

Future Nurse Future Midwife Northern Ireland

Guidelines for Non Health and Social Care Organisations Supporting Nursing and Midwifery Students (Includes Independent and Voluntary Sectors)

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Glossary of Terms

AA	Academic Assessor
NP	Nominated Person
PS	Practice Supervisor
PA	Practice Assessor
NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council
MORA	Midwifery Record of Achievement Document
NIPAD	Northern Ireland Practice Assessment Document
PLE	Practice Learning Environment
AEI	Approved Education Institute i.e. the University
SSSA	Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment

1. Introduction

- 1.1.** Organisations which enable nursing or midwifery students to develop and meet the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Standards of Proficiency to deliver safe and effective care to a diverse range of people are referred to as Practice Learning Environments (PLE's). Experience over time in the Practice Learning Environment enables nursing/midwifery students to develop and enhance skills, knowledge, and competence to meet the NMC standards for registration.
- 1.2.** The process of supervising and assessing students is one of partnership, to ensure a safe and effective learning and assessment that upholds public protection. It is also a process which fosters a positive learning relationship with the student and enhances their professional and personal development, empowering the student to become a resilient, critical thinker and decision maker who can analyse, reflect on and improve their practice.
- a.** In Northern Ireland (NI) there are three universities who deliver NMC approved programmes i.e. Queens University Belfast (QUB), The Open University (OU) and Ulster University (UU).
- b.** The Practice Learning Environment and the university will work collaboratively to provide and support opportunities for the education and training for pre-registration and post registration students. The education and training provided will meet the NMC Standards (2018).
- c.** The university is responsible for ensuring that a current audit is in place. Practice Learning Environments will be audited by a university in Northern Ireland (NI) in partnership with the organisation. The audit will identify the maximum number of students undertaking Practice Learning with the Practice Learning Environment and shall be agreed between the Practice Learning Environment and the university and a copy of the completed audit will be retained by both organisations.

2. Overview

- 2.1.** The Practice Learning Environment will grant university staff reasonable access to the premises where the student is placed to offer ongoing support and guidance.
- 2.2.** A regional approach has been adopted for the implementation and delivery of the NMC Education Standards (2018) which includes the Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (SSSA). The NI Model reflects the following roles:
- nominated person
 - practice supervisor (PS)
 - practice assessor (PA)
 - academic assessor (AA)
 - link lecture/practice tutor

- 2.3.** All of the above individuals will work together to ensure safe and effective practice learning experiences for the student that upholds public protection and safety.
- 2.4.** Each student will be allocated:
- at least one practice supervisor for each practice learning experience
 - a nominated practice assessor for each practice learning experience or series of practice learning experiences
 - a nominated academic assessor for each part of the programme
 - a link lecturer/practice tutor.
- 2.5.** Separating out the supervision and assessment roles ensures robust, objective, fair and transparent assessments and shared decision making resulting in greater consistency and objectivity.
- 2.6.** The shared responsibility between the practice assessor and academic assessor ensures only those students who have met all the programme requirements and are clearly able to demonstrate achievement of the standards of proficiency for registered nursing/midwifery (NMC 2018) are entered onto the NMC professional register.
- 2.7.** Students in practice learning must be supported to learn without being counted as part of the staffing required for safe and effective person-centred care in that setting. This means they are supernumerary, however, should always be considered part of the team. Through their supervised contribution in the provision of safe and effective care (not merely observing) they can and should add real value to care while enhancing their learning.
- 2.8.** The university may also withdraw a student from a Practice Learning Environment if university staff consider that the environment is not providing the student with the practical experience to achieve the proficiency for registered nursing/midwifery (NMC 2018).

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. The Non Health and Social Care (HSC) Organisation

- a.** Each organisation will identify a named individual (the nominated person), employed by the organisation, who will act as the key contact point between the organisation and the university. This nominated person may have an educational or managerial role in the employing organisation.
- b.** The Practice Learning Environment will ensure practice supervisors and practice assessors are appropriately qualified and experienced professionals and in particular that they:
- i.** comply with the requirements of the NMC Standards for education and training

- ii. at all times act as a professional role model
 - iii. receive appropriate induction and ongoing support and training
 - iv. respond effectively to the individual learning needs of students.
- c. The Practice Learning Environment reserves the right to suspend any practice learning and/or bar any student from its premises. In such circumstances, discussions will take place with the Practice Learning Environment and link lecture/practice tutor at the earliest opportunity to ensure that the university is fully involved.
- d. Health and safety, liability and indemnities
- i. The Practice Learning Environment shall take all reasonably practicable steps for securing the health, safety and welfare of all students on practice learning to the same extent and in the same manner as an employer is required to take in relation to employees by or under the relevant legislation for the time being in force in NI.
 - ii. Each university provides indemnity for the student while on placement.
 - iii. The indemnity which the university offers provides a commitment to the organisation that the university's insurance will cover damages arising from any injury to the student or other persons or damage to property caused by the student provided this was not due to the negligence of the practice learning organisation.
- e. People in receipt of your services are afforded the opportunity to give, and withdraw, specific informed consent to students being involved in their care.
- f. Professionally qualified members of university staff may have access to relevant records relating individual receiving care, and only for the purpose of the evaluation of the performance of the student.

3.2. The Nominated Person

- a. Education Audits
- i. Will complete the education audit processes with the university.
 - ii. Notify the university of the names of practice assessors for each student to enable a database to be maintain.
 - iii. Have responsibility to oversee and ensure continuity for the student and actively support their learning.
 - iv. Provide local information about changes to practice environments, which occur due to factors such as re-decoration, reconfiguration, and change of service provision or action by the HSC Trust or the regulator.
 - v. Alert the university should any Practice Learning Environment cease to be suitable or appropriate for student learning, e.g. an enforcement action by the regulator.
- b. Students
- i. Allocate to each student a practice supervisor/s and assessor selected from staff employed by the Practice Learning Environment and who fulfil

- the requirements of the NMC in respect of their standards for student supervision and assessment.
- ii. Ensure that all students will be supernumerary while on placement.
 - iii. Ensure that each student receives appropriate induction.
 - iv. Ensure continuity of the student's learning experience and actively support their learning.
- c. Student support
- i. Listen to and act upon student feedback in order to improve the learning environment.
 - ii. Facilitate appropriate time and resources to fulfil the role of Practice Assessor and Practice Supervisor, in addition to their other professional responsibilities.
- d. Governance
- i. Address work related issues raised by managers, students, Practice Supervisor, Practice Assessors, Academic Assessors and Link Lecturers/Practice Tutors, such as persistent breaches of a student's supernumerary status or lack of supervision within a practice area.
 - ii. Notify student's link lecturer and or academic assessor, if the student is underperforming or if concerns are raised.
 - iii. Refer any complaint about a student or member of university staff to the Head of the School (or Department) at the university in writing as soon as practicable.
 - iv. Alert the university should a student wish to withdraw from Practice Learning and thereby be unable to fulfil practice requirements of the Programme.

3.3. Practice Supervisor

- a. All registered nurses and midwives are capable of being a practice supervisors along with other registered health care professionals. (NMC Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment 2018). Each student will be assigned a practice assessor and practice supervisor/s. The same person cannot fulfil the role of the practice assessor and practice supervisor for the same student. However, the same person may undertake each role simultaneously but for separate students.
- b. Students will also 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 practice learning experience will be coordinated by practice supervisor/s.
- c. Practice supervisors:
 - i. Practice supervisors may be a registered nurse from a different field of practice as the student. For example, a mental health nursing student gaining experience with a Drug and Alcohol Team might have an adult registered nurse as a practice supervisor.
 - ii. Practice supervisors do not necessarily have to be registered nurses to undertake this role. For example, an adult nursing student gaining

experience in a Residential or Nursing Home may be allocated a registered social care worker as a practice supervisor.

- iii. The supervisory role that non-registered professionals play will be dependent on their skill, knowledge and experience. They will be prepared for this role and receive ongoing support.
- d. The Practice Supervisor will:
 - i. be prepared for the role and will support student learning in line with their scope of practice and 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 appraisal
 - ii. ensure a range of student learning opportunities are facilitated and support the student in safely achieving a range of proficiencies
 - iii. have time set aside to engage in feedback discussions regarding the students' progress with the practice assessor and will record relevant observations of the student's progress in the student record documents.

3.4. Practice Assessor

All registered nurses and midwives are capable of being practice assessors.

- a. Each student will be assigned a practice assessor.
- b. The same person cannot fulfil the role of the practice assessor and practice supervisor for the same student. However, the same person may undertake each role simultaneously but for separate students.
- c. The practice assessor
 - i. is a registered nurse or midwife who maintains their knowledge and expertise and has completed preparation programme for the role
 - ii. periodically observes the student in practice and conducts their formative assessment with the link lecturer/practice tutor, and summative assessments with the academic assessor
 - iii. provides students with a range of learning opportunities across a variety of learning environments to prepare the student to provide care to people with diverse needs.
- d. The assessment of students
 - i. involves, direct observation, students' self-reflection and the feedback from a range of people, including staff, student peers and service users. and is evidenced in the Northern Ireland Practice Assessment Document (NIPAD)/ Midwifery Ongoing Record of Achievement (MORA)
 - ii. informed by feedback from the nominated person, practice supervisor(s) and others who have contributed to the student's NIPAD/MORA
 - iii. occurs at significant points during the student's practice placement and a joint decision is made on the student's progression to the next Part of their programme and includes whether they are forwarded to the NMC for registration.

3.5. Academic Assessor

- a.** An appropriate academic assessor for each part of the student's programme will be allocated by the university.
- b.** Students will not be assigned the same academic assessor for consecutive parts of the programme. The academic assessor will not simultaneously be the practice supervisor and practice assessor for the same student.
- c.** The academic assessor will receive on-going preparation and support from their university to develop their professional practice and knowledge in order to fulfil their role.
- d.** The academic assessor:
 - i.** is a registered nurse or midwife who is appropriately prepared and maintains current knowledge and expertise within the student's profession or field of practice
 - ii.** is an affiliated member of staff from the student's university and hold relevant qualifications as required by their university
 - iii.** has an understanding of the student's learning and achievement in practice which enables effective communications and collaboration between them and the practice assessor
 - iv.** works in partnership with the practice assessor in evaluating and recommending the student for progression to each Part of their programme and whether they are forwarded to the NMC for registration
 - v.** may undertake such activities as would be carried out by equivalently qualified staff provided they adhere to Practice Learning Environment practices and policies.
- e.** The academic assessor may carry out assessments face to face or via phone. In exceptional circumstances other communication mediums may be used in line with each organisation's policy. Exceptional circumstances might include inclement weather/illness. Assessment is provisional until all practice hours are completed and there are no emerging professional/performance issues.

3.6. Student Nurses

- a.** Students are expected to:
 - i.** demonstrate achievement of proficiencies and utilise existing skills to develop and enhance their knowledge, practice and professional behaviour as a student
 - ii.** ensure access to their Practice Assessment Document by practice supervisors/assessors in the Practice Learning Environment on each working day
 - iii.** effectively manage their time to ensure that they meet all the programme requirements for completion of theory hours, practice hours, theoretical and practice-based assessments
 - iv.** comply with any reasonable request made by Practice Learning Environment staff adhering to the professional standards as set by the

- NMC, not carrying out any task unsupervised, without the consent of appropriate staff
- v. familiarise yourself with all the rules, policies and procedures appropriate to the practice area and orientated to the area
 - vi. report sickness or absence to their Practice Learning Environment manager in line with the Practice Learning Environment Policies
 - vii. always wear your uniform (where required) and identity badge while in the Practice Learning Environment, together with any protective clothing or footwear as required
 - viii. take proper care of your health and safety and that of others complying with Health and Safety Regulations.
- b. The student will still be subject to the disciplinary and grievance procedures of the university.
 - c. The student will ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times, in relation to any information imparted or obtained at the Practice Learning Environment.
 - d. Roles of individuals who are in receipt of your services users/advocates
 - i. Service users play a significant role in developing module materials and in the recruitment and selection of students to the programme. Their views are also sought regarding students' performance in practice. Feedback should be requested from service users about students' performance in practice using the form provided in the student's NIPAD/MORA.

3.7. Link Lecturers

- a. Schools of Nursing and Midwifery in Northern Ireland operate a link lecturer/practice tutor system with an identified member of staff allocated to each practice learning setting.
- b. The link lecturer/practice tutor will:
 - i. support students and practice supervisors/assessors in clarifying the learning opportunities available to develop evidence to support achievement of proficiencies
 - ii. support and advise students and practice supervisors in relation to challenges to student learning within the practice learning setting
 - iii. guide and monitor student progression, development and achievement
 - iv. collaborate with the appropriate university personnel, nominated person, practice supervisor / assessor and academic assessor regarding issues which may impact on students' learning experiences or performance, including feedback questionnaires
 - v. assure quality practice learning experiences through educational audit and monitoring of the quality of the learning environment in collaboration with practice partners.

3.8. Managing and Escalating Concerns

- a.** If there are concerns raised about the student by the practice supervisor or practice assessor they should inform the nominated person and seek guidance as defined in Appendix one. Any issues or concerns with the student must be communicated and managed in a timely manner.
- b.** If utilising the Hub and Spoke model, where the Spoke practice learning experience is a different organisation to the Hub, any issues that arise will be managed by the nominated person and the link lecturer/practice tutor who will be the first point of contact (Appendix one). The student's nominated practice assessor for the practice learning experience must be notified.
- c.** If the student has concerns re practice which could be considered as safeguarding or quality issues, these should be raised initially with the practice supervisor, practice assessor, nominated person and link lecturer.

Appendix One - Escalating Concerns/Issues Regarding a Student in Practice Learning Environments

