

COVID-19: Supervision and Support-Students in Clinical Placement Fact Sheet

On the 25th March the NMC published Emergency Standards for Nursing and Midwifery Education (Attached). These standards are intended to provide flexibility during the situation regarding Covid19 to allow for learning in practice to continue.

Full details are available through the NMC at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/news/coronavirus/>

Please note that with the adoption of the emergency standards it is not possible to continue students within the existing programme delivery model.

In summary the delivery of existing preregistration programmes has been redesigned and students will spend more time in clinical placement during the emergency period of response to COVID-19. Details are as follows:-

Students in the final six months of the preregistration programme–

- These students will complete their programmes in clinical practice while ensuring all learning outcomes are met but will require protected time to learn (AEIs to liaise with Trusts). They will still be students and must have access to supervision and support during this period. Hours in practice, during this period, will be counted toward the hours of their programme to meet the requirement for entry unto the NMC register, when the emergency situation ceases. AEIs will provide pastoral support to students.
- These students will not be supernumerary and any student who does not move to the extended placement programme will have a position agreed with the AEI (e.g. they may pause from the programme)

Students in 2nd year, final year students on the first six months of study and first-year postgraduate students of preregistration nursing and midwifery programmes-

- These students will spend no more than 80% of their hours in clinical placements and 20% of their hours in theoretical learning. Universities and Practice Partners will work together to make the relevant arrangements for their clinical placements.
- These students must have access to supervision and support during their hours in clinical practice
- They will not be supernumerary, but will require protected time to learn.

First-year students in the preregistration undergraduate nursing and midwifery programmes-

- These students may spend 100% of their programme in theory/academic learning, which may be virtual or distance learning.

Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (SSSA NMC 2018) will now be put in place across all programmes for pre-registration education and under the emergency education standards a range of flexibilities can be offered to support students in clinical practice. Substantial work has already been done in Northern Ireland to prepare for this through Future Nurse Future

Midwife however it has been recognised that nurses and midwives will not have time to undertake preparation programmes until after COVID-19 emergency arrangements are stood down.

COVID-19 Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment

These are unprecedented times, and there may be concern about staff preparation to undertake the SSA role and the timing of this change. The NMC have recognised we already have a critical mass of very skilled staff who currently support students, and who can with confidence and the right support move immediately into the roles of Practice Supervisor and Practice Assessor.

What does this mean?

- As the SLAiP standards cannot offer flexibility in how they are delivered these are to be stood down with immediate effect for nursing students (for midwives see below).
- Mentors and sign off mentors will automatically transition to the roles of practice supervisor and practice assessor.
- The NMC have advised that regarding nurses and midwives who have not been prepared as mentors and are required to support students, this can be done under the NMC Code (2018), section 9.4,

‘.. support students’ and colleagues’ learning to help them develop their professional competence and confidence’

In this role they can support Supervisors and Assessors.

- There will no longer be a requirement for staff to spend one hour protected time per week with students
- Students will not be required to spend 40% of their time with a mentor.
- Under the emergency education standards the SSSA (2018) standard in relation to practice supervisor & practice assessor this can be the same person so this should significantly reduce the individual time needed for student supervision and assessment.

Midwifery: The above arrangements will apply to all NMC preregistration Midwifery programmes from June 2020. This will accommodate final practice based assessments due to take place in May 2020 for final year pre-registration Midwifery student and students on the shortened programme as it would be too disruptive as this stage for them to change at this time.

These interim arrangements will be reviewed and monitored on an ongoing basis by Practice Education Teams who will liaise closely with practice areas and Universities

In Summary

| Main Changes | What Stays the Same |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current mentors and sign-off mentors will transition across to SSSA and assume the dual role of practice supervisor and practice assessor • Each student will be allocated a practice assessor and at least one practice supervisor (may be dual roles) • Students will no longer be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ supernumerary however they will require protected time to support their learning ➢ required to spend 40% of their time with a mentor ➢ required to spend one hour protected time per week with a mentor • The ward sister, charge nurse, team leader i.e. the nominated person, will maintain a locally held practice assessor record to support allocation of students. Universities will continue to maintain a practice assessor record for the independent and voluntary sector • Registrants who have not been prepared as mentors or sign-off mentors and are required to support students can do so under the NMC Code (2018). They will provide feedback about the student to the practice supervisors and/or practice assessor. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be supported to achieve their learning objectives through the identification of learning opportunities, whilst maintaining safe and effective care • Induction, learning contracts, mid-point (formative) assessment, action plans and summative assessment will continue and will be co-ordinated by the person assuming the role of practice assessor linking with university/academic staff where relevant • Students will receive constructive feedback to inform their progress • The need to identify and manage underperformance or arising issues • Support for staff and students in the form of the Practice Education Teams, link lecturer/practice teacher remains • In line with the NIPEC delegation Framework for Nursing and Midwifery Practice should use professional judgement, local and national policy to determine where activities may be safely delegated to students while being accountable for your decisions • The student portfolio/practice assessment document/on-going record of achievement remains in place with minimal changes and will be available electronically. |

Full preparation can be undertaken at a later more appropriate time when this emergency period has passed. At that time preparation of FNFM Practice Supervisor Practice Assessor roles for all staff will be taken forward as originally planned through the FNFM Project and FNFM Local Implementation Groups.

In the interim full information on Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (SSSA NMC 2018) and preparation for the role is available through your Practice Education Teams and through NIPEC Website – [FNFM Products and Resources](#)

Another useful link is [Emergency Standards for Nursing and Midwifery Education](#) (NMC 2020)