



- **FACT SHEET No. 3**

## **Pain Curriculum Design Models and Implementation Approaches**

Numerous pain societies and organizations have declared “pain management is a human right” [8]. However, decades of research have documented inadequate acute pain management, and the Global Burden of Disease Study points to persistent pain as an increasing cause of morbidity and disability worldwide [13]. These data will not change without making pain education a priority and pain care competency a requirement for all of our health professional graduates. Although integrating pain content into already full curricula can be challenging, the use of existing resources can facilitate the process.

Depending on curriculum requirements, all four domains of the [IASP Curricula](#) need to be considered:

- multidimensional nature of pain
- pain assessment and measures
- management of pain
- application to clinical conditions

Moreover, the importance of interprofessional education is increasingly being recognized so clinicians learn to work together to provide more effective pain care [4,7,14].

Curriculum design involves:

- clearly defined goals and rationale for student learning about pain
- the people to involve for success and sustainability
- the content, learning approaches, and evaluation methods that are feasible considering resources [9,14].



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Implementation involves strategies that consider:

- the level and experience of the student
- sequential learning targets
- iterative evaluation methods to ensure the required knowledge and skill outcomes

Adapting already developed curricula, models, and strategies can help save time and effort.

### Resources

1. [Professional and interprofessional curricula](#) at the prelicensure level (undergraduate, entry-to-practice)
  - The IASP website offers both professional and interprofessional curricula that can be implemented in a variety of ways considering the professions involved, patients being studied, and regional needs.
  - Pain competencies related to the IASP Curricula are foundational to ensure that all health professional graduates are able to provide effective and safe pain management [5,6,7].
  - A four-day pain course for first-year students at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine includes reflective activities such as a “pain portfolio” of students’ responses to pain images in works of art, personal pain experiences, and the role of empathy in medicine [11,12].
  - Blueprint of pain content and teaching methods with interprofessional collaboration from the University of Washington’s six health-science schools with recommendations for adding pain content [3].
  - “Pain Interprofessional Curriculum Model,” based on IASP domains, guides curriculum design and implementation through clarifying four key questions: (1) *Why* pain content is important in your context; (2) *who* to involve for success; (3) *what* content, scheduling, and resources are realistic; and (4) *How* to implement, whether professional or interprofessional, mandatory or elective, integrated hours or a course [14].
  - Integrating pain content in 19 UK universities across seven disciplines: both challenges and successful approaches [1].
  - [An Essential Pain Management-UK](#) has been introduced into 12 medical schools.
  - Online learning and mentoring-at-a-distance telemedicine programs have produced improvements in observed clinical skills in students, as well as in prescribing choices, knowledge, and confidence in primary care practitioners, but evidence for the effectiveness of these modalities is currently limited to high-resource settings [15, 16, 17].
2. Education interventions in clinical settings for health-care professionals



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- Deteriorating patient simulation as an effective “low tech” alternative for clinicians’ education on postoperative pain assessment, with improvements in performance and knowledge comparable with more costly standardized patient-based simulation [10].
- Pain education workshops for nurses working in pediatric and neonatal units improved pain knowledge scores in a pretest and post-test design [3].

### 3. Postgraduate and professional continuing education

- [IASP Pain Schools and Camps](#)
- [IASP chapters and federation websites](#)

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IASP is the leading professional forum for science, practice, and education in the field of pain. [Membership is open to all professionals](#) involved in research, diagnosis, or treatment of pain. IASP has more than 7,000 members in 133 countries, 90 national chapters, and 20 Special Interest Groups.

Plan to join your colleagues at the [17th World Congress on Pain](#), September 12-16, 2018, in Boston, Massachusetts, USA.

As part of the Global Year for Excellence in Pain Education, IASP offers a series of nine Fact Sheets that cover specific topics related to pain education. These documents have been translated into multiple languages and are available for free download. Visit [www.iasp-pain.org/globalyear](http://www.iasp-pain.org/globalyear) for more information.



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