are exploring business models to preserve access. Regulators and quality assurance bodies need to maintain essential outcomes for ethical, effective practice while responding to local norms and degree requirements.

Mark Stamper-Webster, BSc(Chiro), MSc(Chiro), MSc (PM) . . Examines the role of accrediting bodies in safeguarding educational quality, promoting consistency across jurisdictions, and supporting the responsible and sustainable growth of chiropractic programmes worldwide.

Routes to responsible growth

Build shared expectations for graduate competence while allowing programs to meet local degree, regulatory, and workforce requirements. Strengthen faculty development, collaboration, and education research. Consider recognition pathways that account for the quality of prior education, the comparability of regulatory systems, registration history, and demonstrated practice experience while maintaining public protection.

Further reading

WFC Strategic Plan 2024-2029

wfc.org/website/documents/797_wfc-strategic-plan-2024-2029.pdf