



**NORTHERN IRELAND PRACTICE AND  
EDUCATION COUNCIL  
FOR NURSING AND MIDWIFERY**

**LEARNING AGREEMENT TEMPLATE**

**for**

**DHSSPS/ECG COMMISSIONED COURSES**

**January 2013**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

As a Nurse or Midwife you are accountable and responsible for keeping your knowledge and skills up to date, throughout your working life (NMC, 2008<sup>1</sup>). Appraisal, personal development planning and supervision are processes available to nurses and midwives to support them to enhance their practice, education and professional development. There are many ways to learn and often a blend of different approaches will facilitate the nurse or midwife to best meet their learning needs.

## **2. PURPOSE OF A LEARNING AGREEMENT**

The purpose of a learning agreement is to ensure that both the learner and the line manager agree the learning activity which will best meet the needs of the individual and the service and evaluate it against the agreed learning outcomes. This learning agreement template is for use with courses funded by Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and commissioned by the Education Commissioning Group (ECG).

It is important before submitting an application for a commissioned course, that the learner and the line manager are clear about the relevance of the course to the staff member's job. Consideration should also be given on how the individual will apply the knowledge and skills learned, to improve their practice and service delivery.

1. Annual appraisal or personal development planning meetings provide the ideal opportunity for the nurse/midwife and their line manager to identify ways to enable the individual to develop relevant knowledge and skills to improve their practice and service delivery.

### **The nurse/midwife and their line manager need to:**

1. Have a clear vision of what the nurse/midwife needs to learn
2. Decide on the knowledge and skills required
3. Work out how best to achieve this
4. Look at the relevant courses and content – will the individual's learning needs be met?

---

<sup>1</sup> Nursing and Midwifery Council (2008) *The Code: standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives*. London. NMC,

**and also consider:**

5. How to evidence learning achievements?
6. How will learning impact on the individual's practice?
7. How will the benefits be measured?
8. How to ensure improvement is maintained?
9. Does the course fully meet the individual's learning requirements?
10. If relevant, how will any additional learning requirements be addressed?

Sometimes individuals can start a course but due to unforeseen reasons do not complete it; others complete their course only to realise that it did not actually meet their needs. It is important that the nurse or midwife fully understands what the course entails and how it may impact on them before they commit to it; consideration should be given to the following aspects:

- Course content, including aim and learning outcomes.
- The duration and design of the course, this includes issues such as: how much of the course is based in a learning setting, in the individual's work place, on placement; will there be a requirement to travel, be away from home, work anti-social hours?
- What are the personal cost implications in relation to finance, time and quality of life?
- What is the assessment process, for example: number and level of assignments; number and content of examinations, practical assessments; placements, number, duration and location.
- Does the individual need to address other areas of development prior to commencing the course?
- Are there alternative learning activities to be considered? Visit the Learning Section of Development Framework website for information about a wide range of learning opportunities [www.nipecdf.org/learn](http://www.nipecdf.org/learn)
- Can the individual meet the demands of the course in relation to ability, time and support (at work and home)?

### **3. LEARNING AGREEMENT PROCESS**

#### **Phase 1**

Nurse/midwife to complete section 1: Preparatory information of the learning agreement proforma for commissioned programmes (Appendix 1), and arrange to meet with their line manager to discuss the options to meet their learning needs.

#### **Phase 2**

Complete section 2: Agree learning outcomes (Appendix 1) at meeting with line manager, to record the decisions made about the agreed / anticipated learning outcomes, anticipated impact on practice and identified support during the educational programme, which includes the learner commitment.

#### **Phase 3**

Complete section 3 : Post completion of the course the staff member should meet with their line manager and review the impact of the learning and development on the individual's practice and how this relates to improvements in patient/client care or service. This will be normally take place at that member of staff's next appraisal meeting with their line manager. In the event of a learner identifying any shortcomings regarding an educational programme it is their responsibility to alert their line manager as soon as possible. The Line Manager must advise through the relevant Trust operational/professional process any shortcomings of Phase 2 which require escalation for operation/service or professional lines to address accordingly.

## APPENDIX 1 Learning Agreement Proforma for Commissioned Programmes

### Section 1: Preparatory Information

**Must be completed by staff member *before* discussion with line manager**

<b>Duration:</b> How long will the course last?	
<b>Design:</b> Full-time/part-time and location of course	
<b>Course content:</b> Brief overview, refer to learning outcomes / module descriptors, published on NIPEC website: or proposed education provider website <a href="http://www.nipec.hscni.net/dcycle_proforma.htm">www.nipec.hscni.net/dcycle_proforma.htm</a>	
<b>Cost implications for student:</b> Financial, include being away from home; subsistence; time, include travel and personal study; quality of life, include anti-social hours, impact on family	
<b>Cost: Implications for service:</b> Time away from unit, what cover is needed, are there training implications for other	
<b>Assessment of learning by:</b> Assignments, examinations, practical assessments, placements (location and duration) etc	
<b>Other Factors:</b> Areas for development necessary prior to undertaking the course and areas for development not covered by the course	
<b>Personal statement of commitment to achieve learning outcomes:</b> Statement should reflect academic ability, time and support to complete the course	



## **SECTION 2:      AGREED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**For completion by nurse/midwife and line manager prior to course commencement:**

Name of course participant:

Name of line manager:

Date of meeting:

1. What are the anticipated learning outcomes/objectives of undertaking the course?

2. What is the proposed impact of learning on practice and/or service development?

3. Agreed methods for evidencing learning in practice.

4. Agreed study leave required to meet programme outcomes.

5. Agreed resources for supervision/mentoring, if required.

6. Planned meetings with line manager or allocated supervisor/mentor

7. Agree to undertake a reflection exercise post completion of the course.



## **LEARNER COMMITMENT**

I have read the course content and learning outcomes and believe that I have the ability and commitment to complete the programme in the allocated time frame.

I am prepared to undertake the identified learning activities and course assessments and to meet the above agreement. Should exceptional circumstances arise which prevent this, I will inform my line manager immediately so that the situation can be considered/reviewed and managed through the relevant procedures.

I will return my completed application form to Line Manager by the relevant deadline.

I have agreed the following arrangements with my line manager:

1. I will meet with my line manager or allocated supervisor/mentor, at the following points in the programme to discuss progress; a record will be kept of the discussions.
  - Prior to starting programme (where the preparatory information, agreed learning outcomes and learner commitment are addressed)
  - Following completion of the programme (generally at personal appraisal meeting, which will be informed by my reflection exercise).
  
2. Throughout the programme I will evaluate the programme quality and content and if I have concerns, I will inform my line manager or allocated supervisor/mentor and the education provider at that time.

**SIGNATURE STUDENT** \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE LINE MANAGER** \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



### **Section 3 EVALUATION by NURSE/MIDWIFE LEARNER**

To be completed by nurse/midwife learner and line manager post completion of the programme, which should generally coincide with the learner's appraisal meeting. This is an opportunity to evaluate if the learning outcomes of the programme were met and provides a contributing reflection tool for the purpose of the appraisal process.

Please refer to the learning outcomes the learner and line manager documented prior to undertaking the course. Compare what was actually gained from the course with what was expected.

Any barriers to achievement of learning outcomes should be escalated through the appropriate education provider or via Trust procedure.

#### **NURSE/MIDWIFE LEARNER EVALUATION**

Please tick all that apply and provide comments as appropriate.

1. Now that you have had time to reflect, in your opinion, have the intended (eg) learning outcomes of the course been achieved?

Yes  No

Please give details::

2. Has the course enabled you to address the particular patient/client and/or care/service improvements you expected it to?

Fully  Partially  Not at all

Please give details:

3. Has the course equipped you to become more involved in introducing changes and / or improvements in practice?

Yes  No

Please identify how you will evidence these changes and / or improvements:-

**SIGNATURE STAFF MEMBER** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE LINE MANAGER** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_



For further Information, please contact

**NIPEC**

Centre House  
79 Chichester Street  
BELFAST, BT1 4JE

**Tel:** 028 9023 8152

**Fax:** 028 9033 3298

This document can be downloaded from the NIPEC website

[www.nipec.hscni.net](http://www.nipec.hscni.net)

**DECEMBER 2012**