PRACTICE SUPERVISOR AND PRACTICE ASSESSOR: TRANSITIONING FROM BEING A MENTOR 2018-2019
This mentor update is intended to:

• Meet professional requirements for current annual updating
• Introduce the new standards for Supervision and Assessment (NMC 2018)
• Assist in mapping the current mentor role to the new Practice Assessor and Practice Supervisor role
• Supports the revalidation process by providing 2 hours of participatory CPD

Practice Education at Oxford Brookes University

Practice education is central to all our pre-registration curriculum. We believe it is our role to support you to support our students to become competent practitioners, who can think critically, work collaboratively and is able to practice flexibly adapting to person centered care requirements across the sector. We are proud of what our students say about our placement provision and how we organise practice and work together with practice colleagues to support student learning.

Practice Placement Support
All students are supported by both university staff and practice staff whilst on placement. All students are provided with a named qualified member of staff within the practice placement who oversees the student’s learning on placement and is usually responsible for the assessment of the student’s practice. The title of this person varies according to each profession.

Practice education is critical to the current provision and future development of health and social care professional education courses. It may account for up to 50% of the pre-qualifying health and social care courses depending upon professional statutory regulatory body requirements. Practice education is also an important component of advanced practice clinical Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses. Placements are dependent upon the funding sponsor, professional/programme requirements, student progression regulations and placement quality and capacity.

Placements are provided by the NHS, Social Care and Social Services, the private, independent and voluntary sector and within osteopathic clinics provided by the School. All placement experience is quality assured through approved processes.

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A Quick Quiz – reviewing your current knowledge

Complete the multiple choice quiz below. We will be returning to this at the end of the update

1. You see a student in your clinical area looking a little lost. Do you:
   a. Not worry; you are not allocated as the mentor to this student at the moment
   b. Allocate them to a support worker as they are new to the placement
   c. Introduce yourself and suggest they work alongside you until you establish who they will be supported by.

2. You set up a teaching session for the learners in your area. Afterwards they have several questions. Do you:
   a. Advise them to look this up for themselves?
   b. Suggest they research and then arrange to meet up to discuss their findings later?
   c. Look up the information and provide it to the students?

3. Your colleague is a Sign Off Mentor and is worried about completing a student’s assessment. The student has told them they expect at least a high pass and they feel the student does not warrant this.
   a. Suggest they ask other team members for feedback and contact the link tutor for support?
   b. Do you say ‘I’m glad I’m not the Sign Off Mentor for this student’!
   c. Tell them to contact the university?

4. The student evaluations have provided good feedback about the friendliness of the team. However, several have said that they felt learning was limited as they were ‘included in the numbers’ and restricted learning opportunities. Do you:
   a. Feel irritated as this is the reality of the workplace
   b. Have sympathy but patient care must come first
   c. Discuss with the team and make a plan?

5. You are mentoring a student who seems reluctant to engage in learning opportunities unless you ask them. Do you:
   a. Think that they are not interested and not worry
   b. Ask if there is something concerning them; discuss strategies to develop a more independent approach
   c. Delegate the responsibility to someone else who is more patient

6. You are asked to be the mentor for a student who has been very vocal about not wanting to be on placement.
   Do you:
   a. Permit them to complete as many spoke visits so you don’t have to listen to the constant complaining
   b. Explain that whilst you enjoyed some placements more than others; there was always something to learn
   c. Ask about their previous placements and interests. Help them to identify learning opportunities that will develop their transferable skills.

7. The student you are mentoring tells you that you are not completing a skill correctly as they were shown differently in a clinical skills session. Do you:
   a. Suggest that you both find information and use this as an opportunity to explore principles of practice.
   b. Try not to show your irritation and review the procedure when on your own.
   c. Ask them what they would do and ask them to bring the information in reminding them that you have completed this procedure many times.

8. A student reports poor practice to your colleague. They have told the student to report it but not to involve them. Do you:
   a. Agree with your colleague. The student has to learn.
   b. Suggest that the student contacts their Link Lecturer to help them report.
   c. Talk to your colleague about the need to support the student and show them the concerns protocol. If they won’t take action you will.
Why are the standards changing?

The standards have been developed to support the pre-registration Nursing, Midwifery, Nurse Associate, Specialist Community Public Health and prescribing programmes. They have been devised to permit:

• Innovative approaches to Practice Supervisor and Practice Assessor preparation; ensuring they are suitably prepared to support learners
• Recognition of the interprofessional nature of practice in that all registered professionals can contribute to the learning process. As Willis (2012) states we are not educated in a 'silo'.
• Promotion of team learning. Mentors have reported ‘fatigue’ as they shoulder the responsibility for support, education and assessment. A body of mentors felt that there was a conflict between the mentor and assessor role
• Enhanced validity and reliability of assessment; with feedback coming from a wider range of sources e.g. 360 degree feedback, student led evidence.
• Different routes to healthcare education. The result is that we will be supporting a greater variety of learners in the workplace (Willis 2015)
• A more reflexive approach to changes in care services. New clinical placements are being developed as care needs and services change.

And so how will the new standards affect your role?

In practice there will be:

• Practice Supervisors
• Practice Assessors

In addition, there will be an Academic Assessor to support the assessment process.

There will no longer be:

• Mentors / sign-off mentors
• A requirement for an NMC approved programme for mentorship
• A requirement for 40% of direct or indirect supervision by a named mentor.

All registered professionals will be able to support and supervise student learning as well as provide feedback for assessment.

The intention at Oxford Brookes is that all students except for year three students will transition to the new standards so that there will not be two methods of practice assessment running concurrently after the first year.

Further information:

You can obtain additional information regarding The Standards for Supervision and Assessment at www.nmc.org.uk. These will be updated as new information becomes available.

Practice and education providers are working together to provide a consistent approach to:

• The provision of the Practice Supervisor and Assessor preparation programme (This will replace the Learning and assessing in practice unit)
• Student assessment. Work is well under way to develop a standard Assessment document that all the education providers will use as the core document. This means that if you support students from different providers you will not be working with a variety of documents.
• Quality assurance of the learning environment and experience
The Standards for Education and Training (NMC 2018)

On May 17th, 2018, the NMC published the new standards for pre-registration education. The validation of the Oxford Brookes Prescribing and Nurse Associate Programme is planned for Spring 2019 for implementation in September 2019. Before a programme can be delivered, an 'Approval' event is held. The standards provide a framework for the Approved Education and Practice Placement provider (Practice Learning Partner) to collaboratively work together providing quality practice learning. This partnership will be evaluated at the approval event.

Future Nurse: The Standards of Proficiency for Registered Nurses (NMC 2018)

These specify the knowledge, skills and professional attributes a registered nurse must demonstrate. They provide the framework for assessment for students engaging in the programme from September 2019. There are 7 platforms and 2 annexes that will inform the theory and practice requirements for the programme:

1. Being an accountable professional
2. Promoting health and preventing ill health
3. Assessing needs and planning care
4. Providing and evaluating care
5. Leading and managing nursing care and working in teams
6. Improving safety and quality of care
7. Coordinating care

Annex A – communication and relationship management
Annex B – nursing procedures

There are 3 parts to the Standards for Education and Training:

Part 1: Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education

The NMC visitors validating the programme will consider evidence that verifies the programme has been developed to meet the student need as well as programme requirements. They will use the following areas to help them review the proposed programme

1. Learning culture
2. Educational governance and quality
3. Student empowerment
4. Educators and assessors
5. Curricula and assessment

As a part of this process the reviewers will wish to visit practice placement areas and have opportunities to meet with colleagues who are responsible for supporting and assessing students in practice. At these visits they will be seeking your experience of supporting learners and identifying any further actions we can take to support you and learners in practice.
Part 2: Standards for student supervision and assessment

The Standards for Learning and Assessing in Practice (NMC 2008) will be superseded by the new standards. The new terminology employed will be Practice Supervisor and Practice Assessor. For those of you who are already mentors and sign-off mentors there will be no requirement for you to undertake a new programme to meet these standards. The purpose of this update is to help you appreciate that your knowledge and experience readily maps to these new standards.

The standards provide a framework to help us prepare for the student’s practice placement experience acknowledging:

- Effective practice learning
- Supervision of students
- Assessment of students and confirmation of proficiency

Part 3: Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes

These follow the student journey and will consider the process in which students are selected, supported and educated to meet the programme requirements.

1. Selection, admission and progression
2. Curriculum
3. Practice learning
4. Supervision and assessment
5. Qualification to be awarded

The programmes will remain 50% theory and 50% practice. One change is that there is greater opportunity for relevant simulated learning. This may aid students in having more opportunity to safely practice skills that may not be consistently available in practice. There is a greater emphasis on self-management and leadership skills for the student which will influence how you provide student support in the future.

Students will continue to have an ongoing record of achievement. However, they will be expected to work within the Multi-disciplinary team and will need to take a greater responsibility for gathering evidence to inform the assessment process.

Practice Learning

The new standards permit greater innovation for practice learning. Simulation can be used more reflexively to help ensure students have parity of opportunity to develop clinical skills. The changes to mentorship allow creative thinking for placement learning. You may already be engaged in a collaborative learning approach. How else could you, as a team, enhance learning and reliable assessment?

Supernumerary status

All pre-registration students will continue to be supernumerary; the purpose being to aid the safe development of requisite skills and knowledge under supervision. Supernumerary status could be defined as: ‘a learning strategy that facilitates effective supervision and assessment of student practice whilst upholding the practitioner’s duty of care. This enables the assessor to provide exposure to relevant practice whilst the student is required to engage fully in order to develop their fitness for purpose and practice.’ (Shepherd and Uren, 2014). Please see Oxford Brookes supernumerary status link: https://www.brookes.ac.uk/documents/practice-education/supporting-supernumerary-status-and-practice-hours/statement-in-relation-to-supernumerary-status-of-students/
**Practice Supervisor:**
The practice supervisor is defined as:
‘NMC registered nurses, midwives, nursing associates and other registered health and social care professionals’ (NMC 2018)

Roles and responsibilities will include:
- Being a role model
- Support learning within your scope of practice
- Provide appropriate supervision and feedback
- Have relevant knowledge and experience of your clinical area
- Contribute to assessment by providing feedback
- Confidently share observations and feedback with practice and academic assessors
- Raise concerns appropriately using the relevant protocols

**Activity 1 - Look at this list; and tick the knowledge, skills and practice you already demonstrate.**

**Activity 2 – Under the new standards you may well be a supervisor for several students but an assessor for one. What are the benefits of students being supervised in this ‘team’ approach.......**

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How may this aid in ‘protecting the public’?

transitionPA&PS18.03.19
Supporting learning in clinical practice is integral to professional practice. As a practice supervisor you will be more involved in the assessment process. The Standards of Proficiency for Registered Nurses (NMC 2018) clarify this by specific inclusion of the need to support learners and students assessed elements of the pre-registration programme. Registrants will need to demonstrate that they are able to:

- Support and supervise students in delivering nursing care; promoting reflection, providing feedback and recording evaluation on the student’s performance
- Challenge others in the team by providing constructive feedback; supporting change by aiding in identifying learning needs.
- Contribute to supervision and team reflection to promote improvements in practice and services.

**Activity 3 – Providing feedback to aid assessment**

Providing feedback will be vital as the assessor will be dependent upon the practice supervisors and the student in providing the evidence to support the assessment processes. Developing a systematic approach to feedback will help you to record information in a consistent manner. This supports both the student and the assessor in recording the assessment decision.

Example of supervisor feedback

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**I have supervised Jason on 10 occasions**

**Knowledge:**

During this first placement, Jason has developed his knowledge of assessment. He has kept a placement diary to record learning opportunities and spent time researching. For example he has revised care for people who have had a stroke and the role of the Emergency Department in providing timely assessment and treatment. He has reviewed common conditions such as diabetes, Parkinson’s and dementia. I would encourage Jason to continue to revise A&P as he cares for clients with differing needs. He finds it easier to learn when thinking of a person he has cared for.

**Skills:**

Jason is very proactive in developing his skills. Initially he struggled to record B/P’s but has practiced a lot and is now very confident. In the last two weeks Jason was able to complete basic assessments under supervision. On one occasion he quickly identified a deteriorating patient. I would encourage Jason to continue to build on these skills as he sometimes questions his ability. He is readily meeting the competencies required at this stage of the programme and I have noted the ones I consider he has achieved in his PAD.

**Professional Behaviours:**

Jason was initially shy and lacked confidence in communicating with the team and patients. We discussed the need to overcome this. Jason now confidently provides handovers and interacts confidently with the team, patients and families.

Signed: Jane Bloggs

Dated: 12.01.19

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### Case study:

You are supervising Judy, who is on her 2nd year two placement. Judy achieved 80% average in her previous placement. You ask her to take a manual B/P; she declines stating it is not necessary as the practice areas record it electronically. You clarify that this is an essential skill with the practice educator; Judy demands to know why you have ‘checked’ up on her. You explain that being able to record a B/P is important and that you are trying to help. Judy agrees to develop a plan with you and by the end of the day she has successfully taken two recordings accurately. She apologises for being rude to you. You reflect on the skills used to challenge colleagues together.

You now need to provide some feedback to the practice assessor to help them confirm Judy’s assessment

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You may find this a helpful approach to evidence gathering to aid current assessment processes.
### Practice Assessors:

‘Registered nurse with appropriate equivalent experiences for the student’s field of practice’ (NMC 2018)

Roles and responsibilities:

- Conduct assessments to **CONFIRM** achievement of proficiency and programme outcome for practice learning; taking responsibility for carrying out a reliable and evidenced based assessment, including all assessment decisions
- Seek relevant feedback and evidence to ensure that you make and record an objective, evidence-based assessment on conduct, proficiency and achievement.
- Maintain and develop current knowledge and expertise relevant for the proficiencies and programme outcomes being assessed
- Observe the student when making an assessment of their practice learning. The NMC do not specify when or how this must happen, only that it must form part of the overall assessment, and evidence base.
- Have knowledge of the student programme and assessment process
- serving as a role model for safe and effective practice in line with their professional codes of conduct (including the relevant codes as set by the regulator(s) for each profession)
- **Raising concerns** about any impacts to public protection from student learning. This can mean risks to public protection from the student, but also any risks to people arising from the environment in which the student is placed, including if the practice supervisor has been asked to practice beyond their competence.
- taking action to ensure any concerns raised with them are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner
- Works in partnership with the nominated academic assessor to evaluate and recommend the student for progression for each part of the programme, in line with the programme standards and local and national policies.

### Activity 4 - Look at this list; and tick the knowledge, skills and practice you already demonstrate.

**What does ‘confirm’ mean?**

As a practice assessor you will need to consider a range of evidence to **confirm** that the student has met the proficiency. Whilst it is advocated that you will have opportunities to work with or observe the student in practice this may not always be practicable. To help you complete a reliable assessment you will need to consider a range of evidence.
What about my accountability?
As with all aspects of your practice you will need to evaluate your own knowledge and skills to ensure you are practicing within your scope. You are being asked to confirm that the evidence supports the decision to pass or refer the student. This is a significant change from the current standards where you will have directly or indirectly supervised their practice for at least 40% of the placement. Developing a consistent approach to completing these assessments will help you to feel more confident about the process.

Activity 5 – List the types of evidence you use to assess currently. How might you need to adapt your assessment process for the new model?

Sources of evidence can include the following:

- Direct observation of the student. Observations should help to build an overall picture of student performance. How often and in what environments observations will be done will vary depending on, student performance, their outcomes, the skills and knowledge of the assessor, and how practice learning is organised.

- Communication with practice supervisors

- Student documentation, such as a practice assessment document or ongoing record of achievement

- Communication with any other practice assessors

- Communication with anyone else who may be involved in the education of the student

- Communication with the academic assessor
- Student self-reflection
- Communication and an ongoing relationship with the student

In order to build an evidence base, Practice Assessors must be given access to the relevant documents, processes and databases for a good assessment. This includes contact with Practice Supervisors and access to student documentation (for example the student’s ongoing record of achievement)

**Challenging colleagues**

As we identified earlier a significant part of student support is pastoral. Assessment is always at risk of being subjective. As the Practice Assessor you need to be prepared to challenge feedback and evidence when have concerns that it may not reflect the actual proficiency of the student. For example, you receive contradicting reports about a student’s ability from colleagues and need to explore it with the Practice Supervisors.

**Activity 6 - Case study**

Sam has been qualified for a year. He has been acting as a supervisor to Elaine, a year three student. You are aware that they know each other socially. You have overheard Elaine telling Sam ‘she can't be bothered’ and ‘you can do that as you’re being paid’. You are aware that Sam does not like confrontation and so may not have challenged Elaine about this. Sam provides feedback that Elaine is very professional suggesting she is signed off for her proficiencies. 2 other supervisors have provided feedback that Elaine can be dismissive and lack motivation but did respond positively to their feedback. They have identified professionalism is an issue and do not think he should be signed off.

**How would you address this concern?**

**What support is available to you locally?**

**Pause for thought**

What actions can you and the team do now to help prepare for a more hands-off’ assessment?

1.------------------------------------------------------------

2.------------------------------------------------------------

3.------------------------------------------------------------
Student Role and Responsibilities

Take a moment to reflect on what happens when you currently complete a student’s assessment. Who takes on the responsibility for gathering evidence? There is significant evidence that the mentor currently takes on the burden of gathering evidence.

There is a risk that the change in standards does not change the process and Practice Assessor takes on the responsibility for evidence gathering. This can add significantly to the time it takes to complete the assessment process.

The new standards will require students to develop a greater sense of self management and autonomy earlier in the programme. They will need to be proactive in identifying their role within the team. For the learning environment this will require a recognition of the need for learners to question and challenge. Uren and Shepherd (2016) identified the value of the student contribution to the team. To help students appreciate their role it is important to identify relevant objectives that enable them to:

- Take responsibility for their own learning
- Recognise the ‘transferability’ of their skills and knowledge
- Appreciate how they contribute to safe and effective care

As registrants, it is our responsibility to gather the evidence to demonstrate to our confirmers that we continue to meet the professional requirements. Placement assessment is an opportunity to help students appreciate the requirements for revalidation.

Encouraging a student to take greater responsibility for assessment will be an essential element of the process. As the assessor you can only utilise the evidence before you. Students can use this opportunity to develop their skills in:

- Organisation
- Assertiveness
- Reflection of learning needs
- Planning
The coaching approach to placement learning has identified that these skills are developed at an earlier stage of the programme as students are given the opportunity to develop their problem solving skills. They have the space to work together with their peers to identify issues and consider resolutions. The GROW model can help you to encourage students to take a greater role in planning, managing and evaluating their own learning needs.

**Activity 7 – Encouraging student independence**

You are supporting a new student on their first placement.

The first Pillar of proficiency is ‘Being an Accountable Professional’.

One of the outcomes is: 1.4 ‘demonstrate an understanding of, and the ability to challenge, discriminatory behaviour’

Using the GROW approach talk to your colleague beside you. Consider how a Year 1 student may demonstrate proficiency in this outcome. Why is this important?

Identify:
1. The opportunities in your practice area that would facilitate development of knowledge, skills and professional behaviours.
2. An objective for the student to work towards.
3. The nature of the evidence that you would require to evidence the outcome.

**Hint:** You could use this now when completing student assessments. Ask them to write up examples of how they have met the competency. Ensure that they include evidence to support their growing knowledge and the skills they have developed. You could then paste them into the portfolio endorsing the example as relevant evidence and then support with some feed forward guidance as to how the student could further develop an aspect of practice.

For example,

> ‘Whilst on my placement I have reviewed The Code regularly with my mentor to learn how it helps to guide my practice. An example of how I applied The Code is when a patient I cared for was very frightened and I asked my mentor if I could contact his wife. His wife came and helped to answer questions about his health. We learned that he had dementia and found it difficult to let people know his needs. The Code (Point 1 and 2) emphasises the need to listen and treat all as individuals. In caring for this gentleman, I appreciated how important nonverbal communication is.’

I endorse this as a good example of .... natural empathy and compassionate nature. To further develop this, I suggest trying to be more assertive in acting as an advocate by having confidence in your own assessment about patients’ needs.

**Now….. remember that quiz?** You will not have to ‘retrain’ as a Practice Assessor and Practice Supervisor. Your knowledge and skills will meet the new standards. Now that you have more information about the new standards look at this quiz below and the questions again. Which of the questions relates to the Practice Assessor and which to the Practice Supervisor role? Do you think there is any overlap? Why might this be?
Complete the multiple choice quiz below.

1. You see a student in your clinical area looking a little lost. Do you:
   a. Not worry; you are not allocated as the Practice Supervisor or the Practice Assessor to this student at the moment
   b. Allocate them to a support worker as they are new to the placement
   c. Introduce yourself and suggest they work alongside you until you establish who they will be supported by.

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   a. Advise them to look this up for themselves?
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   a. Suggest they ask other team members for feedback and contact the link tutor for support?
   b. Do you say ‘I’m glad I’m not the Practice Assessor for this student’!
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4. The student evaluations have provided good feedback about the friendliness of the team. However, several have said that they felt learning was limited as they were ‘included in the numbers’ and restricted learning opportunities. Do you:
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References


Acknowledgment:
With thanks to Bournemouth University for sharing this resource in the development of this update.