

Part 2: Standards for student supervision and assessment

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These standards were approved by Council at their meeting on 28 March 2018 and were updated on 8 October 2018 to include the regulation of pre-registration nursing associate programmes.

These standards were newly published on 25 April 2023 to align with the publication of the updated standards for education and training that were approved at the Council meeting on 25 January 2023.

About our standards

Our standards for education and training include the Standards framework for nursing¹ and midwifery education, Standards for student supervision and assessment, and programme standards specific to each approved programme.

Our **standards** for education and training are set out in three parts:

Part 1: Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education

Part 2: Standards for student supervision and assessment

Part 3: Programme standards:

- **Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes**
- **Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes**
- **Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes**
- **Standards for prescribing programmes**
- **Standards for post-registration programmes: programmes leading to specialist community public health nurse qualifications and programmes leading to community nursing specialist practice qualifications**
- **Standards for return to practice programmes**

Supporting information for our **Standards for student supervision and assessment** is on our **website**.

These standards help nursing and midwifery **students** achieve NMC proficiencies and programme outcomes. All nursing and midwifery professionals must practise in line with the requirements of **the Code**, the professional standards of practice, values and behaviours that nurses, midwives and nursing associates are expected to uphold.

¹ We have used the phrase 'nursing' in this document to apply to the work of nurses and nursing associates. Nursing associates are a distinct profession in England with their own part of our register, but they are part of the nursing team.

Introduction

Our Standards for student supervision and assessment set out our expectations for the learning, support and supervision of students in the practice environment. They also set out how students are assessed for theory and practice.

Article 15(1) of the **Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001** ('**the Order**') requires the Council to establish standards for education and training which are necessary to achieve the standards of proficiency for admission to the register, as required by Article 5(2) of the Order. The **Standards for student supervision and assessment** are established under the provision of Article 15(1) of the Order.

These standards aim to provide Approved Education Institutions (AEIs) and practice learning partners with the flexibility to develop innovative approaches to nursing and midwifery education, while being accountable for the local delivery and management of approved programmes in line with our standards. Public safety is central to our standards. Students will be in contact with people throughout their education and it's important that they learn in a safe and effective way.

The **Standards for student supervision and assessment** apply to all NMC approved programmes and should be read with the NMC **Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education** and the programme standards specific to the programme that is being delivered. There must be compliance with all these standards for an education institution to be approved and run NMC approved programmes.

Our **Standards for student supervision and assessment** are set out under the following three headings:

Effective practice learning (section 1)

These standards describe what needs to be in place to deliver safe and effective learning experiences for nursing and midwifery students in practice.

Supervision of students (sections 2 to 5)

Here we describe the principles of student supervision in the practice environment, and the role of the practice supervisor.

Assessment of students and confirmation of proficiency (sections 6 to 10)

In these standards we set out what we require from educators who are assessing and confirming students' practice and academic achievement. We describe the role and responsibilities of the practice assessor and the academic assessor.

Each of the described roles must be in place for education institutions and practice learning partners to meet our standards. Additional roles may be introduced in line with local or national requirements. Programme leaders will confirm the achievement of proficiencies by each student on a programme as set out in the Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education and the programme standards specific to the programme

The **Standards for student supervision and assessment** are outcome-focused and allow for local innovation in programme delivery; they are designed to work across all programmes and in all settings. Student supervision and assessment can be flexible, provided the education institutions and practice learning partners meet our standards. Students in practice or work-placed learning must be supported to learn. This may include being supernumerary, meaning that they are not counted as part of the staffing required for safe and effective care in that setting. The decision on the level of supervision provided for students should be based on the needs of the individual student. The level of supervision can decrease with the student's increasing proficiency and confidence. Students must be provided with adjustments in accordance with relevant equalities and human rights legislation in all learning environments and for supervision and assessment.

Effective practice learning

All students are provided with safe, effective and inclusive learning experiences. Each learning environment has the governance and resources needed to deliver education and training. Students actively participate in their own education, learning from a range of people across a variety of settings.

1. Organisation of practice learning

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must ensure that:

- 1.1 practice learning complies with the NMC Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education
- 1.2 practice learning complies with specific programme standards
- 1.3 practice learning is designed to meet proficiencies and outcomes relevant to the programme
- 1.4 there are suitable systems, processes, resources and individuals in place to ensure safe and effective coordination of learning within practice learning environments
- 1.5 there is a nominated person for each practice setting to actively support students and address student concerns
- 1.6 students are made aware of the support and opportunities available to them within all learning environments
- 1.7 students are empowered to be proactive and to take responsibility for their learning
- 1.8 students have opportunities to learn from a range of relevant people in practice learning environments, including users of services, registered and non-registered individuals, and other students as appropriate
- 1.9 learning experiences are inclusive and support the diverse needs of individual students
- 1.10 learning experiences are tailored to the student's stage of learning, proficiencies and programme outcomes, and
- 1.11 all nurses, midwives and nursing associates contribute to practice learning in accordance with the Code.

Supervision of students

Practice supervision enables students to learn and safely achieve proficiency and autonomy in their professional role. All NMC registered nurses, midwives and nursing associates are capable of supervising students, serving as role models for safe and effective practice. Students may be supervised by other registered health and social care professionals.

2. Expectations of practice supervision

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must ensure that:

- 2.1** all students on an NMC approved programme are supervised while learning in practice
- 2.2** there is support and oversight of practice supervision to ensure safe and effective learning
- 2.3** the level of supervision provided to students reflects their learning needs and stage of learning
- 2.4** practice supervision ensures safe and effective learning experiences that uphold public protection and the safety of people
- 2.5** there is sufficient coordination and continuity of support and supervision of students to ensure safe and effective learning experiences
- 2.6** practice supervision facilitates independent learning, and
- 2.7** all students on an NMC approved programme are supervised in practice by NMC registered nurses, midwives, nursing associates, and other registered health and social care professionals.

3. Practice supervisors: role and responsibilities

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must ensure that practice supervisors:

- 3.1** serve as role models for safe and effective practice in line with their code of conduct
- 3.2** support learning in line with their scope of practice to enable the student to meet their proficiencies and programme outcomes
- 3.3** support and supervise students, providing feedback on their progress towards, and achievement of, proficiencies and skills
- 3.4** have current knowledge and experience of the area in which they are providing support, supervision and feedback, and
- 3.5** receive ongoing support to participate in the practice learning of students.

4. Practice supervisors: contribution to assessment and progression

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must ensure that practice supervisors:

- 4.1** contribute to the student's record of achievement by periodically recording relevant observations on the conduct, proficiency and achievement of the students they are supervising
- 4.2** contribute to student assessments to inform decisions for progression
- 4.3** have sufficient opportunities to engage with practice assessors and academic assessors to share relevant observations on the conduct, proficiency and achievement of the students they are supervising, and
- 4.4** are expected to appropriately raise and respond to student conduct and competence concerns and are supported in doing so.

5. Practice supervisors: preparation

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must ensure that practice supervisors:

- 5.1** receive ongoing support to prepare, reflect and develop for effective supervision and contribution to student learning and assessment, and
- 5.2** have understanding of the proficiencies and programme outcomes they are supporting students to achieve.

Assessment of students and confirmation of proficiency

Student assessments are evidence based, robust and objective. Assessments and confirmation of proficiency are based on an understanding of student achievements across theory and practice. Assessments and confirmation of proficiency are timely, providing assurance of student achievements and competence.

6. Assessor roles

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must ensure that:

- 6.1** all students on an NMC approved programme are assigned to a different nominated academic assessor for each part of the education programme
- 6.2** all students on an NMC approved programme are assigned to a nominated practice assessor for a practice placement or a series of practice placements, in line with local and national policies
- 6.3** nursing students are assigned to practice and academic assessors who are NMC registered nurses with appropriate equivalent experience for the student's field of practice
- 6.4** midwifery students are assigned to practice and academic assessors who are NMC registered midwives
- 6.5** specialist community public health nurse (SCPHN) students are assigned to practice and academic assessors who are NMC registered SCPHNs with appropriate equivalent experience for the student's field of practice
- 6.6** nursing associate students are assigned to practice and academic assessors who are either an NMC registered nursing associate or an NMC registered nurse
- 6.7** students studying for an NMC approved post-registration qualification are assigned to practice and academic assessors in accordance with relevant programme standards

- 6.8** practice and academic assessors receive ongoing support to fulfil their roles, and
- 6.9** practice and academic assessors are expected to appropriately raise and respond to concerns regarding student conduct, competence and achievement, and are supported in doing so.

7. Practice assessors: responsibilities

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must ensure that:

- 7.1** practice assessors conduct assessments to confirm student achievement of proficiencies and programme outcomes for practice learning
- 7.2** assessment decisions by practice assessors are informed by feedback sought and received from practice supervisors
- 7.3** practice assessors make and record objective, evidenced-based assessments on conduct, proficiency and achievement, drawing on student records, direct observations, student self-reflection, and other resources
- 7.4** practice assessors maintain current knowledge and expertise relevant for the proficiencies and programme outcomes they are assessing
- 7.5** a nominated practice assessor 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 programme standards and local and national policies
- 7.6** there are sufficient opportunities for the practice assessor to periodically observe the student across environments in order to inform decisions for assessment and progression
- 7.7** there are sufficient opportunities for the practice assessor to gather and coordinate feedback from practice supervisors, any other practice assessors, and relevant people, in order to be assured about their decisions for assessment and progression
- 7.8** practice assessors have an understanding of the student's learning and achievement in theory
- 7.9** communication and collaboration between practice and academic assessors is scheduled for relevant points in programme structure and student progression

- 7.10** practice assessors are not simultaneously the practice supervisor and academic assessor for the same student, and
- 7.11** practice assessors for students on NMC approved prescribing programmes support learning in line with the NMC **Standards for prescribing programmes**.

8. Practice assessors: preparation

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must ensure that practice assessors:

- 8.1** undertake preparation or evidence prior learning and experience that enables them to demonstrate achievement of the following minimum outcomes:
 - 8.1.1** interpersonal communication skills, relevant to student learning and assessment
 - 8.1.2** conducting objective, evidence based assessments of students
 - 8.1.3** providing constructive feedback to facilitate professional development in others, and knowledge of the assessment process and their role within it
- 8.2** receive ongoing support and training to reflect and develop in their role
- 8.3** continue to proactively develop their professional practice and knowledge in order to fulfil their role, and
- 8.4** have an understanding of the proficiencies and programme outcomes that the student they assess is aiming to achieve.

9. Academic assessors: responsibilities

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must ensure that:

- 9.1** academic assessors collate and confirm student achievement of proficiencies and programme outcomes in the academic environment for each part of the programme
- 9.2** academic assessors make and record objective, evidence-based decisions on conduct, proficiency and achievement, and recommendations for progression, drawing on student records and other resources
- 9.3** academic assessors maintain current knowledge and expertise relevant for the proficiencies and programme outcomes they are assessing and confirming

- 9.4** the nominated academic assessor works in partnership with a nominated practice assessor to evaluate and recommend the student for progression for each part of the programme, in line with programme standards and local and national policies
- 9.5** academic assessors have an understanding of the student's learning and achievement in practice
- 9.6** communication and collaboration between academic and practice assessors is scheduled for relevant points in programme structure and student progression, and
- 9.7** academic assessors are not simultaneously the practice supervisor and practice assessor for the same student.

10. Academic assessors: preparation

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must ensure that academic assessors:

- 10.1** are working towards or hold relevant qualifications as required by their academic institution and local and national policies
- 10.2** demonstrate that they have achieved the following minimum outcomes:
 - 10.2.1** interpersonal communication skills, relevant to student learning and assessment
 - 10.2.2** conducting objective, evidence based assessments of students
 - 10.2.3** providing constructive feedback to facilitate professional development in others, and
 - 10.2.4** knowledge of the assessment process and their role within it
- 10.3** receive ongoing support and training to reflect and develop in their role
- 10.4** continue to proactively develop their professional practice and knowledge in order to fulfil their role, and
- 10.5** have an understanding of the proficiencies and programme outcomes that the student they confirm is aiming to achieve.

Glossary

Approved Education Institutions (AEIs): the status awarded by the NMC to an institution, or part of an institution, or combination of institutions that works in partnership with practice placement and work placed learning providers. AEIs will have provided us with assurance that they are accountable and capable of delivering NMC approved education programmes.

Co-produced: when an individual influences the support and services received, or when groups of people get together to influence the way that services are designed, commissioned and delivered, acknowledging that people who use social care and health services (and their families) have knowledge and experience that can be used to help make services better. Co-production is one of the principles of the Care Act 2014.

Educators: in the context of the NMC standards for education and training educators are those who deliver, support, supervise and assess theory, practice and/or work placed learning.

Equalities and human rights legislation: prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and other characteristics. Anti-discrimination laws can be country specific and there are some legally binding international protections.

Learning environments: includes any environment in terms of physical location where learning takes place as well as the system of shared values, beliefs and behaviours within these places.

People: individuals or groups who receive services from nurses and midwives, healthy and sick people, parents, children, families, carers, representatives, also including educators and students and others within and outside the learning environment.

Practice learning partners: organisations that provide practice learning opportunities necessary for supporting pre-registration and post-registration students in meeting proficiencies and programme outcomes.

Quality assurance: NMC processes for making sure all AEs and their approved education programmes comply with our standards.

Reasonable adjustments: changes in the way services are offered to prevent students with disabilities from being placed at a substantial disadvantage, ensuring a fair and equal chance of accessing services as set out in equalities and human rights legislation.

Recognition of prior learning: a process that enables previous certificated or experiential learning to be recognised and accepted as meeting some programme outcomes and requirements; this means it includes both theory and practice achievement.

Simulation: an educational method which uses a variety of modalities to support students in developing their knowledge, behaviours and skills, with the opportunity for repetition, feedback, evaluation and reflection to achieve their programme outcomes and be confirmed as capable of safe and effective practice.

Stakeholders: any person, group or organisation that has an interest or concern in the situation in question, and may affect or be affected by its actions, objectives or policies. In the context of the NMC standards for education and training this includes students, educators, partner organisations, people who use services, carers, employers, other professionals, other regulators and education commissioners.

Student: any individual enrolled onto an NMC approved education programme whether full-time or less than full-time.

Supported learning time: time to facilitate learning. This may include supernumerary status² that enables students to be supported in safely and effectively achieving proficiency.

Users of services: people accessing health or social care services, and anyone supporting the needs and circumstances of these people.

² Supernumerary: see Standards for student supervision and assessment and specific programme standards.

What we do

Our vision is safe, effective and kind nursing and midwifery practice that improves everyone's health and wellbeing. As the independent regulator of more than 771,000 nursing and midwifery professionals, we have an important role to play in making this a reality.

Our core role is to **regulate**. First, we promote high education and professional standards for nurses and midwives across the UK, and nursing associates in England. Second, we maintain the register of professionals eligible to practise. Third, we investigate concerns about nurses, midwives and nursing associates – something that affects a tiny minority of professionals each year. We believe in giving professionals the chance to address concerns, but we'll always take action when needed.

To regulate well, we **support** our professions and the public. We create resources and guidance that are useful throughout people's careers, helping them to deliver our standards in practice and address new challenges. We also support people involved in our investigations, and we're increasing our visibility so people feel engaged and empowered to shape our work.

Regulating and supporting our professions allows us to **influence** health and social care. We share intelligence from our regulatory activities and work with our partners to support workforce planning and sector-wide decision making. We use our voice to speak up for a healthy and inclusive working environment for our professions.

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