See full document and Circulars available at:

Mentor: “A registrant who has met the outcomes of stage 2 of the standards (attached as appendix 1) and who facilitates supervises and assesses students in the practice setting”

**Mentors are responsible and accountable for:**

- Organising and coordinating student learning activities in practice
- Supervising students in learning situations and providing them with constructive feedback on their achievements
- Setting and monitoring achievement of realistic learning objectives
- Assessing total performance including skills, attitudes and behaviours
- Providing evidence as required by programme providers of student achievement or lack of achievement
- Liaising with others (e.g. mentors, sign-off mentors, practice teachers) to provide feedback, identify any concerns about the student’s performance and agree action as appropriate
- Providing evidence for, or acting as sign-off mentors with regard to making decisions about achievement of proficiency at the end of a programme.

**NMC requirements: Supporting student learning**

Each student has a named mentor for each period of practice learning (arranged at least 1 week before the placement starts)

Mentors should not normally support more than 3 students at any point in time

At least 40% of the student’s time must be supervised but the mentor (and one hour each week protected time in the final placement for the sign-off mentor)
An on-going achievement record (student passport) including comments from mentors must be passed from one placement to another to enable judgements to be made on the student’s progress.

The mentor should have access to a network of support and supervision to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities and making complex judgements such as failing a student. (this can be other mentors, link lecturers etc.)

**Assessing learning in practice.** Mentors will have been prepared to assess student performance and will be accountable for their decisions to pass or fail. Failing students may be difficult. All assessment decisions must be evidence based.

Most assessment of competence should be taken through direct observation of practice. Simulated experiences or Observed Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) may be used when appropriate (e.g. Basic Life Support).

Mentors should be involved wherever possible when competence is assessed through simulation.

Mentors should consider how evidence from various sources might contribute to making a judgment on performance and competence. Mentors should seek advice and guidance from a sign-off mentor or a practice teacher when dealing with failing students.

**Sign-off mentor criteria** (see appendix 2 and additional Guidance on the Sign off Mentor role for Nurses and Midwives [http://shsc.brookes.ac.uk/plu/nmc-standards](http://shsc.brookes.ac.uk/plu/nmc-standards))

All midwives will be sign off mentors.

The NMC had identified progression points where a student may not progress without a formal decision that they have met the outcomes or competencies of a previous part of the programme.

Mentors must keep sufficient records to support and justify their decisions on whether or not a student is proficient/competent (i.e. there is an audit trail). This includes giving regular feedback to the student and keeping records of guidance given.

Sign-off mentors must have time allocated to reflect, give feedback and keep records of student achievement in their final period of practice learning. This will be equivalent of an hour per student per week. This is so that students have effective feedback and so that the ultimate decision on their proficiency is not unexpected. This allocated time may be greater earlier in the placement.

Only sign-off mentors must sign-off proficiency at the end of a programme, unless the mentor is being supervised by a sign-off mentor (who should then countersign that proficiency has been achieved). This final assessment draws on evidence of assessment over a sustained period of time. The sign-off mentor may use the student passport (portfolio) and other evidence to see has been achieved, demonstrated and maintained. This sign-off of practice must be confirmed by the examining boards of the programmes.

PS/PAG updated Jan 2016

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**Domain 1. Establishing effective working relationships:**
Demonstrate effective relationship building skills sufficient to support learning, as part of a wider inter-professional team, for a range of students in both practice and academic learning environments

- Demonstrate an understanding of factors that influence how students integrate into practice settings
- Providing on-going and constructive support to facilitate transition from one learning environment to another
- Have effective professional and inter-professional working relationships to support learning for entry to the register.

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**Domain 2. Facilitation of learning:**
Facilitate learning for a range of students, within a particular area of practice where appropriate, encouraging self-management of learning opportunities and providing support to maximise individual potential

- Use knowledge of the student's stage of learning to select appropriate learning opportunities to meet their individual needs
- Facilitate the selection of appropriate learning strategies to integrate learning from practice and academic experiences
- Support students in critically reflecting upon their learning experiences in order to enhance future learning

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**Domain 3. Assessment and accountability:**
Assess learning in order to make judgements related to the NMC standards of proficiency for entry to the register or for recording a qualification at a level above initial registration

- Foster professional growth, personal development and accountability through support of students in practice
- Demonstrate a breadth of understanding of assessment strategies and the ability to contribute to the total assessment process as part of a teaching team
- Provide constructive feedback to students and assist them in identifying future learning needs and actions. Manage failing students so that they may either enhance their performance and capabilities for safe and effective practice or be able to understand their failure and the
implications of this for their future

- Be accountable for confirming that students have met, or not met, the NMC competencies in practice and as a sign-off mentor confirm the students have met, or have not met, the NMC standards of proficiency in practice and are capable of safe and effective practice

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Domain 4. Evaluation of learning:</th>
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<td>Determine strategies for evaluating learning in practice and academic settings to ensure that the NMC standards of proficiency for registration or recording a qualification at a level above initial registration have been met</td>
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- Contribute to the evaluation of student learning and assessment experiences – proposing aspects for change as a result of such evaluation
- Participate in self and peer evaluation to facilitate personal development and contribute to the development of others

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<th>Domain 5. Creating an environment for learning:</th>
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<td>Create an environment for learning, where practice is valued and developed, that provides appropriate professional and inter-professional learning opportunities and support for learning to maximise achievement for individuals</td>
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- Support students to identify both learning needs and experiences that are appropriate to their level of learning
- Use a range of learning experiences, involving patients, clients, carers and the professional team, to meet defined learning needs
- Identify aspects of the learning environment which could be enhanced – negotiating with others to make appropriate changes
- Act as a resource to facilitate personal and professional development of others

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<tr>
<th>Domain 6. Context of practice:</th>
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<td>Support learning within a context of practice that reflects health care and educational policies, managing change to ensure that particular professional needs are met within a learning environment that also supports practice development</td>
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- Contribute to the development of an environment in which effective practice is fostered, implemented, evaluated and disseminated
- Set and maintain professional boundaries which are sufficiently flexible for providing inter-professional care
- Initiate and respond to practice developments to ensure safe and effective care is achieved and an effective learning environment is maintained

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Domain 7. Evidence based practice:
Apply evidence-based practice to their own work and contribute to the further development of such a knowledge and practice evidence base

- Identify and apply research and evidence based practice to their area of practice
- Contribute to strategies to increase or review the evidence-base used to support practice
- Support students in applying an evidence base to their own practice

Domain 8. Leadership:
Demonstrate leadership skills for education within practice and academic settings

- Plan a series of learning experiences that will meet students defined learning needs
- Be an advocate for students to support them accessing learning opportunities that meet their individual needs – involving a range of other professionals, patients, clients and carers
- Prioritise work to accommodate support of students within their practice roles
- Provide feedback about the effectiveness of learning and assessment in practice.

**Sign-off mentor Criteria** see other information on SOM at http://www.hls.brookes.ac.uk/peu/nmc-standards

1. Identified on the local register/database as a mentor
2. Registered on the same part of the register as the student
3. Working in the same field of practice as the student
4. Have clinical currency and capability in the same field of practice as the student
5. Met the NMC requirements to remain on the register
7. A working knowledge of current programme requirements, practice assessment strategies and relevant changes in education and practice
8. An understanding of the NMC registration requirements and their contribution to this
9. An in-depth understanding of their accountability to the NMC for the decision they make to pass or fail a student when assessing proficiency requirements at the end of a programme