



Standards to support learning and assessment in practice

NMC standards for mentors, practice teachers and teachers

- Liaising with others (e.g. mentors, sign-off mentors, practice facilitators, practice teachers, personal tutors, programme leaders) 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.

2.1.1 Criteria for supporting learning and assessing in practice – mentors

Nurses and midwives who intend to take on the role of mentor must fulfil the following criteria:

- Be registered in the same part or sub-part of the register as the student they are to assess and for the nurses' part of the register be in the same field of practice (adult, mental health, learning disability or children's). See Circular 26/2007 for further information (Annexe 3).
- Have developed their own knowledge, skills and competence beyond registration i.e. been registered for at least one year.
- Have successfully completed an NMC approved mentor preparation programme (or a comparable programme which has been accredited by an AEI as meeting the NMC mentor requirements).
- Have the ability to select, support and assess a range of learning opportunities in their area of practice for students undertaking NMC approved programmes.
- Be able to support learning in an interprofessional environment – selecting and supporting a range of learning opportunities for students from other professions.
- Have the ability to contribute to the assessment of other professionals under the supervision of an experienced assessor from that profession.
- Be able to make judgements about competence/proficiency of NMC students on the same part of the register, and in the same field of practice, and be accountable for such decisions.
- Be able to support other nurses and midwives in meeting CPD needs in accordance with The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses and midwives (NMC, 2015).

2.1.2 Competence and outcomes for a mentor

Mentor competencies are achieved by successful completion of an NMC approved mentor preparation programme that achieves all of the outcomes of stage 2. These outcomes are as follows:

Establishing effective working relationships

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

Facilitation of learning

- Use knowledge of the student's stage of learning to select appropriate learning opportunities to meet 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.

Assessment and accountability

- 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 the teaching team.
- Provide constructive feedback to students and assist them in identifying future learning needs and actions. Manage failing students so that they may 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. As a sign-off mentor confirm that students have met, or not met, the NMC standards of proficiency in practice and are capable of safe and effective practice.

Evaluation of learning

- Contribute to evaluation of student learning and assessment experiences – proposing aspects for change resulting from such evaluation.
- Participate in self and peer evaluation to facilitate personal development, and contribute to the development of others.

NMC Requirements	Guidance
The student must self-declare their good health and good character for entry to a new part of the register.	Good health and good character will have been assessed for admission to and maintenance on the register at initial registration, and again for entry to and continued participation in the current programme. Students should advise their Personal Tutors of any issues that may affect this. They are responsible and accountable for their self-declaration to the NMC when applying for registration in a new part of the register.
The programme leader/official correspondent must provide a supporting declaration of good health and good character of the student for registration.	A declaration of the student's self-declaration must be completed by a registrant who is the programme leader/official correspondent (or her deputy), whose name has been previously notified to the NMC, There should be an audit trail of evidence (normally in the student's record).

3.4 Applying the NMC teacher standard in practice settings

The NMC teacher standard is mandatory for those nurses and midwives who are teachers employed in higher education and who support students on NMC approved programmes in practice settings. The NMC recognises that AElS will have other teachers, who are not nurses and midwives, who will contribute to teaching on NMC approved programmes in their area of specialist expertise. The NMC will, through its quality assurance processes verify that the majority of HE teachers who support NMC students in practice settings have attained, or are working towards, a teaching qualification that meets the NMC outcomes from stage 4.

Approved educational institutions that employ teachers holding an NMC approved qualification will determine the requirements for applying the standard in academic settings. The NMC is concerned that those nurses and midwives who meet the outcomes of stage 4 of the framework are able to apply their knowledge, skills and competence in practice and academic settings. The NMC requires that 50% of learning for its approved pre-registration and specialist practice programmes takes place in practice.

NMC nurse, midwife and specialist community public health nurse teachers must have contemporary experience to be able to support learning and assessment in practice settings. Such experience may take a variety of forms, such as: acting as a link tutor, supporting mentor development and updating, having an active clinical role for a part of their time, supporting clinical staff in their professional development in practice, being involved in practice development to support the evidence-base from which students draw, and contributing to practice-based research.

3.4.1 Teacher preparation programmes NMC approved teacher programmes must:

- Be at a minimum academic level of postgraduate study, i.e. postgraduate certificate, diploma or degree (M level), according to the requirements of programme providers.
- Be at least one academic year in duration.
- Include a minimum of 12 weeks (360 hours) teaching practice.
- Demonstrate achievement of all of the outcomes of stage 4.

Programme providers should take account of the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education (HE Academy, February 2006 – see Annexe 2). This framework was developed by the Higher Education Academy on behalf of the Higher Education sector and commissioned by Universities UK, the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) and the UK HE funding councils. The model provides a descriptor-based approach for HE institutions to determine their own criteria in the application of the standards framework. It is based upon applying areas of activity, core knowledge and professional values.

The UK Professional Standards Framework (above) complements the NMC Standards to support learning and assessment in practice. The framework is designed to be sector owned and applied to various staff groups from teaching assistants to those who have a substantive teaching role. This would allow programme providers to seek accreditation of their NMC approved teacher preparation programmes and, potentially, to have outcomes for mentors and practice teachers recognised by the HE Academy.

3.4.2 Continuing professional development for teachers

The NMC requires all NMC teachers to maintain and develop their knowledge, skills and competence as a teacher through regular updating. Those teachers employed in approved educational institutions will need to meet the requirements of their employers for scholarly activity. The NMC also requires that teachers focus on the practice aspects of their roles and ensure their knowledge of practice is contemporaneous and that, where appropriate, their skills are fit for safe and effective practice.

Teachers should be prepared to demonstrate to their employers, and NMC quality assurance agents, as appropriate,¹⁴ how they have maintained and developed their knowledge, skills and competence as teachers.

3.4.3 Signing off proficiency

Teachers are responsible for signing off the academic component of the programme. Many teachers will be involved in supporting learning and assessing assignments throughout the programme. The Programme Leader for Nursing or the Lead Midwife for Education, whose name has previously been notified to the Council, will make the final sign-off for the programme. They must ensure that they have seen evidence that the practice component of the programme has been signed off by a sign-off mentor or a practice teacher.

¹⁴ NMC approved programmes and providers are subject to monitoring as part of the NMC's UK wide QA framework.

Only teachers who have a practice-based role, and who have met the additional criteria for a sign-off mentor (section 2.1.3) may undertake sign-off of practice. This may apply where teachers have a role requiring them to take a practice caseload, as well as work in academic settings.

3.4.4 Allocated time for practice teaching activity

Approved educational institutions will employ nurses and midwives who have successfully met the outcomes of stage 4 and recorded their qualification on the register, and other teachers who are not nurses and midwives. The NMC expects teachers who are nurses and midwives to be able to support learning and assessment in both academic and practice learning environments. Teachers are therefore expected to spend a proportion of their time supporting student learning in practice (Recommendation 26 from Fitness for Practice, UKCC 1999). The NMC advises that this should be approximately 20% of their normal teaching hours.

Teachers in HE might specialise in teaching, research or practice and these specialities may at times be in conflict. The NMC requirement for teachers to support practice-based learning may be achieved through a variety of strategies such as:

- Acting as a clinical teacher or a link tutor.
- Preparing, supporting and updating mentors and practice teachers.
- Taking part in practice-based action learning groups.
- Contributing to practice development.
- Undertaking practice-based research activity.
- Any other strategies that would enable teachers to maintain practice knowledge and awareness, and where appropriate, practice skills, i.e. midwifery teachers would require effective registration as a midwife, specialist community public health nurses teachers would normally have a limited caseload, nurse teachers working in specialist areas may similarly wish to maintain a limited caseload.

It is for programme providers to ensure that students have access to a sufficient number of teachers with expertise in practice, teaching, research and development to support their learning in both practice and academic learning environments.

Section 4 – Approval and monitoring of mentor, practice teacher and teacher standards

4.1 NMC approval of mentor/practice teacher preparation programmes

The NMC has agreed two routes for the approval of mentor/practice teacher preparation programmes. Programme providers may choose the option best suited to their purposes. The routes are:

Route 1

Route 1 would be suited to NMC programme providers seeking approval for NMC programmes leading to registration: Nursing, Midwifery and SCPHN. A combined event could consider the pre-registration programme and a mentor/practice teacher programme. Separate documentation would be necessary for the mentor/practice teacher preparation programme.

Route 2

Framework approval events allowing one event to approve all standards set by the NMC as teaching roles. Route 2 would be best suited to those programme providers who already offer an NMC approved teacher preparation programme and who would be interested in developing these further to provide outcomes for mentors and practice teachers. Such programmes should provide stepping on and stepping off points and processes for AP(E)L to recognise achievement of previous stages (or equivalent) in the developmental framework. This route would also be suitable to those who do not offer an NMC approved pre-registration programme but who would wish to have approved mentors – such as those programme providers offering return to practice programmes or the overseas nurses programme.

4.2 NMC approval of teacher preparation programmes

The NMC already approves teacher preparation programmes leading to a recordable qualification on the register as part of its quality assurance processes. This arrangement will continue unchanged.

4.3 NMC monitoring arrangements

Reports of quality assurance activities, annual monitoring, and list of approved programmes are published on the NMC website at www.nmc-uk.org

4.4 NMC recognition of other teaching qualifications

The NMC recognises that some nurses and midwives may undertake teacher preparation programmes for their own interest and career development before making the decision to become a nurse, midwife or specialist community public health teacher. The NMC has previously offered a route for recording such a teaching qualification where it is deemed comparable to the NMC standard for the preparation of teachers. The NMC has agreed that this route should continue.

In such cases, the NMC requires sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the entry criteria for teacher preparation have been met, that the programme undertaken is comparable to that of an NMC approved programme in nature and content and that the registrant can provide evidence of mapping their learning and experience to demonstrate the current NMC requirements have been met. This includes evidence of assessed teaching activity, comparable with students studying an NMC approved programme for a period equivalent to a minimum of 12 weeks (or 360 hours). Such evidence must be verified by a nurse, midwife or specialist community public health nurse teacher, who has a recorded teaching qualification on the NMC register.

Nurses and midwives intending to use the NMC recognition route to record a teaching qualification must be able to provide evidence that they:

- Meet NMC criteria for entry to a teacher preparation programme.
- Have undertaken continuing professional development, at least to first degree level, relevant to their area of practice.
- Have undertaken a post-graduate programme of teacher preparation.
- Have mapped their learning and experience to demonstrate that the outcomes of stage 4 have been met. This must be verified by a registrant who already has a teaching qualification recorded on the register and is currently employed to teach students in education leading to registration or a recorded qualification with the NMC.
- Are able to supply a reference from practice to support that they have the ability to teach students in practice.
- Confirm that they have undertaken at least 12 weeks (or 360 hours) of assessed teaching activity with students on an NMC approved programme leading to registration or a recordable qualification. An NMC registrant who has a recorded teaching qualification on the register must have assessed such teaching activity.
- Such nurses and midwives would need to prepare a portfolio of evidence for local assessment by an NMC registrant who has a teaching qualification recorded on the register and who is employed at an NMC approved educational institution. This registrant will confirm to the NMC that evidence has been provided that all stage 4 outcomes have been met.

Section 5 – Glossary, references and annexes

Glossary

Glossary of terms	
Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning (AP(E)L)	Process of awarding credit for formal or experiential learning by mapping it against defined learning outcomes of the programme offered (see NMC QA Factsheet I/2004).
Approved Educational Institutions (AEI)	An institution recognised by the NMC to provide NMC approved programmes. Normally these are in higher education, however the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 allows the NMC to approve other institutions to deliver programmes that meet NMC standards.
Approval	A process whereby the partners (see below) present their programme for external scrutiny (or validation) which, if successful, leads to joint approval by the NMC and the approved educational institution.
Competency	A competency describes the skills and abilities to practise safely and effectively without the need for direct supervision. Competencies are achieved incrementally throughout periods of practice experience during a programme. At the end of the final period of practice experience or supervised practice it is the evidence of achievement of all competencies that enables sign-off mentors or practice teachers to decide whether proficiency has been achieved.
Due regard	Differentiates between the nurses', midwives' and specialist community public health nurses' parts of the NMC register as well as specific fields of practice within nursing, e.g. adult, children, mental health and learning disability. Mentors and practice teachers normally assess others only with due regard to the parts on which they, themselves, are registered.
Fitness for practice	Requires the student to demonstrate that they are practising safely and effectively, have met the standards of proficiency and all other requirements to become registered.
Lead Midwife for Education	Named person within an approved educational institution responsible for leading midwifery education and involved in all processes relating to the approval and monitoring of NMC approved midwifery programmes.
Local register of mentors/practice teachers	Placement providers hold a register of all current mentors, including sign-off mentors and practice teachers, that have met the NMC outcomes for these roles and have additionally met the NMC requirements for maintenance on the register.
Mentor	A registrant who has met the outcomes of stage 2 and who facilitates learning, and supervises and assesses students in a practice setting.

Glossary of terms	
Nurses and midwives	This term refers to a nurses and midwives whose names are held on the NMC register. There are three parts of the register: nursing, midwifery and specialist community public health nursing. In addition, the term midwife has a legal definition: “A midwife is a person who having been regularly admitted to a midwifery education programme, duly recognised in the country in which it is located, has successfully completed the prescribed course of studies in midwifery and has acquired the requisite qualifications to be registered and/or legally licensed to practise midwifery.” (ICM 2005).
Outcomes	Outcomes identify the skills required at each stage of the framework to meet the defined final competencies.
Parts of the register	The NMC register, which opened on 1 August 2004, has three parts: nurse, midwife and specialist community public health nurse. A mark on the register identifies the field of practice, i.e. adult, children, mental health and learning disability nurses.
Postgraduate	A postgraduate preparation programme is normally undertaken following graduation from a first degree (or equivalent) and, normally, at Master’s level. Academic outcomes may be of postgraduate certificate, diploma, degree or a specified number of M level credits.
Practice proficiency	A student is deemed proficient when they have successfully met all of the NMC standards of proficiency for nursing, midwifery or specialist community public health nursing, at the end of an NMC approved programme. Practice proficiency may only be signed off by a practice teacher or a mentor who has met the NMC additional criteria.
Practice teacher	A registrant who has gained knowledge, skills and competence in both their specialist area of practice and in their teaching role, meeting the outcomes of stage 3, and who facilitates learning, supervises and assesses students in a practice setting.
Preceptorship	The process through which existing nurses and midwives provide support to newly qualified nurses and midwives.
Proficiencies	These are contained within the standards of proficiency for each of the three parts of the register. Fitness for practice is demonstrated by meeting all NMC proficiencies and other requirements by the end of the programme.
Programme providers	Programme providers are partnerships formed between AEs and service partners providers who provide placement opportunities for students on NMC approved programmes. Normally these programmes are 50% theory and 50% practice. All partners are responsible for ensuring that learning opportunities and support for learning and assessment is available in both theory and practice learning environments.
Quality Assurance (QA)	The initial approval to allow a programme to be delivered and ongoing monitoring during the lifespan of NMC approved programmes.

Glossary of terms	
Recordable qualification	A qualification, approved by the NMC that may be recorded on the NMC register.
Registrable qualification	A qualification approved by the NMC that enables admission to a part of the NMC professional register.
Registrants	Previously used by the NMC to describe nurses and midwives whose names are held on the NMC register.
Rules	Rules are established through legislation and they provide the legal strategic framework from which the NMC develops standards, e.g. Education, Registration and Registration Appeals Rules 2004 (SI 2004/1 767).
Sign-off mentor	Mentors are required to meet specified criteria in order to be able to sign-off a student's practice proficiency at the end of an NMC approved programme. All midwife mentors and practice teachers will have met the requirements through their preparation programme.
Specialist Community Public Health Nurse	The NMC register has a part for registered specialist community public health nurses (SCPHN). The Council has agreed standards of proficiency for entry to this part of the register. Existing groups of nurses have migrated to this part of the register; these include health visitors, school nurses (who hold a specialist practice qualification) and occupational health nurses (who hold a specialist practice qualification). Nurses and midwives who work in public health roles, and can demonstrate that they have met the academic and practice standards of proficiency for this part of the register, may be able to apply to be registered as SCPHN.
Standards	The NMC is required by the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 to establish standards of proficiency to be met by applicants to different parts of the register. The standards are considered to be necessary for safe and effective practice [Article 5(2)(a)]. These are set out within the standards of proficiency for each of the three parts of the register. The standards support the rules, are mandatory and gain their authority from the legislation.
Teacher	A registrant who has undertaken an NMC approved teacher preparation programme, or equivalent and successfully achieved the outcomes defined in stage 4 of the developmental framework.

References

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NMC Circulars

- 20/2006 Introduction of the Standards to support learning and assessment in practice
- 21/2006 Preceptorship Guidelines
- 08/2007 Revised arrangements for the introduction of the practice teacher standard in relation to specialist community public health nursing programmes
- 13/2007 Preparing midwife mentors to meet the NMC's Standards to support learning and assessment in practice
- 17/2007 Approval process and timetable to implement the Standards to support learning and assessment in practice for NMC Approved Programme Providers
- 26/2007 Applying due regard to learning and assessment in practice
- 27/2007 Sign-off status and preceptorship for Practice Teacher students
- 28/2007 Guidance for small scale service providers in applying the NMC's Standards to support learning and assessment in practice
- 33/2007 Ensuring continuity of practice assessment through the ongoing achievement record
- 01/2008 Meeting the triennial review requirements for midwife sign-off mentors who support midwives undertaking the Standards for the preparation and practice of supervisor of midwives programmes
- 02/2008 Applying due regard to learning and assessment in practice for student midwives

Annex 1

The developmental framework to support learning and assessment in practice

Domain	Stage 1 Nurses and midwives	Stage 2 Mentor	Stage 3 Practice teacher	Stage 4 Teacher
Establishing effective working relationships Demonstrate effective relationship building skills sufficient to support learning, as part of a wider interprofessional team, for a range of students in both practice and academic learning environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work as a member of a multi-professional team, contributing effectively to team working support those who are new to the team in integrating into the practice learning environment act as a role model for safe and effective practice develop effective working relationships based on mutual trust and respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate an understanding of factors that influence how students integrate into practice settings providing ongoing and constructive support to facilitate transition from one learning environment to another have effective professional and interprofessional working relationships to support learning for entry to the register 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have effective professional and inter-professional working relationships to support learning for entry to the register and education at a level beyond initial registration be able to support students moving into specific areas of practice or a level of practice beyond initial registration, identifying their individual needs in moving to a different level of practice support mentors and other professionals in their roles to support learning across practice and academic learning environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate effective relationships with other members of the teaching teams in practice and academic settings based on mutual trust and respect maintain appropriate supportive relationships with a range of students, mentors, practice teachers and other professionals foster peer support and peer learning in practice and academic settings for all students support students to integrate into new environments and working teams to enhance access to learning

Domain	Stage 1 Nurses and midwives	Stage 2 Mentor	Stage 3 Practice teacher	Stage 4 Teacher
Facilitation of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-operate with those who have defined support roles contributing towards the provision of effective learning experiences • share their own knowledge and skills to enable others to learn in practice settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use knowledge of the student's stage of learning to select appropriate learning opportunities to meet individual needs • facilitate the selection of appropriate learning strategies to integrate learning from practice and academic experience • support students in critically reflecting upon their learning experiences in order to enhance future learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enable students to relate theory to practice whilst developing critically reflective skills • foster professional growth and personal development by use of effective communication and facilitation skills • facilitate and develop the ethos of interprofessional learning and working 	<p>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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote development of enquiring, reflective, critical and innovative approaches to learning • implement a range of learning and teaching strategies across a wide range of settings • provide support and advice, with ongoing and constructive feedback to students, to maximise individual potential • co-ordinate learning within an interprofessional learning and working environment • facilitate integration of learning from practice and academic settings • act as a practice expert to support development of knowledge and skills for practice

Domain	Stage 1 Nurses and midwives	Stage 2 Mentor	Stage 3 Practice teacher	Stage 4 Teacher
<p>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</p> <p>Assessment and accountability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work to the NMC Code for nurses and midwives in maintaining own knowledge and proficiency for safe and effective practice provide feedback to others in learning situations and to those who are supporting them so that learning is effectively assessed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> foster professional growth, personal development and accountability through support of students in practice demonstrate a breadth of understanding of assessment strategies and ability to contribute to the total assessment process as part of the teaching team provide constructive feedback to students and assist them in identifying future learning needs and actions. Manage failing students so that they may 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> set effective professional boundaries whilst creating a dynamic, constructive teacher-student relationship in partnership with other members of the teaching team use knowledge and experience to design and implement assessment frameworks be able to assess practice for registration and also at a level beyond that of initial registration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> set and maintain professional boundaries that are sufficiently flexible for interprofessional learning develop, with others, effective assessment strategies to ensure that standards of proficiency for registration or recordable qualifications at a level beyond initial registration are met support others involved in the assessment process, students, mentors and peers

Domain	Stage 1 Nurses and midwives	Stage 2 Mentor	Stage 3 Practice teacher	Stage 4 Teacher
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> be accountable for confirming that students have met or not met the NMC competencies in practice and as a sign-off mentor confirm that students have met or not met the NMC standards of proficiency and are capable of safe and effective practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide constructive feedback to students and assist them in identifying future learning needs and actions, manage failing students so that they may 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 standards of proficiency in practice for registration at a level beyond initial registration and are capable of safe and effective practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide constructive feedback to students and assist them in identifying future learning needs and actions, manage failing students so that they may 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 their decisions related to fitness for practice for registration or recordable qualifications, underpinning such decisions with an evidence base derived from appropriate and effective monitoring of performance

Domain	Stage 1 Nurses and midwives	Stage 2 Mentor	Stage 3 Practice teacher	Stage 4 Teacher
Evaluation of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contribute information related to those learning in practice, and about the nature of learning experiences, to enable those supporting students to make judgements on the quality of the learning environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contribute to evaluation of student learning and assessment experiences, proposing aspects for change resulting from such evaluation participate in self and peer evaluation to facilitate personal development and contribute to the development of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> design evaluation strategies to determine the effectiveness of practice and academic experience accessed by students at both registration level and those in education at a level beyond initial registration collaborate with other members of the teaching team to judge and develop learning, assessment and support appropriate to practice and levels of education collect evidence on the quality of education in practice, and determine how well NMC requirements for standards of proficiency are being achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> determine and use criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of learning environments, acting on findings, with others, to enhance quality foster and participate in self and peer evaluation to enable students to manage their own learning in practice and academic settings and to enhance personal professional development evaluate the effectiveness of assessment strategies in providing evidence to make judgements on fitness for practice report on the quality of practice and academic learning environments to demonstrate that NMC requirements have been met, particularly in relation to support of students and achievement of standards of proficiency

Domain	Stage 1 Nurses and midwives	Stage 2 Mentor	Stage 3 Practice teacher	Stage 4 Teacher
Create an environment for interprofessional learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate a commitment to continuing professional development to enhance own knowledge and proficiency provide peer support to others to facilitate their learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enable students to access opportunities to learn and work within interprofessional teams initiate the creation of optimum learning environments for students at registration level and for those in education at a level beyond initial registration work closely with others involved in education, in practice and academic settings, to adapt to change and inform curriculum development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in partnership with others, opportunities for students to identify and access learning experiences that meet their individual needs ensure such opportunities maintain the integrity of the student's professional role whilst responding to the interprofessional context of practice determine with others, audit criteria against which learning environments may be judged for their effectiveness in meeting NMC requirements support and develop others involved to ensure that learning needs are effectively met in a safe environment explore and implement strategies for continuous quality improvement of the learning environment

Domain	Stage 1 Nurses and midwives	Stage 2 Mentor	Stage 3 Practice teacher	Stage 4 Teacher
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> whilst enhancing their own practice and proficiency, a registered nurse or midwife, act as a role model to others to enable them to learn their unique professional role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contribute to the development of an environment in which effective practice is fostered, implemented, evaluated and disseminated set and maintain professional boundaries that are sufficiently flexible for providing interprofessional care initiate and respond to practice developments to ensure safe and effective care is achieved and an effective learning environment is maintained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise the unique needs of practice and contribute to development of an environment that supports achievement of NMC standards of proficiency set and maintain professional boundaries, whilst at the same time recognising the contribution of the wider interprofessional team and the context of care delivery support students in exploring new ways of working and the impact this may have on established professional roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support students in identifying ways in which policy impacts on practice contribute effectively to processes of change and innovation, implementing new ways of working that maintain the integrity of professional roles negotiate ways of providing support to students so that they can achieve their learning needs within the context of professional and interprofessional practice act as a role model to enable students to learn professional responsibilities and how to be accountable for their own practice adapt to change, demonstrating to students how flexibility may be incorporated whilst maintaining safe and effective practice

Domain	Stage 1 Nurses and midwives	Stage 2 Mentor	Stage 3 Practice teacher	Stage 4 Teacher
Apply evidence-based practice to their own work and contribute to the further development of such a knowledge and practice evidence base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further develop their evidence base for practice to support their own personal and professional development and to contribute to the development of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify areas of research and practice development based on interpretation of existing evidence • use local and national health frameworks to review and identify developmental needs • advance their own knowledge and practice in order to develop new practitioners, at both registration levels and education at a level beyond initial registration, to be able to meet changes in practice roles and care delivery • disseminate findings from research and practice development to enhance practice and the quality of learning experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advance their own knowledge and practice abilities through access to and involvement in, where appropriate, research and practice development • consider how evidence-based practice, involving patients, clients, carers and other members of the health and social care team, enhances care delivery and learning opportunities • empower individuals, groups and organisations to develop the evidence-base for practice • disseminate findings from the research and practice development to enhance the quality of learning and care delivery and academic environments

Domain	Stage 1 Nurses and midwives	Stage 2 Mentor	Stage 3 Practice teacher	Stage 4 Teacher
<p>Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use communication skills effectively to ensure that those in learning experiences understand their contribution and limitations to care delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide practice leadership and expertise in application of knowledge and skills based on evidence • demonstrate the ability to lead education on practice, working across practice and academic settings • manage competing demands of practice and education related to supporting different practice levels of students • lead and contribute to the evaluation of effectiveness of learning and assessment in practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate effective communication skills to facilitate delivery of educational programmes leading to registration or a recordable qualification • initiate and lead programme development and review processes to enhance quality and effectiveness • develop effective relationships with practice and academic staff involved in programme delivery to ensure clarity of contribution and strategies to respond to evaluation of learning experiences • demonstrate strategic vision for practice and academic development relevant to meeting NMC requirements • manage competing demands to ensure effectiveness of learning experiences for students • lead, contribute to, analyse and act on the findings of evaluation of learning and assessment to develop programmes • provide feedback about the effectiveness of learning and assessment in practice

Annexe 2

The UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education

HE sector-owned standards

The HE Academy has developed a National Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education. The framework was developed by the Higher Education Academy on behalf of the Higher Education sector and commissioned by Universities UK, SCOP and the UK HE funding councils. The model provides a descriptor-based approach for HE institutions to determine their own criteria in the application of the standards framework. It is based upon applying areas of activity, core knowledge and professional values. These areas are applied to learning outcomes and assessment activities within professional development programmes in order to demonstrate application of the standards.

Areas of activity, core knowledge and professional values within the framework

Areas of activity

- 1 Design and planning of learning activities and/or programmes of study
- 2 Teaching and/or supporting student learning
- 3 Assessment and giving feedback to learners
- 4 Developing effective environments and student support and guidance
- 5 Integration of scholarship, research and professional activities with teaching and supporting learning
- 6 Evaluation of practice and continuing professional development

Core knowledge

Knowledge and understanding of:

- 1 The subject material
- 2 Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
- 3 How students learn, both generally and in the subject
- 4 The use of appropriate learning technologies
- 5 Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching
- 6 The implications of quality assurance and enhancement for professional practice

Professional values

- 1 Respect for individual learners
- 2 Commitment to incorporating the process and outcomes of relevant research scholarship, and/or professional practice
- 3 Commitment to development of learning communities
- 4 Commitment to encouraging participation in higher education, acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity
- 5 Commitment to continuing professional development and evaluation of practice

Please see www.heacademy.ac.uk for further details.

Annexe 3: Circulars

Circular: Applying due regard to learning and assessment in practice.

Nursing and Midwifery Council Circular

Index Number: NMC Circular 26/2007

Issue Date: 21 Sept 2007

Review Date: 21 Sept 2008

Replaces: New circular

Category: Nursing General/Specialist Community Public Health Nurses

Status: Action

Summary

This circular:

- responds to challenges currently experienced in the application of due regard in meeting the Standards to support learning and assessment in practice (NMC August 2006) hereafter referred to as 'the Standards'.

(The definition of due regard is given in bold text in the background section page 73).

- sets out ways in which the principle of due regard may be applied more flexibly without reducing the degree of rigour applied to assessing student competence.
- may be applied with immediate effect in relation to nursing and specialist community public health programmes as indicated below.
- does not apply to pre-registration midwifery programmes. Further information related to the assessment of pre-registration midwifery students will follow.

This circular should be read in conjunction with:

- The Standards to support learning and assessment in practice (NMC August 2006)
- NMC Circular 20/2006

Background

The NMC has addressed some challenges in the application of due regard in the assessment of practice of approved nursing and specialist community public health nursing programmes. This includes issues relating to available resource and the need to make use of inter-professional shared learning opportunities.

Principle A (para 1.2) of the Standards states that NMC registrants:

‘who make judgements about whether a student has achieved the required standards of proficiency for safe and effective practice must be on the same part or sub-part of the register as that which the student is intending to enter’

It has been reported that in some circumstances the current application of due regard for learning and assessment has become either impractical or impossible due to workforce issues and employment practices. Equally, it is important that students can be placed with a professional from a different part of the register or a different profession in order to meet programme outcomes.

As a consequence, the ways in which due regard can be applied have been reviewed and requirements may now be met by applying the principles set out in Methods 1 to 2c pages 74–77.

Education providers may apply these principles as described below with immediate effect without need for programme modification.

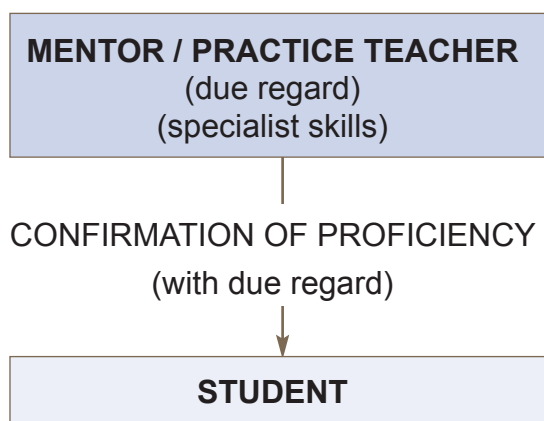
Principles to be applied

Method 1: Existing application

This method is the way in which due regard is currently applied and will likely remain the most frequently used method. It is also the only method which will apply in pre-registration midwifery programmes.

The student's mentor or practice teacher:

- has the specialist skills required to support the placement learning outcomes
- is from the same part of the register and field of practice as the student.
- supervises and monitors progress throughout this period
- assesses component skills related to the programme outcomes.



Judgements are informed by feedback from colleagues and evidence from other sources leading to an assessment determining whether the student has achieved the required standard for safe and effective practice in relation to the particular field of practice. Fields of practice are usually indicated by marks on the register as representing the nursing branches but they can also be applied more broadly, e.g. in relation to a specialist area of practice.

Method 2: Modified application

Three variations of method 2 are set out below and address the complexity of the types of placements within the different parts of the register and fields of practice.

Method 2a is intended to support the increasing need for nursing and specialist community public health nursing students to appreciate the interprofessional context in which they will be working as registrants and the need for placements to be undertaken in this way may increase. However, methods 2b and 2c are intended as interim measures to allow programme providers, placement providers and commissioners time to work together to ensure that adequate numbers of mentors and practice teachers from all parts of the register and fields of practice are prepared for these roles.

Method 2a: Where learning and assessment particularly requires specialist field input

This method enables due regard to be applied where students need to gain experience with somebody from a specialist field of practice who is not a mentor/practice teacher from the same part of the register and same field of practice as that which they intend to enter.

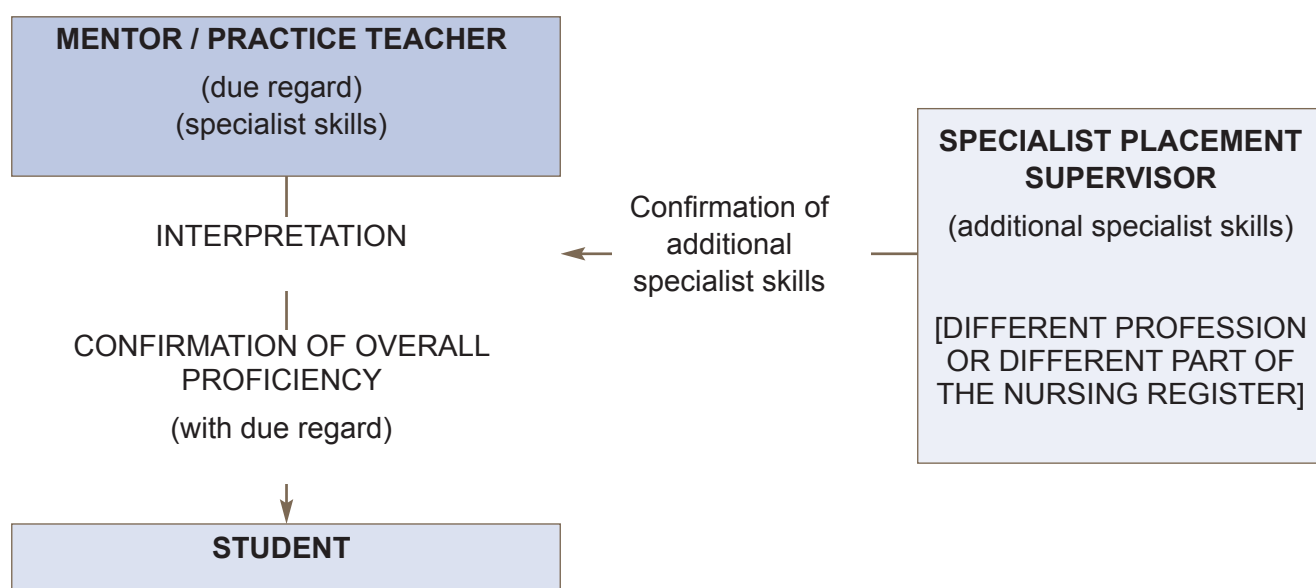
Examples could include:

- a specialist community public health nursing student who undertakes a placement within a social work environment,
- a mental health nursing student placed within a criminal justice environment
- a learning disability nursing student placed within an adult nursing environment
- a child branch nursing student placed with a specialist community public health nurse

In these circumstances the student is placed with a specialist placement supervisor who is a designated practitioner with the skills that the student needs to acquire or be exposed to. The specialist placement supervisor is normally a professional who has received preparation in supervising and assessing students in practice settings.

The specialist placement supervisor from a different part of the register or profession:

- directly supervises the student in the required activities that address the specified learning outcomes related to the specialist experience.
- assesses component skills directly related to the professional's own area of competence and scope of practice.



The placement must be overseen by a NMC registrant mentor or practice teacher with due regard who meets with the student and placement supervisor at agreed predetermined points to monitor the student's achievement in the context of the part of the register that the student intends to enter. The mentor/ practice teacher is accountable for assessment with due regard and confirming overall proficiency (or not) at the end of the placement.

NB. Practice assessment in independent/supplementary prescribing programmes is the legal responsibility of a designated medical practitioner who supports, teaches and supervises the student with, where possible, an experienced nurse prescriber who should ensure that learning is applied to specific areas of nursing practice.

Method 2b: Where mentors and practice teachers with due regard are scarce.

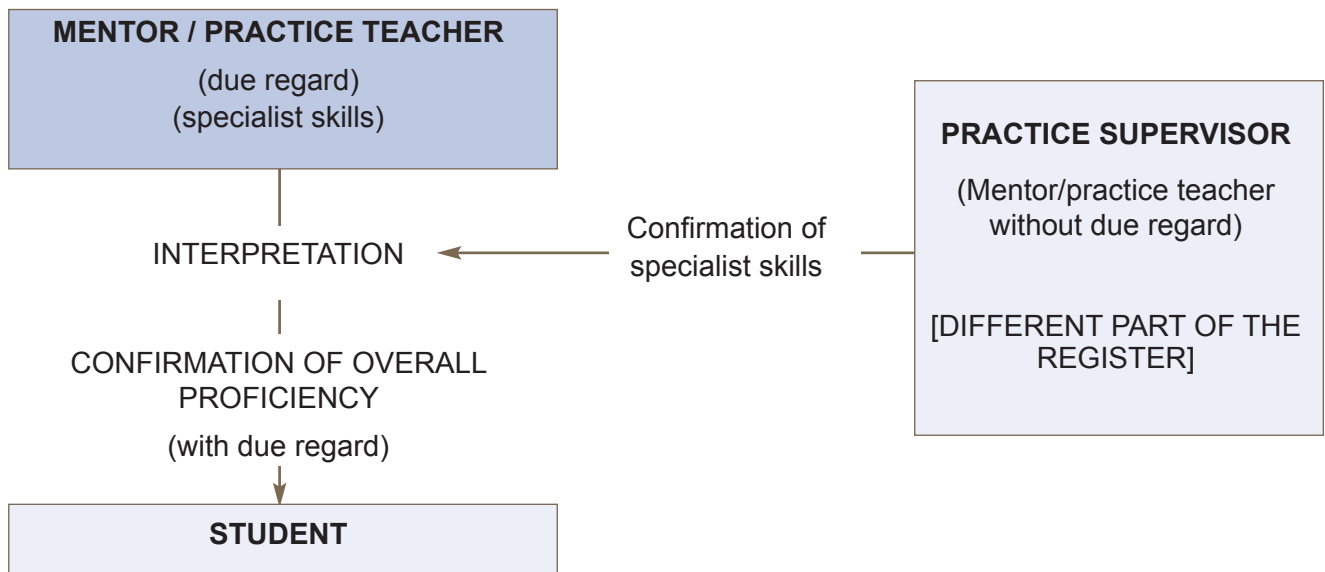
This method enables due regard to be applied where students need to gain experience within a required field of practice or part of the register where there are limited numbers of mentors/practice teachers available from their part of the register and/or field of practice. Direct supervision and assessment in the specialist area is provided by other NMC mentors/ practice teachers without due regard.

Examples could include a:

- mental health branch student supervised by an adult nurse in a general accident and emergency unit
- general practice nurse student supervised by an adult nurse in a minor injuries unit
- child branch student supervised by a learning disability nurse in a unit for challenging behaviour
- learning disability nurse supervised by a health visitor in a baby clinic.

A practice supervisor (mentor/practice teacher without due regard)

- directly supervises the student in the required activities that address the specified learning outcomes related to the specialist experience
- assesses component skills directly related to the professional's own area of competence and scope of practice.



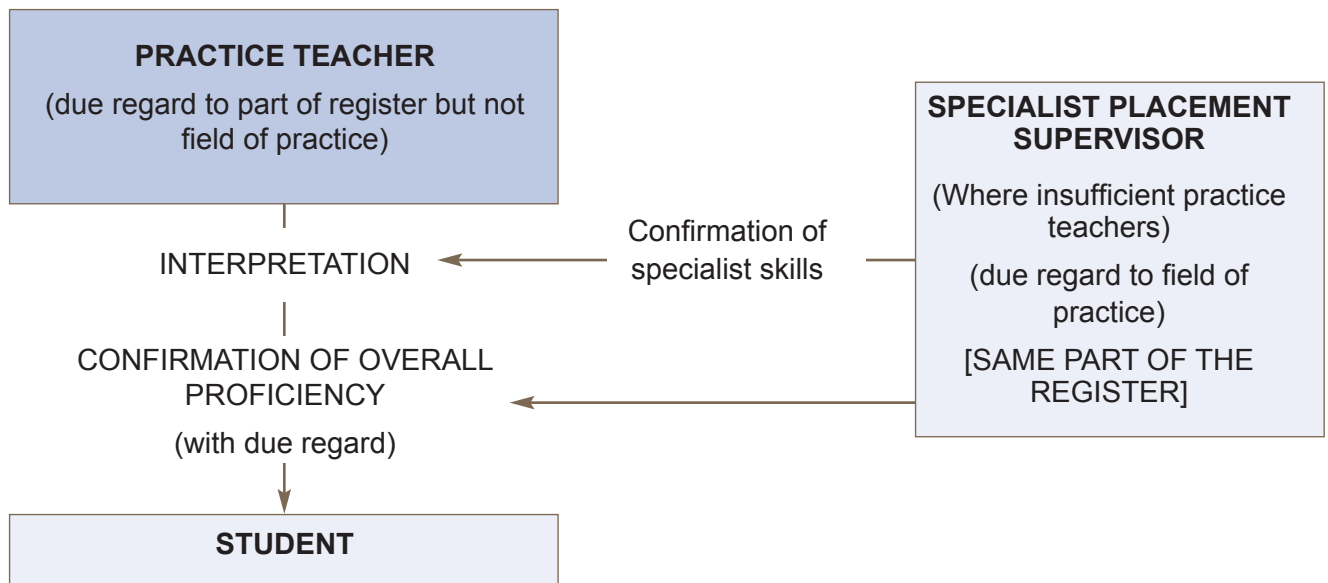
The placement must be overseen by an NMC registrant mentor or practice teacher with due regard who meets with the practice supervisor providing direct supervision at agreed predetermined points to monitor the student's achievement in the context of the part of the register that the student intends to enter. The overseeing mentor/practice teacher is accountable for assessment with due regard and confirming overall proficiency (or not) at the end of the placement.

Method 2c: In specialist community public health nursing programmes where practice teachers are available from the part of the register but not the specific field of practice.

This enables due regard to be applied where specialist community public health nursing students are placed within a required field of practice, where there are no practice teachers from that part of the register to provide direct supervision. Specialist community public health nurse (SCPHN) registrants from the field of practice provide direct supervision and assessment in the specialist area.

An example is where there are several health visitor practice teachers but no practice teachers within the occupational health nursing field of practice. Under these circumstances:

- an occupational health student is directly supervised by a SCPHN registrant from the occupational health field of practice
- the placement is overseen by a health visitor practice teacher who meets with the student and placement supervisor at agreed predetermined points to monitor the student's achievement
- the health visitor practice teacher (from the SCPHN part of the register together with the SCPHN specialist supervisor from the specialist occupational health field of practice) jointly assess overall proficiency within context of the SCPHN part of the register and specific field of practice.



The placement supervisor and the overseeing practice teacher must both take accountability for the confirmation of proficiency at the end of the placement or programme.

N.B. The placement supervisor would normally be a registrant on the SCPHN part of the register who would also be entered on the local mentor register.

Circumstances where due regard need not apply

There are two circumstances where due regard need not apply:

- in the common foundation programme within pre-registration nursing programmes where the placement is not branch (field) specific. In these circumstances a mentor from any part of the nursing register may confirm that outcomes have been achieved.
- in formative placements where proficiencies/learning outcomes are not being assessed.

Required action

Providers of nursing and specialist community public health nursing programmes may now apply the principles in this circular in the application of due regard for the respective parts of the register and fields of practice. In applying the principles, the most important consideration is safety, public protection and confirmation of overall proficiency. This requires the specialist placement provider, mentor/practice teacher and student to work together in determining the overall practice assessment outcome.

All placement arrangements will continue to be monitored through existing practice placement audit and quality assurance mechanisms.

This circular may be reproduced by all to whom it is addressed

This circular has been issued by:

Sarah Thewlis
Chief Executive and Registrar
Nursing and Midwifery Council

Circular: Applying due regard to learning and assessment in practice for student midwives

Nursing and Midwifery Council Circular
Index Number: NMC Circular 02/2008
Issue Date: 25 January 2008
Review Date: 1 January 2010
Replaces: New Circular
Category: Midwifery
Status: Action

Summary

This circular:

- responds to challenges currently experienced in the application of due regard in meeting the Standards to support learning and assessment in practice (NMC August 2006) hereafter referred to as 'the Standards'.
- sets out ways in which the principle of due regard may be applied more flexibly without reducing the degree of rigour applied to assessing student competence.

Applying due regard to learning and assessment in practice for student midwives

This circular clarifies the principle of applying due regard in a safe and effective way across a range of different placements where student midwives may achieve competence. It should be read in conjunction with the Standards to support learning and assessment in practice. The content of the circular should be applied with immediate effect.

Due regard

The principle of due regard underpins the NMC Standards to support learning and assessment in practice. Principle A (paragraph 1.2 of the Standards) states that NMC registrants:

'who make judgments about whether a student has achieved the required standards of proficiency for safe and effective practice must be on the same part or sub-part of the register as that which the student is intending to enter'

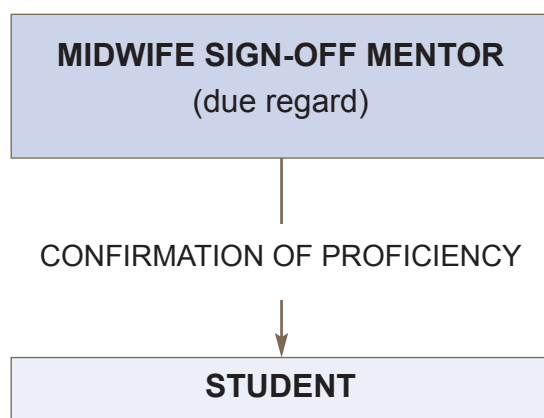
Existing application of applying due regard

Applying due regard is illustrated in the diagram below. In this model the student midwife is placed with a midwife sign-off mentor (who must have achieved the NMC requirements for sign-off). This person undertakes a number of functions. These include:

- managing the placement
- planning the student's learning experiences
- working with them on a day-to-day basis.

In so doing, the midwife sign-off mentor develops an opinion on the student's performance and learning progression throughout a practice placement which may be informed by the assessment of specific tasks and skills. Their opinion is also normally informed by feedback from colleagues and evidence from other sources. This process leads to a judgment being made as to whether the student has achieved competence by reaching the requirements for safe and effective practice set out in the NMC Standards of proficiency for pre-registration midwifery education.

The existing application of due regard

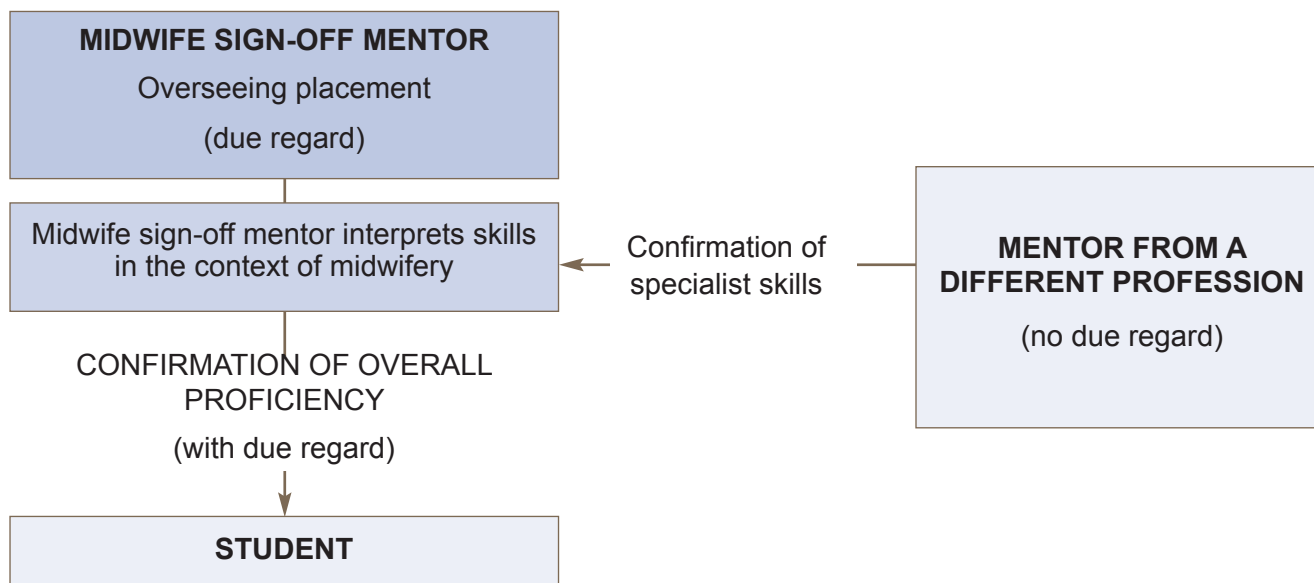


Applying due regard where mentors are available but do not meet NMC requirements for due regard

There are circumstances where it is appropriate for a student midwife to gain experience by being placed with someone from a different profession who would feedback to the student and sign-off mentor.

The final judgement as to whether the student midwife has achieved the required standard for safe and effective practice in relation to a particular aspect of the standards of proficiency, is made by a midwife sign-off mentor with due regard 'overseeing' the placement.

Applying due regard where mentors are available who do not meet NMC requirements for due regard.



In applying the above framework, the most important consideration is safety, public protection and confirmation of competence . This will be achieved by the mentor (no due regard), midwife sign-off mentor overseeing the placement (with due regard) and student working together in detailing the practice assessment outcome.

Action Required

- may be applied with immediate effect in relation to midwifery

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This circular has been issued by:

Sarah Thewlis
Chief Executive and Registrar
Nursing and Midwifery Council

Circular: Ensuring continuity of practice assessment through the ongoing achievement record.

Nursing and Midwifery Council Circular
Index number: NMC Circular 33/2007
Issue Date: October 2007
Review Date: October 2010
Supports: Standards to support learning and assessment in practice (NMC 2006)
Category: Standards
Status: Action

Summary

The circular sets out the principles for sharing of personal information necessary to maintain continuity of assessment and to ensure safe and effective practice through the 'ongoing achievement record'. This forms part of the assessment of practice arrangements for all approved programmes.

The Standards to support learning and assessment in practice (NMC 2006, page 30) requires that:

'An ongoing achievement record (student passport) including comments from mentors, must be passed from one placement to the next to enable judgments to be made on the student's progress'.

The term 'student passport' is no longer being applied to this process due to differing interpretations and meaning and will in future be referred to as the 'ongoing achievement record'.

Education providers must ensure that:

- student's consent to the processing of confidential data about him or her to be shared between successive mentors and with the relevant education providers in the process of assessing fitness for practice.
- robust processes are in place to ensure that where there are issues or concerns about a student's progress that these are promptly and appropriately dealt with
- where there are serious concerns about a student's health or character this should be reported promptly using established University procedures
- students are actively supported in addressing issues and concerns through a well defined and time limited development plan, either within a placement or across successive placements.
- disabled students needs are assessed and student's are appropriately supported in addressing the requirements of any development plan.

The Circular should also be read in association with Good health and good character Guidance for educational institutions (NMC 2007).

Requirements

The vehicle for sharing information regarding student progress in practice settings will normally be through the 'ongoing achievement record' that forms part of the assessment of practice document.

Consent

Legal advice relating to the Data Protection Act 1998 has confirmed that the NMC 'is perfectly competent to require the nurse to consent to the processing of confidential data about him or her in the process of assessing her fitness to be a nurse'. This data might include both 'personal data' and 'sensitive personal data' as described within Sections 1 and 2 of the Data Protection Act 1998. (In this context 'nurse' relates to student nurse and also applies to student 'midwife').

Should the student not consent to the sharing of confidential data, then this would be incompatible with ensuring fitness for practice and therefore the student would be unable to meet programme requirements.

Students must be kept fully informed regarding the ways in which information is intended to be shared, used and stored, including the length of time it is to be retained and when it will be destroyed.

'Ongoing achievement record'

Education providers must ensure that:

- student's consent has been obtained allowing the processing of confidential data about him or her to be shared between successive mentors and with the relevant education providers in the process of assessing fitness for practice.
- an 'ongoing achievement record', including comments from mentors is passed from one placement to the next to enable judgements to be made on the student's progress.
- student concerns are addressed and where relevant shared with others, including academic staff.
- sign-off mentors can access records of achievement to inform signing off proficiency, confirming that ongoing competence and any concerns have been addressed since the last progression point.

The 'ongoing achievement record' forms part of the assessment of practice document and needs to be of sufficient detail to enable the sign off mentor to confirm proficiency at the designated point of the programme. All actions must be taken with the full knowledge of the student. Mentors should not keep their own separate student progress records, everything should be contained within the assessment of practice document.

The following applies to all assessed placements but may be interpreted more flexibly for placements of less than four weeks, or for observational experience:

- the student and mentor meet together at the end of a placement to document strengths, development needs, and any concerns. The document to be shared with the education provider.
- the student to be responsible for carrying the documentation from placement to placement with copies retained by the education provider

- within 5 days of commencing a placement the documentation to be used by the student and mentor to develop a development plan and set goals that take account of strengths, issues and concerns raised in previous placements.
- regular meetings are scheduled to evaluate progress by student and mentor throughout a placement, (involving academic staff when appropriate) at least at the mid point and at the end of a placement where strengths and any issues for development are addressed.
- a specific development plan to address needs and/or concerns can be established at any point and must set out clear timescales for addressing the needs/concerns
- where a specific development plan has been put in place and concerns remain then an evaluation session with the mentor must be urgently scheduled and others involved as appropriate e.g. academic staff.
- where there are causes for concern a student representative might also be present.

The above needs to be considered in relation to the NMC's requirements for local 'fitness to practise' panels as set out in the Good health and good character Guidance for educational institutions (NMC 2007).

Action Required

The above requirements apply to all NMC approved programmes and are effective from the date of this Circular. They support the requirements set out within the Standards to support learning and assessment in practice (NMC 2006)

This circular may be reproduced by all to whom it is addressed

This circular has been issued by:

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