



**Northern Ireland Practice and Education
Council for Nursing and Midwifery**

**Benchmarks to Measure Compliance with NMC
Standards to Support Learning and
Assessment in Practice**



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Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC)

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Introduction

- 1.1 The Nursing and Midwifery Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NMC) published its initial Standards for Learning and Assessment in Practice in 2006; an amended set was published in 2008 (NMC, 2008). The standards were developed in response to concerns that registrants were failing to fail students whose practice was below the required standard (Duffy, 2003). The standards are applicable across the UK and detail the NMC's requirements for supporting the learning and assessment of students completing programmes for entry or recording on the NMC register.
- 1.2 Implementation of the new standards was anticipated to create considerable pressures within the system. Preliminary work was undertaken by the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) in Northern Ireland to establish a foundation for an infrastructure to support learning and assessment in practice. A sub group of the Central Nursing Advisory Committee (CNAC) completed a report in May 2007 - '*Infrastructure to Support Learning in Practice*' (DHSSPS, 2007). The report made a number of recommendations and offered an outline description of the responsibilities that required to be invested in education facilitator roles to include:
- Providing leadership concerning education and learning needs
 - Assuring the quality of clinical placements
 - Ensuring that systems are in place to teach, supervise and assess students
 - Providing a liaison between the service and education programme providers

The infrastructure to support learning and assessment in practice

- 2.1 The Chief Nursing Officer endorsed the recommendations contained in the CNAC report and the DHSSPS agreed to provide funding to each Health and Social Care Trust (HSC) to develop an infrastructure to support learning and assessment in practice, commencing in the financial year 2009-2010. Each Trust was provided with funding to establish a team of Band 7 Practice Education Facilitators, led by a

Band 8a Practice Education Co-ordinator under the management of the Trust Nursing and Midwifery Assistant Director/Co-Director for Learning and Development. The teams also include an administrative clerical support member of staff. The teams were recruited and established during the period of May to December 2009.

- 2.2 It was agreed that NIPEC, on behalf of the DHSSPS, would lead the development of a framework and associated tools to assist HSC Trusts in evaluating the impact of the implementation of the infrastructure.

Benchmarks

- 3.1 During 2010 and 2011, NIPEC worked in collaboration with the HSC Trusts' to develop an evaluation framework which included developing a set of benchmarks to be used by the HSC Trusts to specifically measure compliance with the NMC (2008) standards. The benchmarks presented within this document were endorsed by the members of a Working Group (Appendix One) in June 2011.

- 3.2 The benchmarks are presented within seven areas comprising:

1. Profile for practice placement
2. Local register of mentors and practice teachers
3. Practice placement audit
4. Allocation of students
5. Monitoring the quality of practice experience
6. Managing students' practice experience
7. Supporting mentors and practice teachers.

In addition, a set of indicators was developed for each of the seven areas that identify where, within the Trust, the accountability for the achievement of each indicator rests. This has been identified across three levels as follows:

1. **Organisationally** – Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery, Assistant Director/Co-Director for Learning and Development (nursing and midwifery) and Practice Education Coordinator.

2. **Directorate/Service Unit** - Lead Nurses and Service Group Managers for each service and the Practice Education Facilitator for the area.
 3. **Placement** - Ward Manager/ Team Leader, Practice Education Facilitator and individual mentors/sign-off mentors/practice teachers.
- 3.3 The benchmarks are presented at Appendix Two. As previously indicated, it has been agreed that the Practice Education Co-ordinators and their teams will use the benchmarks to measure compliance with the NMC (2008) standards and inform their developments and work programme.
- 3.4 The benchmarks will be subject to review and revision, as required.

REFERENCES

Department of Health and Social Service and Public Safety (2007) *Infrastructure to Support Learning in Practice: Report of Working Group*. Belfast, DHSSPS.

Duffy, K. (2003) *Failing Students: a qualitative study of factors that influence decisions regarding assessment of students' competence in practice*. London: NMC.

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2008) *Standards to Support Learning and Assessment in Practice*. London: NMC.

APPENDIX ONE**WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP**

| Member | Role and Organisation |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Moira Mannion (Chair) | Co-Director Learning and Development Belfast HSC Trust |
| Dr Carole McIlrath (Project Lead) | Senior Professional Officer NIPEC |
| Elish MacDougall | Practice Education Coordinator Belfast HSC Trust |
| Claire McGuigan | Practice Education Coordinator Northern HSC Trust |
| Margaret Marshall | Practice Education Coordinator Southern HSC Trust |
| Sally Martin | Practice Education Coordinator Western HSC Trust |
| Evelyn Mooney | Practice Education Coordinator South Eastern HSC Trust |

BENCHMARKS TO EVALUATE THE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT IN PRACTICE

| Benchmark | Organisation | Directorate/ Service Unit | Placement |
|--|--------------|------------------------------|-----------|
| Profile for practice placement | | | |
| 1. There is a profile of each placement area which identifies: | | | |
| a. maximum number of students that can be accommodated at any time | | | √ |
| b. the programmes for which the placement is audited | | | √ |
| c. a description of the facility and experience available to the student | | | √ |
| d. a record is maintained by each ward manager/ team leader in relation to named mentors/ practice teachers for students in their area | | √ | √ |
| e. a central database of all placement profiles is held by the Practice Education Coordinator (PEC) | √ | | |
| f. each Practice Education Facilitator (PEF) holds a record of the profile of all placements within their area of responsibility | | √ | |

Accountability

Accountability for the achievement of benchmarks rests at three levels:

Organisationally - accountability rests with Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery, Assistant Director for Learning and Development (nursing and midwifery), and, the Practice Education Coordinator.

Directorate/ Service Unit - accountability rests with the Practice Education Facilitator, Lead Nurses and Service Group Managers for each service.

Placement - accountability rests with the individual mentors/ sign-off mentors, Ward Manager/Team Leader and Practice Education Facilitator.

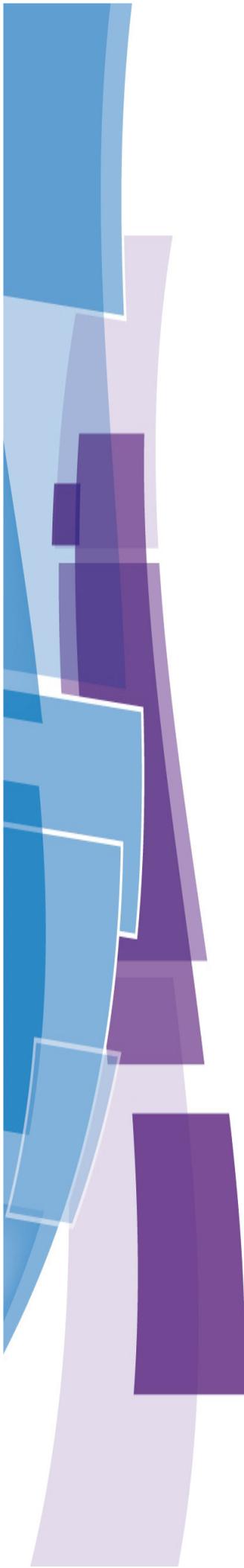
| Benchmark Local register of mentors and practice teachers | Organisation | Directorate/ Service Unit | Placement |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>2. A local register has been established to hold information in relation to mentors and practice teachers to demonstrate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a policy and related procedures have been implemented to manage the local register that ensures the information is accurate and up-to-date b. all mentors/ practice teachers details are entered on the register c. all mentors/ practice teachers working in all practice placements used for student learning have received preparation for their role in teaching, supporting and supervising students d. all ward/ facility managers have up-to-date information about mentors/ practice teachers in their area e. all mentors/ practice teachers' annual update is recorded on the register f. all mentors/ practice teachers' triennial review is recorded on the register | <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> | <p></p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> | <p></p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> |

| Benchmark Practice Placement Audit | Organisation | Directorate/ Service Unit | Placement |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>3. A policy and related procedures have been implemented to manage Trust related aspects of practice placement audit in partnership with education providers. This will address the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a rolling programme of (bi-annual) audits b. all placement areas are audited in line with the agreed regional processes to meet the requirements of NMC c. the audit process ensures that the full range of 24 hour a day seven day per week nature of health care is accessed, where possible. d. all evaluation data in relation to the practice placement area is reviewed prior to and taken into account during the audit process e. information relative to the audit is maintained centrally within the Trust and at placement level f. processes are in place to manage changes that will impact on the continued suitability of individual placements as a learning environment g. processes are in place to ensure that all untoward incidents involving students within the placement area are reported to education providers and relevant Trust personnel and appropriate action taken | <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> | <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> | <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> |

| Benchmark Allocation of Students | Organisation | Directorate/ Service Unit | Placement |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| <p>4. A policy and related procedures have been implemented in partnership with education providers to manage allocation of students to specific placement areas and address the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. communication mechanisms between the education providers and the Trusts b. communication mechanisms within the Trusts c. there are sufficient mentors/ practice teachers to supervise and assess the students allocated to the placement area in accordance with the NMC standards d. the expertise available in the multidisciplinary team supports the students' achievement of required learning outcomes e. a named mentor/ practice teacher is allocated to each student in accordance with the NMC standards f. the named mentor/ practice teacher is notified to the education provider 2 weeks before placement commences g. any changes in relation to the named mentor/ practice teacher is notified to the education provider normally within two working days | <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> | <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> | <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> |

| Benchmark Monitoring the quality of practice experience | Organisation | Directorate/ Service Unit | Placement |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>5. A policy and related procedures have been implemented in partnership with education providers to monitor the quality of practice experience in relation to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. evaluation by students of the quality of the learning experience at the completion of each placement experience b. evidence of equity of opportunity for all students to enable them to meet their learning outcomes c. evaluation by mentors/ practice teachers of their experience related to the supervision and assessment of students on placement on completion of each student placement experience d. communication of relevant evaluative data between education providers and Trusts e. development and implementation of action plans to manage identified problems f. a summary of evaluations in relation to each placement area is provided to those undertaking the annual practice placement audit g. sharing of good practice | <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p></p> <p>√</p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>√</p> | <p></p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> | <p></p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p></p> <p>√</p> <p></p> <p>√</p> |

| Benchmark Supporting mentors and practice teachers | Organisation | Directorate/ Service Unit | Placement |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>7. A policy and related procedures are implemented to ensure that mentors and practice teacher are supported in their role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Practice Education Facilitators provide guidance and support on an on-going basis b. opportunities are provided to mentors and practice teachers to meet together to explore assessment and supervision issues c. all mentors/ practice teachers have had an annual update d. all mentors/ practice teachers' triennial reviews are carried out e. a programme for the preparation of mentors is in place f. there is a process for experienced registrants with previous mentor experience to APEL to the agreed mentor preparation programme g. there is a robust process in place to support the progression of mentors to sign-off h. there is a process in place to ensure students on practice teachers/SCPHN/SPQ are facilitated to complete their programme of learning | <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> | <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> | <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> |



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