In the light of a global shortage of the health workforce, there is an urgent need to scale up the production of health professionals. Efforts to scale up the education of health professionals must not only increase the quantity of health workers but also address issues of quality and relevance in order to respond to population health needs.

Educational institutions need to:

- increase their capacity in terms of infrastructure
- improve the competencies of existing staff and increase their numbers
- reform admissions criteria
- graduate health professionals with required competencies by updating curricula and educational approaches on a regular basis.

Thus, there is a need to transform health professional education for the 21st century.

Transformative scaling up of health professionals' education and training is defined as the sustainable expansion and reform of health professionals' education and training to increase the

quantity, quality and relevance of health professionals, and in so doing strengthen the country health systems and improve population health outcomes. The WHO guidelines on transforming and scaling up health professionals' education and training were adopted in 2013.

Although there is a significant increase in the number of health professional education institutions in many Member States of the Region, the increase is not able to keep pace with population growth which is demonstrated with insignificant changes in the density of health workers. The skill imbalances are also reflected in distribution of health professional education institutions.

**Related links**

WHO guidelines on transforming and scaling up health professionals' education and training

Global standards for the initial education of professional nurses and midwives

Medical education: a framework for action for the Eastern Mediterranean Region
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Review of medical education in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: challenges, priorities and a framework for action
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