

# **Northern Ireland Guide for those responsible for Student Supervision and Assessment in Practice (2023)**

**Aligned to the NMC Standards for Student  
Supervision and Assessment (NMC, 2023)**

**(For pre-registration and post-registration  
programmes)**

## Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. The Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment - The Northern Ireland Model (2023) .....	4
3. The Northern Ireland Guide for those Responsible for Student Supervision and Assessment in Practice (2023).....	5
4. The Nominated Person .....	7
4.1 Who can be the Nominated Person?.....	7
4.2 What is the role of the Nominated Person? .....	7
4.3 Who will support the Nominated Person?.....	7
5. Supervision of Students .....	8
5.1 Who can be the Practice Supervisor? .....	8
5.2 What is the role of Practice Supervisor?.....	9
5.3 Who will support the Practice Supervisor? .....	10
5.4 Preparation for the Role of Practice Supervisor.....	10
6. Assessment of Students .....	10
6.1 Assessment Process .....	10
6.2 Assessor Database.....	11
6.3 Practice Assessor .....	11
6.3.1 Who can be the Practice Assessor?.....	11
6.3.2 What is the role of the Practice Assessor? .....	12
6.3.3 Who will support the Practice Assessor? .....	12
6.3.4 Preparation for the role of Practice Assessor .....	13
6.4 Academic Assessors.....	13
6.4.1 Who can be the Academic Assessor?.....	13
6.4.2 What is the role of the Academic Assessor? .....	14
6.4.3 Who will support the Academic Assessor?.....	14
6.4.4 Preparation for the role of Academic Assessor .....	14
7. Link Lecturer/Practice Tutor .....	14
7.1 What is the role of the Link Lecturer/Practice Tutor? .....	14
7.1.1 Independent Sector: Link Lecturer/Practice Tutor .....	15
8. Practice Education Teams .....	15
9. Escalating Concerns Regarding a Student in the Practice Learning Environment .....	16
10. Glossary of Terms .....	17
11. References.....	19
Appendix One: Escalating Concerns Regarding a Student in Practice Learning Environments .....	20

Appendix Two: Principles for: Practice Supervisor/Practice Assessor preparation programmes to support Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (SCPHN) and Specialist Practice Qualifications (SPQ) student learning and assessment.....	21
Appendix Three: Preparation Programme Requirements .....	22
Appendix Four: Additional Guidance regarding Practice Assessors .....	23

**NB.** This document will continue to be updated in accordance with any NMC updates that are required to meet the needs of students undertaking NMC approved pre-registration and post-registration programmes.

## 1. Introduction

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Standards Framework for Nursing and Midwifery Education (NMC, 2023b) should be read with the NMC Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (NMC, 2023a), and the programme standards which are specific for each pre-registration and post-registration educational programme. Taking all these together, these are the NMC standards for education and training for the nursing and midwifery professions.

The NMC Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (NMC, 2023a) set out the roles and responsibilities of practice supervisors and assessors, and the expectations for the learning, support, supervision and assessment of students in the practice learning environments. They also set out how students are assessed for theory and practice and ensure they have a fair and reliable assessment by an appropriate practice assessor.

The process of supervising and assessing students is one of partnership between the NMC, Approved Education Institutions (AEIs) and practice learning partners to ensure safe and effective learning experiences that upholds public protection. It is a process, which fosters a positive learning relationship with the student and enhances their professional and personal development. It also aims to empower the student in becoming a more resilient critical thinker and decision maker who can analyse, reflect on and improve their practice.

Students undertaking pre-registration nursing and midwifery programmes should have supernumerary status when they are undertaking their practice learning. They should always be considered part of the professional team and integral to the workforce through their contribution in providing safe and effective care, however they should not be counted as part of the staffing numbers in the practice setting. By observing and participating in practice, students should add real value to care while evidencing their learning. Students completing post-registration programmes should have employer support in practice, that includes protected learning time to undertake the learning required to meet the competencies linked to their programme.

The principles and processes contained within this guide applies to all pre-registration programmes and the following post-registration programmes;

- Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (SCPHN) programmes
- Community nursing Specialist Practice Qualifications (SPQ) programmes with integrated prescribing
- Non-community Specialist Practice Qualifications (SPQ) programmes with integrated prescribing
- Non-community Specialist Practice Qualifications (SPQ) programmes without integrated prescribing
- Independent/supplementary prescribing programmes.

## 2. The Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment - The Northern Ireland Model (2023)

In Northern Ireland (NI) there are three AEI's; The Open University, Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University who in partnership with practice learning partners, provide NMC approved nursing and midwifery education programmes.

The NI Model for Future Nurse Future Midwife, Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (DoH and NIPEC, 2021) was developed in partnership by the AEI's and practice learning partners to support the learning, support, supervision and assessment of students undertaking NMC approved education programmes. This was updated in 2023 to include the NMC Standards for post-registration (2024a) and the NMC Standards for prescribing programmes (NMC 2024b) is now called the 'The Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment - The Northern Ireland Model (DOH and NIPEC, 2023)'.

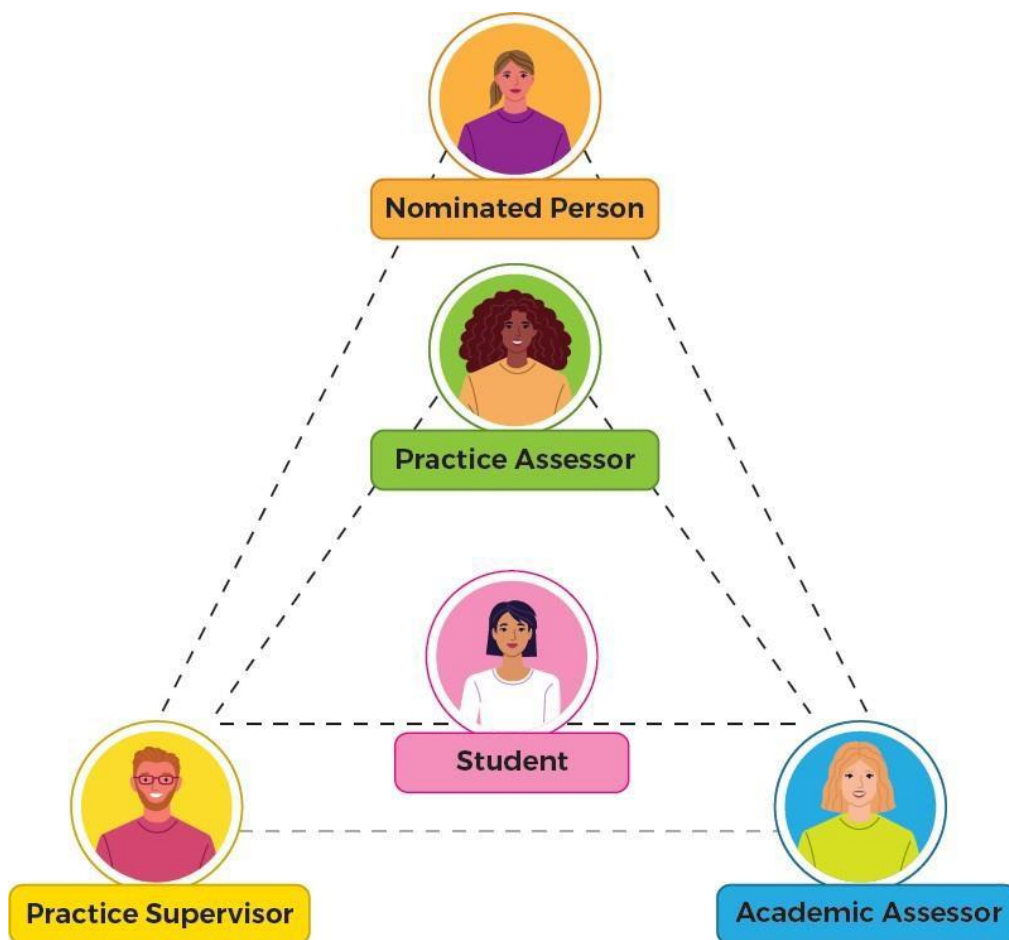
### **3. The Northern Ireland Guide for those Responsible for Student Supervision and Assessment in Practice (2023)**

This guide has been developed to support the Northern Ireland Model (DoH and NIPEC, 2023) and provides details on the roles and responsibilities of practice supervisors and assessors, and how they can provide a good learning experience for students during their practice placements. It also includes details on the regional approach to the practice assessor database, the roles of the HSC Trust Practice Education Teams or equivalent, and link lecturer/practice tutors.

The following roles work in partnership to support the the Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (NMC, 2023a), illustrated in Diagram 1 below:

- Nominated Person (ward sister/charge nurse/team leader/manager/or general practice nurse lead)
- Practice Supervisor (all registered nurses/midwives and other healthcare professionals)
- Practice Assessor (all registered nurse/midwives, designated prescribing practitioner)
- Academic Assessor (member/affiliated member of academic staff in AEI)
- Link Lecturer/Practice Tutor.

**Diagram 1: Partnership Approach in Student Supervision and Assessment in Practice.**



Every student will be allocated:

- at least one practice supervisor for every practice learning experience
- a nominated practice assessor for each practice learning experience or series of practice learning experiences
- a nominated academic assessor for all or each part of the education programme (as appropriate).

The nominated academic assessor works in partnership with the practice assessor/s to evaluate and recommend the student for progression for each part of the programme. They will certify that the student has met all the programme requirements and is able to demonstrate application of the values and principles as set out in the Code (NMC, 2018). This is informed by feedback sought and received from practice supervisor/s and practice assessors.

This partnership approach will ensure that processes to carry out robust, objective, fair and transparent assessments and shared decision-making have been upheld.

## 4. The Nominated Person

### 4.1 Who can be the Nominated Person?

The nominated person for each practice learning environment will normally be the ward sister/charge nurse/team leader/manager or general practice nurse lead. The name of the nominated person will be detailed on the Practice Learning Environment Educational Audit (PLEEA).



Nominated Person

### 4.2 What is the role of the Nominated Person?

The nominated person will:

- ensure continuity of the practice learning experience for the student
- actively support student learning
- be responsible for assigning students to each practice supervisor and practice assessor
- consider the registrant's scope of practice when assigning practice supervisor/s and practice assessor/s
- support the practice supervisor/s and practice assessor/s to manage student underperformance or concerns in collaboration with the Practice Education Team (when appropriate), the link lecturer and academic assessor
- ensure the practice assessor/s and practice supervisor/s receive appropriate preparation and have ongoing access to support
- liaise with the Practice Education Team (when appropriate) or AEI
- co-ordinate and monitor quality assurance processes to support the Practice Learning Environment (PLE) and meet the NMC Standards Framework for Nursing and Midwifery Education (NMC,2023b) i.e. student evaluation, educational audit, maintenance of the practice assessor database and continuing professional development requirements for the practice supervisor and practice assessor.

### 4.3 Who will support the Nominated Person?

The nominated person will be supported by the:

- Line Manager
- Link Lecturer/Practice Tutor
- Academic Assessor
- Peers
- Practice Education Team or equivalent.

## 5. Supervision of Students

Practice supervision enables students to learn safely and achieve proficiency and autonomy in their professional role. Every student will be allocated at least one practice supervisor for each practice learning experience. When identifying a practice supervisor/s to support the student, the registrant's scope of practice will be considered.

There may be different models of supervision within the PLE such as 1:1 or Hub and Spoke<sup>1</sup>.



Practice Supervisor

It is anticipated that students will work with and learn from a range of people who may not always be registered healthcare professionals but who can positively contribute to their learning; this practice learning experience will be coordinated by the practice supervisor/s.

### 5.1 Who can be the Practice Supervisor?

All NMC registered nurses and midwives are capable of supervising students, serving as role models for safe and effective practice. They will be prepared for the role and undertake a practice supervisor/assessor preparation programme which will be delivered and supported by identified key personnel across practice and education environments (Appendix Two). Students may also be supervised by other registered health and social care professionals. Each PLE will provide opportunities for the practice supervisor/s to observe the student across a range of environments in order to support and feedback to the practice assessor/s, which will inform decision making on assessments and progression to the next part of the programme or onto the NMC professional register. Practice supervisors will have an understanding of the proficiencies and programme outcomes that the student is required to achieve.

For Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (SCPHN) programmes and Specialist Practice Qualifications (SPQ) programmes, practice supervisors will have:

- undertaken a period of preceptorship in line with the NMC principles for preceptorship (NMC, 2022) as a SCPHN or SPQ qualified professional or,
- evidence of prior learning and relevant practice supervisor experience that enables them to facilitate effective evidence-based learning opportunities for post-registration SCPHN or SPQ students

The student undertaking an NMC approved independent/supplementary prescribing qualification as part of a SPQ or stand-alone prescribing programme must have at least one practice supervisor, who is a registered health care professional and a registered prescriber. They must have the skills to supervise and educate in order to help the student meet the outcomes of the NMC Standards for Prescribing Programmes (NMC, 2024b) and the RPS Competency Framework for all Prescribers (RPS, 2021)<sup>2</sup>.

The same person cannot fulfil the role of practice supervisor and practice assessor for the same student. There are exceptional circumstances to this rule however, the same person may undertake each role simultaneously for separate students.

---

<sup>1</sup>Hub and Spoke is defined as a base practice learning environment/experience (the hub) from which the student's learning is complemented by additional activities (the spoke).

<sup>2</sup> The prescribing practice assessor however, should be a registered healthcare professional and an experienced prescriber with the V300 qualification.



## 5.2 What is the role of Practice Supervisor?

The practice supervisor will:

- serve as a role model for safe and effective practice in line with their code of conduct
- have current knowledge and experience of the area in which they are providing support, supervision and feedback
- support learning in line with their scope of practice to enable the student to meet their proficiencies and programme outcomes
- organise and co-ordinate student learning activities in practice, ensuring quality, safe and effective practice learning experiences that uphold public protection and the safety of people
- ensure the level of supervision provided to students reflects their learning needs and stage of learning
- ensure requirement and rights around informed consent are implemented and that public protection is maintained
- use their professional judgment and local/national policies to determine where activities may be safely delegated to students and the level of supervision required
- be accountable for their decisions
- support and supervise students, providing both written and verbal feedback on their progress towards achievement of proficiencies and skills
- set and monitor realistic achievement of proficiencies through the development of evidence identified within the programme specific practice assessment documents.
- contribute to the student's ongoing record of achievement in the student's practice assessment documents by periodically recording relevant observations on the conduct, proficiency and achievement of the students they are supervising
- facilitate practice based independent learning as appropriate
- support learning in an inter-professional environment, selecting and supporting a range of learning opportunities for students with other professions
- encourage and coordinate students to work with and learn from a number of people who are not registered healthcare professionals but who can positively contribute to their learning
- contribute to student assessments to inform decisions for progression at summative assessment points, in the programme through reviewing evidence to ensure its authenticity, standard and completeness
- liaise with others (e.g. practice education team, practice assessor, link lecturer/practice tutor, academic assessor, nominated person) to provide feedback and identify any concerns about the student's performance and agree action as appropriate
- identify when a student is underperforming, or where there are professional concerns, taking prompt action to notify the appropriate key persons and document the concerns/underperformance with the student's consent in their practice assessment document (Appendix One).

The supervisory role that non-registered healthcare support staff play in supervising students will be dependent on their skill, knowledge and experience. They will be prepared for this role (Appendix Three) and receive ongoing support.

### **5.3 Who will support the Practice Supervisor?**

The practice supervisor can access support from the:

- Nominated Person
- Link Lecturer for the Student
- Other Practice Supervisors
- Practice Assessor
- Academic Assessor
- Practice Education Team or equivalent
- Trust Nurse/Midwife Prescribing Lead<sup>3</sup>

The practice supervisor can also gain additional support during their discussions at their reflective supervision sessions, annual appraisals and NMC revalidation processes.

### **5.4 Preparation for the Role of Practice Supervisor**

Practice supervisors will have the knowledge and experience that meets the NMC Standards Framework for Nursing and Midwifery Education (NMC,2023b) and understand the proficiencies and programme outcomes that they are supporting students to achieve. Preparation programmes will be available, delivered and supported by key personnel in both practice and education environments (Appendix Three) and will be offered via e-Learning or face to face platforms.

## **6. Assessment of Students**

The student will have a practice assessor for each practice learning experience or series of practice learning experiences and an academic assessor for each part of the programme. Students will not be assigned the same academic assessor on consecutive parts of the programme. The practice assessor will not simultaneously be the practice supervisor and practice assessor for the same student except in exceptional circumstances.

### **6.1 Assessment Process**

During the final stage of each part of the programme or at agreed progression points, depending on the programme, the practice assessor will work in partnership with the academic assessor to undertake student assessment. They will consider feedback from practice supervisor/s and other practice assessors to evaluate and recommend the student for progression to the next part of the programme and ultimately onto the NMC professional register. Assessment outcome and confirmation of proficiencies are based on an understanding of the student's achievement across theory and practice and is provisional until all practice hours are completed and there are no emerging professional/performance issues.

The academic assessor and the practice assessor will work in partnership to undertake the assessment with the student in line with AEI/organisation's policy.

---

<sup>3</sup> Trust nurse/midwife prescribing lead specific to NMC prescribing programmes

## 6.2 Assessor Database

HSC Trusts will maintain their own practice assessor database and AElS will maintain a practice assessor database for the Independent Sector. A practice assessor database will record the following details:

- Name
- NMC PIN
- Part of NMC Register
- Field of Practice
- Date of Preparation for Role.

## 6.3 Practice Assessor

### 6.3.1 Who can be the Practice Assessor?

All practice assessors will have completed the practice supervisor/assessor preparation programme and provide evidence that they meet the outcomes for the role. There are specific programme requirements depending on the practice assessor's registration and the programme the student is studying.



To assess a:

- nursing student, the practice assessor must be a registered nurse with appropriate equivalent experience for the student's field of practice.
- midwifery student, the practice assessor must be a registered midwife.
- SCPHN student, the practice assessor must be an experienced registered SCPHN with appropriate equivalent experience for the student's field of practice (refer to Appendix Four for additional guidance). The practice assessor must also have undertaken a period of preceptorship in line with the NMC principles for preceptorship (NMC, 2022) as a SCPHN or can evidence prior learning and relevant practice assessor experience that enables them to engage in fair, reliable and valid assessment processes in the context of SCPHN.
- SPQ student, the practice assessor must be an experienced registered SPQ nurse for the programme the student is undertaking (refer to Appendix Four for additional guidance). The practice assessor must have also undertaken a period of preceptorship in line with the NMC principles for preceptorship (NMC, 2022) as a SPQ or can evidence prior learning and relevant practice assessor experience that enables them to engage in fair, reliable and valid assessment processes in the context of SPQ.
- student undertaking an NMC approved independent/supplementary prescribing qualification (V300) as part of an integrated prescribing/SPQ programme, or stand-alone prescribing programme, the student must be assigned to a practice assessor who is a registered healthcare professional and an experienced prescriber<sup>4</sup> with suitable equivalent qualifications for the programme the student is undertaking (NMC,2024b).

---

<sup>4</sup> An experienced prescriber is an active prescriber who would normally have at least 3 years' recent prescribing experience. An active prescriber consults with patients and makes prescribing decisions based on clinical assessment with sufficient frequency to maintain competence. Reflects and audits prescribing practice to identify developmental needs (RPS, 2019).

In exceptional circumstances, the same person may fulfil the role of practice supervisor and practice assessor for a part of the programme where the SCPHN, SPQ or prescribing student is undergoing education and training in a practice learning setting. In such instances, the Practice Education Facilitator, nominated person and the AEI will need to evidence why it was necessary for the practice supervisor and practice assessor roles to be carried out by the same person and recorded in the practice assessment document. This request will be considered, discussed and agreed with the AEI in advance of the student commencing the programme.

### **6.3.2 What is the role of the Practice Assessor?**

The practice assessor will:

- conduct all assessments and work in partnership with the academic assessor to evaluate and recommend the student for progression for the summative points for each part of the programme or agreed progression points, depending on the programme
- make and record objective, evidenced-based assessments on conduct, proficiency and achievement, drawing on student records, direct observations, student self-reflection, and other resources
- periodically observe the student across environments in order to inform decisions for assessment and progression in partnership with the academic assessor
- ensure that assessment decisions are informed by feedback sought and received from practice supervisor/s
- confirm that all the evidence required for the specific part of the programme has been provided by the student and authenticated by practice assessors and practice supervisor/s. This will include evidence of authenticity, standard of completeness and relevancy to the claimed proficiencies
- in exceptional circumstances, agree alternative arrangements with the academic assessor and student if all three parties cannot be present at the assessment
- maintain current knowledge and expertise relevant to the proficiencies and programme outcomes they are assessing
- provide assurances that they maintain their professional knowledge and skills and critically reflect on their role through a range of processes, which includes NMC revalidation, supervision and appraisals.

### **6.3.3 Who will support the Practice Assessor?**

The nominated practice assessor can access support from the:

- Nominated Person
- Link Lecturer/Practice Tutor for the practice area
- Academic Assessor for Student/s
- Relevant Programme Leader
- Practice Education Team or equivalent
- Trust Nurse/Midwife Prescribing Lead (if relevant).

The practice assessor can gain additional support during discussions at their reflective supervision sessions, annual appraisals, and NMC revalidation processes.

Practice assessors new to the role may wish to shadow an experienced practice assessor, this should be discussed with the nominated person.

There will be ongoing opportunities to participate in discussions and updates on the role of the practice assessor. This may be accessed in a variety of ways including discussions with the support personnel (above), drop in sessions, teaching/assessing events and online learning in the practice and education environments.

### **6.3.4 Preparation for the role of Practice Assessor**

Practice assessors will have the knowledge and experience that meets the NMC Standards Framework for Nursing and Midwifery Education (NMC,2023b) and have an understanding of the proficiencies and programme outcomes that they are supporting students to achieve. Preparation programmes will be available, delivered and supported by key personnel in both practice and education environments (Appendix Two and Appendix Three). They will be delivered via eLearning or face-to-face platforms.

## **6.4 Academic Assessors**

The programme lead for each NMC programme will allocate an appropriate academic assessor for the summative points in the student's programme. AEs will identify the academic assessor for each student through their local clinical allocation system and the academic assessor will be advised of their student's nominated practice assessor.



### **6.4.1 Who can be the Academic Assessor?**

The academic assessor will:

- be a member or affiliated member of academic staff from the student's AEI
- be a registered nurse or midwife with relevant knowledge and experience of the programme the student is undertaking
- hold relevant qualifications as required by their AEI
- have completed an academic assessor preparation programme or equivalent.

The academic assessor for prescribing programmes will be a member/affiliated member of academic staff who is a registered healthcare professional with suitable equivalent qualifications for the programme the student is undertaking. Students will not be assigned the same academic assessor for consecutive parts of the programme.

### **6.4.2 What is the role of the Academic Assessor?**

The academic assessor will:

- maintain current knowledge and expertise relevant to the proficiencies and programme outcomes they are assessing and confirming
- collate and confirm student achievement of proficiencies and programme outcomes in the academic environment for each part of the programme
- communicate and collaborate with the practice assessor at scheduled relevant points during the student's programme
- make and record objective, evidence-based decisions on conduct, proficiency and achievement, and make recommendations for progression drawing on student records and other resources
- have an understanding of the student's learning and achievement in practice including any concerns around underperformance
- liaise with the link lecturer concerning any student underperformance issues
- work in partnership with the practice assessor to evaluate and recommend the student for progression for the summative points for each part of the programme, or agreed progression points depending on the programme in line with programme standards and for entry (or additional entry) to the NMC professional register
- forward the outcome of summative assessments to the appropriate person in a timely manner and advise the appropriate AEI personnel of any issues concerning the student's progress.

### **6.4.3 Who will support the Academic Assessor?**

The opportunities to prepare for the role will be flexible and designed to meet the needs of the academic assessor. Link lecturers/practice tutors will simultaneously undertake the role of academic assessor following completion of a preparation programme or equivalent (Appendix Three).

### **6.4.4 Preparation for the role of Academic Assessor**

In order to fulfil their role, the academic assessor will receive on-going training and support from their AEI to develop their professional practice and knowledge.

## **7. Link Lecturer/Practice Tutor**

The Schools of Nursing in each of Northern Ireland's three AEIs operate a link lecturer/practice tutor system with an identified member of staff allocated to each PLE.

### **7.1 What is the role of the Link Lecturer/Practice Tutor?**

The link lecturer/practice tutor will:

- undertake the role of academic assessor for allocated students
- support students and practice supervisors in clarifying the learning opportunities available to develop evidence for the practice assessment document.

- be available to support and advise students and practice supervisor/s in relation to challenges to student learning within the PLE
- ensure that necessary measures are taken to make effective use of the learning potential in PLEs
- maintain accurate and appropriate records as required
- assure quality practice learning environments through the PLEEA and monitor the quality of the learning experience in collaboration with practice partners
- ensure the relevant process is followed in the event of concerns regarding a student (Appendix One)
- collaborate with the appropriate AEI personnel, nominated person, practice supervisor and the Practice Education Team (where applicable) regarding issues which may impact on students' learning experiences or performance
- encourage students to complete evaluation questionnaires
- provide assurances that they maintain their professional knowledge and skills and critically reflect on their role through a range of processes including NMC revalidation, supervision and appraisals.

### **7.1.1 Independent Sector: Link Lecturer/Practice Tutor**

Within the Independent Sector the link lecturer in addition to the above list is responsible for:

- providing professional support to the nominated person or equivalent, the practice supervisor, the practice assessor and students
- ensuring quality practice learning environments through the PLEEA
- monitoring the quality of the practice learning experience in collaboration with the AEIs and through student evaluation questionnaires.

## **8. Practice Education Teams**

Practice Education Teams provide professional support, advice and guidance to the nominated person, practice supervisors and practice assessors. In partnership with AEIs, they will support students to ensure that the NMC Standards Framework for Nursing and Midwifery Education (NMC,2023b), the NMC Standards to Support Student Supervision and Assessment (NMC, 2023a) and programme standards are met.

The Practice Education Team will:

- work in partnership with others to contribute to systems that monitor the effectiveness of learning and education activities within all NMC approved programmes and non-NMC approved education programmes.
- collate and maintain the practice assessor database and facilitate a process to share required information with AEIs within General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) regulations
- in partnership with the AEI and the nominated person will ensure the quality of the PLE through the completion and monitoring/updating of the PLEEA
- monitor the quality of the practice learning experience in collaboration with the AEIs and through student evaluations.

Where there are no Practice Education Teams, e.g. Independent Sector, the link lecturer/practice tutor will provide this support.



## **9. Escalating Concerns Regarding a Student in the Practice Learning Environment**

Any concerns raised about the student in the practice learning environment should be managed in a timely manner in line with the guidance in Appendix One and if appropriate refer to the NMC Raising Concerns: Guidance for Nurses, Midwives and Nursing Associates (NMC, 2019). If using the Hub and Spoke model where the Spoke practice learning experience is a different organisation to the Hub, any concerns that arise will be managed by the nominated person and the link lecturer/practice tutor who will be the first point of contact.



## 10. Glossary of Terms

**Active prescriber:** Consults with patients and makes prescribing decisions based on clinical assessment with sufficient frequency to maintain competence. Reflects and audits prescribing practice to identify developmental needs.

**Approved Education Institutions (AEI):** the status awarded by the NMC to an institution or part of an institution, or combination of institutions that work in partnership with practice placement and work placed learning providers. AEIs will have provided the NMC with assurance that they are accountable and capable of delivering NMC approved education programmes.

**Experienced prescriber:** An active prescriber who would normally have at least 3 years' recent prescribing experience.

**GDPR:** General Data Protection Regulation.

**Hub and Spoke:** Hub and Spoke is defined as a base practice learning environment/experience (the hub) from which the students learning is complemented by additional activities (the spoke) provided outside the Hub placement.

**Non-registered health care support staff:** (In the context of supporting students) Students will work with and learn from a range of people who may not be registered healthcare professionals but who can positively contribute to their learning; this learning experience will be coordinated by practice supervisor/s. The supervisory role that non-registered professionals play will be dependent on their skills, knowledge and experience.

**Other registered health and social care professionals:** Health and social care professionals registered with a regulated health and social care body i.e GMC, HCPC, GPhC, NISCC.

**Practice Assessment Document:** Provides evidence of the student's ongoing record of achievement.

**Parts of a programme:** One part will usually constitute one year of a programme (parts 1-3) however; this will vary depending on what programme the student is studying and at which AEI. This detail will be included in the programme specific preparation.

**Practice assessor/Academic assessor database:** The collection of information specially organised to store limited specific information relating to practice assessors/academic assessors.

**Practice learning environment (PLE):** A setting/ward/unit (etc.) which has been audited by practice and AEI/s and approved for students to undertake a practice learning experience as part of their programme. Learning environment includes any physical location where learning takes place as well as the system of shared values, beliefs and behaviours.

**Practice Learning Environment Educational Audit (PLEEA):** The NMC requires that approved education institutions (AEIs), together with practice learning partners, regularly review all learning environments and provide assurance that they are safe and effective through proper oversight and effective governance processes, with clear lines of responsibility and accountability especially in responding to standards that are not met.

**Practice learning experience:** Students are supported to gain experiences and skills whilst in a practice learning environment. Multiple practice learning experiences could be acquired whilst the student works under different practice supervisors in one practice learning environment, for example, using a hub and spoke model.

**Practice learning partners:** Organisations that provide practice learning necessary for supporting pre- registration and post-registration students in meeting proficiencies and programme outcomes.

**Protected learning time:** Time in a health, care or other setting during which students are learning and are supported to learn. Students must be supervised during protected learning time. The level of supervision required is a matter of professional judgment and will depend on the competence and confidence of the student, and the risks associated with the intervention being delivered.

**Scope of practice:** Scope of practice is the person's limit of knowledge, skills and experience and is made up of the activities carried out within their professional role. Health care professionals must keep within their scope of practice at all times to ensure they are practising safely, lawfully and effectively.

**Supernumerary:** Supported to learn without being counted as part of the staffing required for safe and effective care in that setting.

## 11. References

Department of Health (DoH) and Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC) (DoH and NIPEC, 2021). *The NI Model for Future Nurse Future Midwife, Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment*. Available from: [Supporting the NMC Standards for Education and Training in Northern Ireland | NIPEC](#)

Department of Health (DoH) and Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC) (DoH and NIPEC, 2023). *The Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment - The Northern Ireland Model*. Available from: [Supporting the NMC Standards for Education and Training in Northern Ireland | NIPEC](#)

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC, 2018) *The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates*. London: NMC. Available from: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/code/>

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC, 2019) *Raising concerns: Guidance for nurses, midwives and nursing associates*. London: NMC. Available from: [Raising concerns: Guidance for nurses, midwives and nursing associates - The Nursing and Midwifery Council \(nmc.org.uk\)](#)

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC, 2022) *Principles for preceptorship*. London: NMC. Available from: [nmc-principles-for-preceptorship-a5.pdf](#)

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC, 2023a) *Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment*. London: NMC. Available from: [Standards for student supervision and assessment](#)

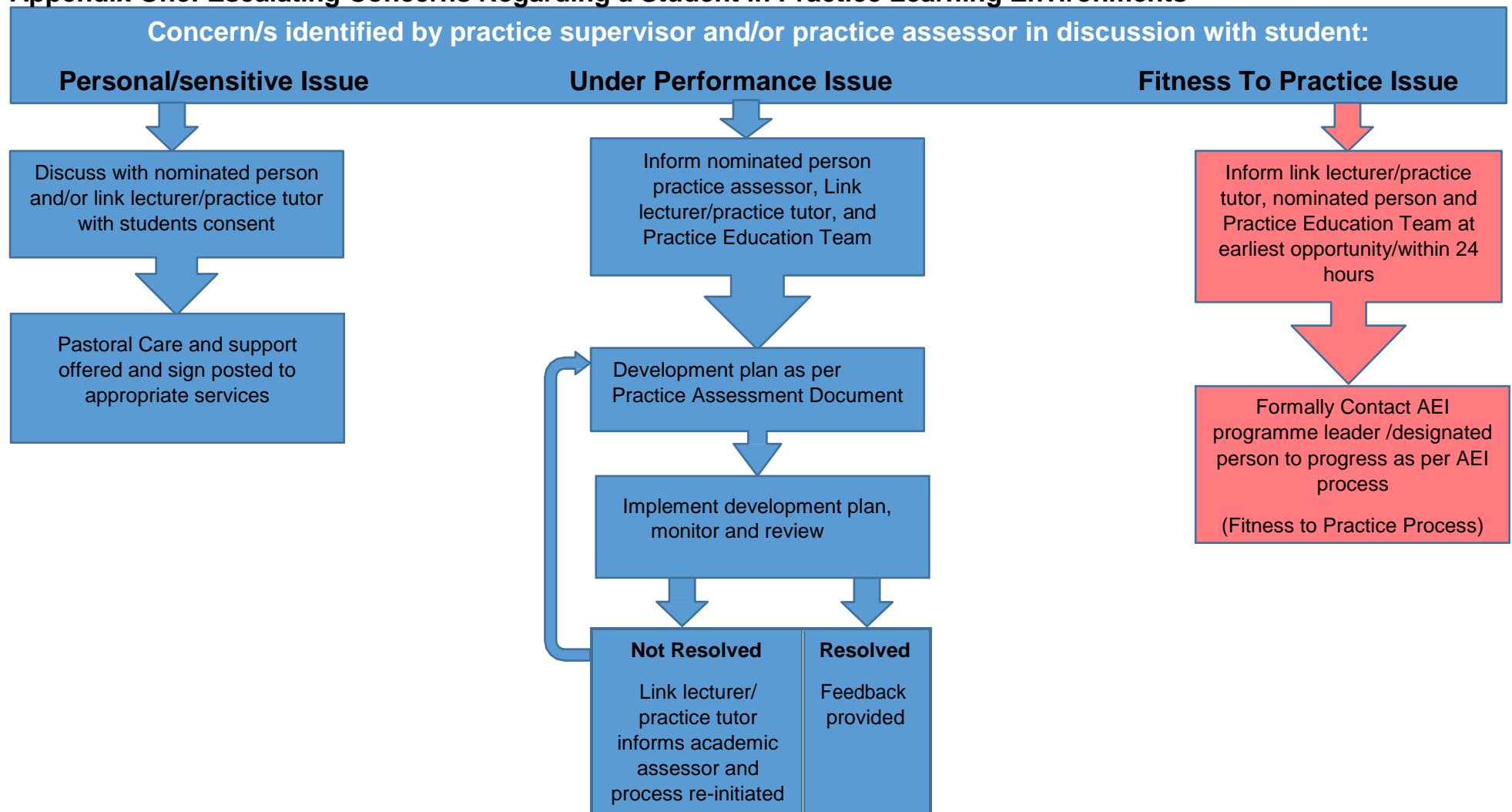
Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC, 2023b) *Standards Framework for Nursing and Midwifery Education*. London: NMC. Available from: [Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education](#)

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC, 2024a) *Standards for post-registration*. London: NMC. Available from: [Part 3: Standards for post-registration programmes](#)

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC, 2024b) *Standards for prescribing programmes*. London: NMC. Available from: [standards-for-prescribing-programmes.pdf](#)

Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS, 2021) *Competency Framework for all Prescribers*. Available from: [RPS English Competency Framework 3.pdf \(rpharms.com\)](#)

## Appendix One: Escalating Concerns Regarding a Student in Practice Learning Environments



## **Appendix Two: Principles for: Practice Supervisor/Practice Assessor preparation programmes to support Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (SCPHN) and Specialist Practice Qualifications (SPQ) student learning and assessment.**

1. Preparation programmes should include an overview of:
  - a) The NMC Standards for post-registration programmes (2023)
  - b) The course curriculum
  - c) The Practice Assessment documentation
  - d) The clinical competencies to be achieved
  - e) The roles and responsibilities of Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors
2. Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors must attend at least one preparation programme (implemented from 2024) to support students undertaking SPQ and SCPHN programmes.
3. If the course curriculum has been changed, Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors must undertake a further update that is provided by the education provider.
4. The preparation programmes should be offered either on a face to face basis or online platform basis with Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors having the choice of attending either.
5. The preparation programmes should be provided within the maximum of half a day.
6. Access to ongoing support and information from Approved Education Institutions (AEI) and Practice Education teams will be available for Practice Assessors and Practice Supervisors.

## Appendix Three: Preparation Programme Requirements

All healthcare professionals undertaking the roles of practice supervisor and assessor must complete the relevant preparation programme/s as listed below:

- Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment - an overview
- Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment - Roles and Responsibilities
- Curriculum Update – aligned to the Standards of Proficiency for the NMC Programmes that the student is undertaking
- Overview of relevant practice assessment documents

The above programmes will be available in both the practice and education environments and will be offered via e-Learning or face to face platforms.

Healthcare professionals new to the practice supervisor and practice assessors' roles must also undertake an eLearning Practice Supervisor/Assessor (New to Role) programme: available at [Learn.hscni.net](https://learn.hscni.net)

Academic Assessors must complete a preparation programme or equivalent.

Non-NMC registrants who are acting as Practice Assessors and Practice Supervisors for students on the Independent/Supplementary prescribing elements of the integrated prescribing/SPQ programme must undertake a regionally agreed AEI preparation programme to enable them to fulfil this role.

Preparation of non-registered healthcare staff to support student learning will be facilitated by members of the Practice Education Team/ Practice Assessors and Link Lecturers.

Following completion of the preparation programmes all health care professionals must sign a self-declaration form to evidence their ability to meet the NMC Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (NMC, 2023a).

For more detail on the preparation programmes, please visit: [Learn.hscni.net](https://learn.hscni.net)

## **Appendix Four: Additional Guidance regarding Practice Assessors**

### **Practice Assessors for students undertaking Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (SCPHN) programmes**

All practice assessors involved in SCPHN student support must attend a SCPHN induction programme (which will include the programme specific curriculum and practice assessment document update) provided by the Approved Education Institutions (AEIs), to ensure they understand the proficiencies and programme outcomes that the student they assess is aiming to achieve.

The student should be assigned to a practice assessor who is an experienced registered SCPHN qualified in the same field of the programme the student is undertaking. If this is not achievable; in agreement with the AEI and practice learning partners, the student should be assigned to a registered SCPHN who has extensive experience in the student's intended field of SCPHN practice.

### **Practice Assessors for students undertaking Specialist Practice Qualification (SPQ) programmes**

All practice assessors involved in SPQ student support must attend a SPQ induction programme (which will include the programme specific curriculum and practice assessment document update) provided by the AEI to ensure they understand the proficiencies and programme outcomes that the student they assess is aiming to achieve.

The student should be assigned to a practice assessor who is an experienced registered SPQ for the programme the student is undertaking. If this is not achievable; in agreement with the AEI and practice learning partners the student should be assigned to a registered nurse (without a SPQ qualification) who has extensive experience in the student's intended field of SPQ practice.

All Practice Assessors for SCPHN and SPQ programmes must also have:

- undertaken a period of preceptorship in line with the NMC principles for preceptorship (NMC, 2022) as SCPHNs or SPQ, or
- can evidence prior learning and relevant practice assessor experience that enables them to engage in fair, reliable and valid assessment processes in the context of SCPHN or SPQ.

Where the SPQ practice assessor does not hold a prescribing qualification, a different practice assessor should be identified, who must be a registered health care professional and an experienced prescriber with suitable equivalent qualifications for the programme the student is undertaking (NMC,2024b).

In exceptional circumstances, as set out in the NMC Standards for post-registration (NMC, 2024a) the same person may fulfil the role of the practice supervisor and practice assessor for the SPQ, SCPHN and prescribing students undergoing training in a practice learning environment.

In such instances, the Practice Education Facilitator, nominated person and the AEI will need to evidence why it was necessary for the practice supervisor and practice assessor roles to be carried out by the same person and recorded in the practice assessment document. This request will be discussed and agreed with the AEI in advance of the student commencing the programme. These requests will also be monitored by the practice learning partners and the AEI.



**NIPEC**

**4<sup>th</sup> Floor, James House, 2-4 Cromac Avenue,  
Belfast BT7 2JA**

**E-mail:** [enquiries@nipec.hscni.net](mailto:enquiries@nipec.hscni.net)

This document can be downloaded from the NIPEC  
website <https://nipec.hscni.net/>

December, 2023

