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## Practice teachers supporting more than one SCPHN or SPQ student in practice

### Issue

- Approved Education Institutions (AEI) are expected to provide students with the best possible learning and teaching experience in both the academic and practice settings.
- Detailed information to help practice teachers support students is available in [Standards to support learning and assessment in practice](#) (NMC 2008).
- In these standards we set a normative expectation that practice teachers should only support one SCPHN or SPQ student at any point in time. This was recommended because practice teachers need to be able to commit themselves to supporting learning and assessment in practice and their workload needs to reflect the demands of being a practice teacher.
- We recognise that this expectation can be challenging to meet in periods when the number of students is greater than practice teachers. In these periods we expect members of staff at an AEI to make a decision about the most suitable model for practice teaching using their professional judgement as both educators and clinicians. This may include models where more than one student can be supported by the same practice teacher.
- When making their decision[s], [members of staff at] AEIs should consider the following criteria to ensure the learning experience meets our standards for programme approval:
  - The risks to safe and effective practice and learning presented by different models of support must be mitigated.
  - The experience of the practice teacher must be appropriate to the task of supporting multiple students.
  - The time available for direct and indirect support of students [must continue to be in line with the standards we set.
  - The processes for clinical supervision must continue to be robust and prioritise safe and effective practice.

- The processes for management supervision must be suitable to the demands placed on practice teachers.
  - Appraisal and individual performance review (IPR) must take account of the increased demands placed on staff.
  - Record keeping and documentation must continue to be completed as expected under routine arrangements.
  - Students with particular learning needs or who require additional support must be considered and catered for accordingly.
  - The geographical location of the placement(s) must not place unreasonable demands on either the student or practice teacher.
  - All practice teachers must be in clinical practice and must also carry a clinical caseload.
- AEs are expected to regularly review the arrangements for student support in the practice setting to ensure they continue to be fit for purpose.
  - AEs do not need to seek further approval to vary the number of students a practice teacher will support. However, these decisions will be scrutinised as part of our education quality assurance monitoring for education.
  - We are currently evaluating the *Standards to support learning and assessment in practice* and would welcome the opportunity to hear more about practice models that have been developed and that are already in use.
  - This circular was revised in April 2014 to clarify its application to all SCPHN and SPQ students and practice teachers. Further amendments were made to update the language and make the circular consistent with house style.

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This revised circular has been re-issued by

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