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Who are practice assessors and how are they prepared?

Reference: PA1 Last Updated: 19/12/2018

Practice assessors are registered nurses, midwives, and nursing associates, or in the case of prescribing programmes any qualified prescriber, who assess a student's practice learning for a placement or a series of placements. A nominated practice assessor also works with the academic assessor to make recommendations for progression for the student they are assigned to.

They have been prepared and supported to take up their role and have current knowledge and experience relevant for the proficiencies and programme outcomes they are assessing.

Relevant NMC standards for this section:

Standards for student supervision and assessment: 6.2–6.8 (page 8), 7.1, 7.3–7.5 (page 9), 8.1–8.4 (page 10)

Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education: 3.8 (page 9), S4.1, R4, 3–4 (page 11)

Standards for prescribing programmes: 4.5, 4.6 (page 12)

Who can be a practice assessor?

Reference: PA1-A Last Updated: 19/12/2018

The practice assessor must be a registered nurse, midwife, nursing associate, or specialist community public health nurse (SCPHN). For prescribing programmes, the practice assessor can be any qualified and experienced prescriber. Who the practice assessor will be is dependent on the student they are assigned to. Below are the standards for who we expect the practice assessor to be for each student:

Standards for student supervision and assessment:

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

6.3 nursing students are assigned to practice and academic assessors who are 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 registered midwives

6.5 specialist community public health nurse (SCPHN) students are assigned to practice and academic assessors who are 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 a registered nursing associate or a 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

Standards for prescribing programmes:

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

4.5 ensure the student is assigned to a practice assessor who is a registered healthcare professional and an experienced prescriber with suitable equivalent qualifications for the programme the student is undertaking
In 6.3 when we say 'equivalent experience for the student's field of practice', we mean that the practice assessor's work based experience or qualifications must help them to understand and assess what the student is aiming to achieve in their field of practice, for the time they are assigned to them. Qualifications can include those formally recognised by regulators such as the NMC, and other qualifications. It will be up to the AEI, with their practice learning partners, to decide what 'equivalent experience' is needed for each student. They should be able to show that their decision meets our standards, enables a fair and objective assessment to take place and upholds public protection.

If a person does not meet our standards they cannot be a practice assessor. Other people may take part in the assessment process, for example practice supervisors, but if they do not meet our standards and expectations for the practice assessor role they cannot be a 'practice assessor'.

The role of assessing a student for progression is the responsibility of academic and practice assessors, working together. The AEI may appoint additional roles to support student learning and assessment across theory and practice. These roles could include those currently in use such as link lecturers or personal tutors.

A practice assessor for a placement or a series of placements

Reference: PA1-B Last Updated: 19/12/2018

Practice assessors can be assigned to a student for a placement or a series of placements. This can mean that they will be assigned to a student for a single placement, more than one placement, or for the whole of the academic or practice year.

It is the responsibility of the AEI, with their practice learning partners, to decide for how long a practice assessor should be assigned to a student. In doing this, they may want to take into account the following:

- Public protection
- Any standards that relate to the practice assessor role
- The skills and availability of individual assessors
- The student's course outcomes
- The student's learning needs
- Course and placement organisation, for example how many placements there are, or the location and type of the placements.

Practice assessor preparation

Reference: PA1-C Last Updated: 19/12/2018

These are the standards that set out what we expect of practice assessor preparation:

Standards for student supervision and assessment:

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

8.1.4 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.

All practice assessors must have some form of preparation before taking up their role. This preparation can be done in different ways, but must ensure the practice assessor meets the outcomes we set out above.

Practice assessors do not need to have additional training if they have previous experience and learning that they can show has helped them to meet our outcomes. It will be up to the AEI, with their practice learning partners, to decide what would be acceptable in these circumstances, as long as they can provide evidence that it upheld public protection and met our standards.

Training may be in specific areas, such as training in equality and diversity, making non-biased decisions, or reasonable adjustments. Anything that is necessary for practice assessors to do their job should be considered 'core' training.

In addition to any initial training needed the practice assessor should be provided with ongoing support and training to develop in their role as needed.

The practice assessor also has a responsibility to proactively develop and remain 'up to date' with their own professional practice, and to think about how their previous experience may enable them to perform in this role. For nurses, midwives and nursing associates who are practice assessors this can mean, amongst other things, reflecting on their role in student learning and assessment when they revalidate. This may also be true for those practice assessors who are from another regulated profession, such as pharmacists. Professionals who are not registered with us may want to seek advice from their professional body on this.

The understanding of proficiencies may differ depending on the student, the stage of learning, the course outcomes, and whether the practice assessor is assessing the student for one, or a series of placements.

The AEI, with its practice learning partners, is responsible for making sure the right support, education and

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training is provided. They should be able to give evidence that the preparation upholds public protection and enables practice assessors to properly assess students. More information on the AEI's responsibilities can be found within the new [Quality Assurance framework](#).

Practice assessors, particularly those from professions not regulated by us, may feel they need to find out more information about the training required. They can do this by talking to the AEI and its practice learning partners, their professional bodies, and by referring to our standards and supporting information.

Current knowledge and experience

Reference: PA1-D Last Updated: 19/12/2018

The practice assessor's knowledge and experience should enable them to make objective, evidence based assessments of the student's achievement in practice, for the period they are assigned to them.

What this means will depend on a number of different factors including the student's learning outcomes, their stage of learning, and whether or not the practice assessor is assessing a placement or a series of placements.

It's the AEI's responsibility, with its practice learning partners, to determine what this might mean, provided they can show that public protection is upheld and student assessments are fair and evidenced based.

Who identifies the practice assessors

Reference: PA2 Last Updated: 19/12/2018

The AEI, with its practice learning partners, is responsible for identifying which professionals may be suitable practice assessors for students, and for what period. This can be done continuously throughout the student's programme.

When they do this, they should take into account the following things:

- public protection
- the relevant standards
- student learning needs
- programme outcomes
- competence, suitability, and preparation of potential practice assessors
- resource considerations and size of the cohort, and
- how the placements are organised

Relevant NMC standards for this section:

Standards for student supervision and assessment: 6.2–6.6 (page 8), 7.10, 7.11 (page 9)

Standards for prescribing programmes: 4.5, 4.6 (page 12)

The relevant standards

Reference: PA2-A Last Updated: 19/12/2018

There are a number of standards that relate to who the practice assessor is and what they do. However, the following standards are of particular relevance for this section:

Standards for student supervision and assessment

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

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

Standards for prescribing programmes

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

4.5.1 In exceptional circumstances, the same person may fulfil the role of practice supervisor and practice assessor for that part of the programme where the prescribing student is undergoing training in a practice learning setting. In such instances, the student, practice supervisor/assessor and the AEI will need to evidence why it was necessary for the practice supervisor and assessor roles to be carried out by the same person

When we state that the practice assessor is 'not simultaneously the practice supervisor and academic assessor' for a student, we mean that they cannot take all three roles on for the same student for the same period of time. For example, if a practice assessor has been assigned to a student for a placement, they could not then be the practice supervisor for that student on that placement. The AEI, with its practice learning partners, should be able to show how this was achieved.

But, we have allowed for some flexibility for prescribing courses, and sometimes a practice assessor on a prescribing course can also be a practice supervisor for the same student for the same period of time. This should only be the case in exceptional circumstances, for example on very short courses or in remote locations. In such circumstances the provider should be able to show us why this was necessary.

The AEI and its practice learning partners should be able to demonstrate that their decisions uphold public protection and that it enables students to meet their learning outcomes in a safe and effective way.

What do practice assessors do?

Reference: PA3 Last Updated: 19/12/2018

Practice assessors assess and confirm the student's achievement of practice learning for a placement or a series of placements.

This does not mean that practice assessors must make an assessment of each individual environment or placement. Practice assessors do not need to be physically based or employed in each or any of the environments in which the student is placed. The practice assessor assesses the students overall performance for their practice learning, taking account of whether or not the relevant proficiencies and programmes outcomes have been met, and if they display the required values of their profession. They must have sufficient opportunities to observe the student across environments in order to inform their decisions.

A nominated practice assessor will also work with the nominated academic assessor to make a recommendation for student progression. However not all practice assessors will be required to perform this aspect of the role.

The links below contain more information about practice assessor responsibilities including their possible role in assessment for progression.

- [Assessment of practice](#)
- [Upholding public protection](#)
- [Managing a student not meeting the progress expected](#)
- [Handing over to the next assessor](#)
- [Assessment for progression](#)

Relevant NMC standards for this section:

Standards for student supervision and assessment: [6.2](#), [6.8](#) (page 8), [7.1–7.9](#) (page 9)

Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education: [R1.4](#) (page 6), [R4.2](#), [R4.5–4.11](#) (page 11) [R5.7–5.16](#) (page 12)

Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes: [4.4](#), [4.5](#), [4.7–4.10](#) (page 11)

Standards for prescribing programmes: [4.7](#), [4.8](#) (page 12)

Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes: [4.4](#), [4.5](#), [4.7–4.9](#) (page 5)

Assessment of practice

Reference: PA3-A Last Updated: 19/12/2018

Each practice assessor is responsible for the assessment and confirmation of the achievement of proficiencies and programmes outcomes in practice learning for the student(s) they are assigned to, for the period they are assigned to them.

A good assessment is **evidenced based, objective and fair**, taking into account a variety of views and inputs, and student diversity, such as different learning styles, cultural backgrounds and communication styles. The practice assessor should take into account the student's history of achievement and their achievement across theory and practice.

Assessment should be continuous throughout the time in which a practice assessor is assigned to a student. The practice assessor should be up to date on the progress of the student they are assigned to; collation of information on a student's performance should be managed in a way that enables this.

Feedback to the student about their achievement, and collaborating with them to review possible areas for improvement also forms a fundamental part of the assessment process.

Evidenced based assessment

Reference: PA3-A-1 Last Updated: 19/12/2018

All assessments must be supported by a diverse and reliable evidence base. These are the standards that set out our expectations of evidenced based assessment.

Standards for student supervision and assessment

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

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

7.8 practice assessors have an understanding of the student's learning and achievement in theory

Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education

5.10 students are assessed across practice settings and learning environments as required by their programme

5.12 practice assessment is facilitated and evidenced by observations and other appropriate methods

5.13 students' self-reflections contribute to, and are evidenced in, assessments

5.14 a range of people including service users contribute to student assessment

In order to make an evidenced based assessment the practice assessor must first gather together the relevant evidence. In order to do this they must judge what evidence is required. This can depend on the student, their learning needs, their stage of learning, the placement they are in and the course outcomes. The practice assessor must be able to show that the evidence they have gathered comes from a variety of relevant sources and that it informed their assessment decisions.

Sources of evidence can include the following:

- Direct observation of the student
- Communication with practice supervisors
- Student documentation, such as a practice assessment document or ongoing record of achievement
- Communication with any other practice assessors
- Communication with anyone else who may be involved in the education of the student
- Communication with the academic assessor
- Student self reflection
- Communication and an ongoing relationship with the student

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

The AEI, with their practice learning partners, should develop and manage appropriate systems and processes to facilitate access to student learning and achievement records. They should be able to evidence that the practice assessor was given suitable access to student documentation, the learning environment, and other relevant resources.

The practice assessor must be able to show that their assessment decision was suitably evidenced based, and that they included all relevant sources.

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All assessment decisions must be evidenced by good record keeping. It is the responsibility of the practice assessor to ensure that all records they provide are accurate and up to date. For nurses, midwives, and nursing associates this is in line with the following section from the Code:

The Code: professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates

10 Keep clear and accurate records relevant to your practice

This includes but is not limited to patient records. It includes all records that are relevant to your scope of practice. To achieve this, you must:

10.1 complete all records at the time or as soon as possible after an event, recording if the notes are written some time after the event

10.2 identify any risks or problems that have arisen and the steps taken to deal with them, so that colleagues who use the records have all the information they need

10.3 complete all records accurately and without any falsification, taking immediate and appropriate action if you become aware that someone has not kept to these requirements 10.4 attribute any entries you make in any paper or electronic records to yourself, making sure they are clearly written, dated and timed, and do not include unnecessary abbreviations, jargon or speculation

10.5 take all steps to make sure that all records are kept securely, and

10.6 collect, treat and store all data and research findings appropriately

The AEI, with their practice learning partners, is responsible for ensuring good record keeping takes place.

Practice assessors must base their assessment decisions on a diverse evidence base, and take responsibility for those decisions.

While the evidence base should include a variety of sources, the following is an area of particular importance for gathering evidence:

Observing the student

Standards for student supervision and assessment

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

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

7.7 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

Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education

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

5.10 students are assessed across practice settings and learning environments as required by their programme It is a requirement for the practice assessor to observe the student when making an assessment of their practice learning. We do not specify when or how this must happen, only that it must form part of the overall assessment, and evidence base.

Observations should help to build an overall picture of student performance. We do not require that assessors

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must assess every placement. How often and in what environments observations will be done will vary depending on, student performance, their outcomes, the skills and knowledge of the assessor, and how practice learning is organised.

The practice assessor, working with the AEI and its practice learning partners, must make a judgment about what number or type of observations may be needed for individual students.

If the practice assessor is working outside of the practice learning setting then arrangements must be put in place for them to observe students within that placement, if necessary. It will be the responsibility of the AEI, with their practice learning partners, to manage how practice assessors might access learning environments.

Objective and fair assessments

Reference: PA3-A-2 Last Updated: 19/12/2018

All student assessments should be objective and fair.

An objective and fair assessment should assure that the student is safe and competent to enter the register or continue on a course, and that they have been given a reasonable opportunity to do so.

An objective and fair assessment takes into account the individual needs and circumstances of the student, while providing a consistent standard to be met. All students are individuals with different needs and abilities and should be treated as such.

A key feature of assessment will be the facilitation of reasonable adjustments when required. All environments will have a responsibility to provide reasonable adjustments for students. This will be the responsibility of the AEI, with their practice learning partners, to manage. If a student has not been given the right adjustments to remove barriers to their learning, this may lead to unfair assessments and affect their ability to complete the course.

Students should also be challenged and given the opportunity to improve and reflect, if appropriate, for an assessment to be considered objective and fair. If a student poses an immediate risk to patient safety, it may be appropriate to remove them from a course, without being given the opportunity to improve. However, this must be supported by evidence and proper record keeping, following AEI processes.

Practice assessors have a responsibility only to 'pass' or recommend a student for progression when this is supported by evidence.

A fair assessment is transparent. It is evidenced based, and supported by clear and reliable documentation, and includes a variety of viewpoints. The student is communicated with appropriately and in a timely way about what the decision is, and clear reasons are given for the decision.

There may be circumstances in which the student feels that they have not been treated fairly. The AEI, with its practice learning partners, should have processes in place to manage student complaints or concerns about their learning and assessment.

Individual practice assessors should also reflect on how they are interacting with students, and be aware of how various things, such as personality clashes, generational and cultural differences, or conscious or unconscious bias, may affect their decisions.

The AEI, with its practice learning partners, is responsible for ensuring that assessments are fair, objective and evidence based. They do this by ensuring that practice assessors meet our standards, and through audits of student learning and assessment.

What to do if the evidence is not considered fair and reliable, or due process has not been followed

In order to make an evidence based assessment the evidence collated must be fair and reliable. The practice assessor should be able to make a judgement about what constitutes fair and reliable evidence based on their experience and our standards and expectations.

The practice assessor may come across times in which the evidence that has been presented to them is not in their view reliable or fair. For instance student documentation may be incomplete, or the student or practice assessor may feel that the feedback received is not accurate.

When this happens the practice assessor may want to do one or both of the following things:

- **Raise concerns:** If the evidence is not reliable due to a perceived issue, for example a practice supervisor

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has not performed their role properly, or the environment in which the student has been placed was not conducive to effective learning and assessment, the practice assessor has a responsibility to raise these issues in a timely and appropriate way. More information on how to raise concerns can be found [on our website](#).

- **Improve the evidence:** If the evidence is not sufficient to make a fair and reliable assessment, the practice assessor should improve and supplement the evidence or support the practice supervisor to do so. This may be done by talking to the student's practice supervisors, anyone else involved in the education of students, anyone who has been coordinating the learning experience, and the academic assessor. They may also choose to further observe the student to ensure they have the required evidence.

The practice assessor should be continually reviewing the evidence throughout the time they are assigned to the student, in order to decide if they need take action to enhance the evidence.

The student may also feel that they have been treated unfairly during their education and assessment, more information can be found on what they can do in these circumstances in the section on student empowerment.

Upholding public protection

Reference: PA3-B Last Updated: 19/12/2018

All practice assessors are responsible for upholding public protection when assessing students. This means that the assessment does not compromise public protection. It can be done in a number of ways, including:

- ensuring that the assessments they carry out are evidenced based, objective and fair
- serving as a role model for safe and effective practice in line with their professional codes of conduct (including the relevant codes as set by the regulator(s) for each profession)
- **raising concerns** about any impacts to public protection from student learning. This can mean risks to public protection from the student, but also any risks to people arising from the environment in which the student is placed, including if the practice supervisor has been asked to practice beyond their competence.
- taking action to ensure any concerns raised with them are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner
- taking responsibility for carrying out a reliable and evidenced based assessment, including all assessment decisions

As registered professionals, all practice assessors also have a responsibility to abide by the duty of candour.

Managing a student not meeting the progress expected

Reference: PA3-C Last Updated: 19/12/2018

The practice assessor should be aware of any concerns regarding student performance. Including any concerns that have been raised in the academic environment or under previous (if any) practice assessors.

Once the practice assessor is aware of concerns around student performance they should have a role in improving the student's performance. This can be done by putting in place action plans or by working directly with the practice supervisors, academic assessor or student. What role the practice assessor might play in this process will depend on a number of different factors, such as the role of the practice assessor in the student's journey and the way in which practice learning is organised.

If it becomes apparent that the student will not improve or has not met the required actions in a plan the practice assessor should take appropriate action, such as recommending the student be failed on a placement, or **recommending that they do not progress**. This should be done through discussion with the nominated academic assessor, following any processes set in place by the AEI and their practice learning partners.

If there is an immediate concern or risk to the public from the student's performance the practice assessor must take appropriate action, such as recommending the student for removal or suspension from a placement or course. This should be done through the appropriate process (such as fitness to practice) as set out by the AEI, and should involve the academic assessor.

Students with disabilities are entitled to have reasonable adjustments considered in relation to their practice learning. However, while reasonable adjustments may be made to the way that a student meets a competency or standard, the competency or standard itself cannot be adjusted. Therefore a decision will need to be made before a student starts a course, and at relevant points within the programme, as to whether they will be able to meet all the competencies of the course, taking into account what reasonable adjustments can be made if for example they have a disability.

The AEI, with its practice learning partners, should have appropriate resources and staff in place to manage student performance. No student should progress through a course, or enter the register, who is not fit to do so. The AEI, with their practice learning partners, is responsible for putting in place the right processes to ensure this does not happen.

Handing over to the next assessor

Reference: PA3-D Last Updated: 19/12/2018

Depending on the period which the practice assessor is assigned to the student, it may be necessary for them to 'hand over' assessment responsibility for the student to the next practice assessor. For example if they are assigned to a student for one placement within the practice year, or for a series of placements within the first or second year in a three year course.

Once they have assessed the student's practice learning for the placement(s) they are assigned to the student, they should ensure that there is a proper handover to the next practice assessor, and any other relevant people involved in the education of the student. This includes ensuring that all relevant documentation is up to date, and any particular issues with the student's performance have been recorded, or communicated with the next practice assessor and all relevant people.

In addition, they should engage with the student and provide them with feedback as part of this process, letting them know where they need to improve and how they may be able to do this.

We do not specify how hand over must take place, only that it must ensure all relevant information is recorded and made available to the next assessor. Many practice learning environments, and AELs, may have well established hand over processes. Practice assessors should work within these wherever possible.

Assessment for progression

Reference: PA3-E Last Updated: 18/12/2018

A nominated practice assessor must work with the nominated academic assessor to provide recommendations for student progression, as set out in the following standards:

Standards for student supervision and assessment:

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

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

Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education

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

5.11 assessment is mapped to the curriculum and occurs throughout the programme to determine student progression

5.15 assessment of practice and theory is weighted appropriately to the programme

A recommendation for progression should be made when the student comes to point at which they will progress from one part of the course to the next. We do not specify at what points progression must take place. It will be up to the AEI, with their practice learning partners to decide what this means. It could be at the end of each academic year, at the end of a series of placements, or a placement. The programme must be delivered and designed in such a way to enable the two roles to work together for progression at defined points in the programme.

The recommendation for progression must be done by a nominated practice assessor with the nominated academic assessor. Each assessor brings their expertise and scope of practice to the assessment process. Equal weighting must be given to theory and practice learning in this process, as it set out in the following standard:

Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education:

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

5.16 there is no compensation in assessments across theory and practice learning.

By 'no compensation' we mean that a student's good achievement in practice must not in any way mitigate poor achievement in the academic environment, and vice versa.

The purpose of this is to ensure there is a joined up approach to progression, and that it is based on an understanding of the student's achievements across theory and practice.

When contributing to the recommendation for progression practice assessors should take into account the student's achievement over the whole period for which they are making the decision, e.g. a placement or a year. They should also consider the student's achievement in previous parts of the programme (if any) and how they have progressed over the programme.

The recommendation should be evidenced based, fair, and objective, calling on a number of evidenced sources as listed in the section on fair assessment.

While it will be the responsibility of the academic assessor to collate and confirm the students' academic

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achievement, and to bring that aspect to this process, the practice assessor should also be mindful of the student's achievement in the academic environment when working with the academic assessor for a recommendation for progression.

Apart from performance across theory and practice learning, practice assessors must also consider if the student displays the required conduct and professional values expected of their professional, regulated role.

We do not state which nominated practice assessor must work with the academic assessor for recommendations for progression, only that it must be done. For example it may be that the practice assessor who is assigned to the student for the final placement in a year takes on this role, or there may be an additional practice assessor who looks at the student's achievement across a whole practice year.

We do not specify how the recommendation should be made or how the practice and academic assessor work together, only that it must be evidenced that it was a fair, objective, evidenced based decision. It must also be evidenced that the decision was reached in a collaborative way and took account of both theory and practice with no compensation between the two.

The following standards set out our expectations for the process of making recommendations for progression:

Standards for student supervision and assessment

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

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

7.9 communication and collaboration between practice and academic assessors is scheduled for relevant points in programme structure and student progression

How this process is managed will be the responsibility of the AEI, with its practice learning partners to decide, working with the practice and academic assessors.

Practice and academic assessors should ensure that recommendations are made in line with local policies and procedures. We do not state what these are as they may differ from area to area. It may be that the recommendation for progression is made to the relevant AEI board which makes the final decision, or it may be that the practice and academic assessors make the final decision.

In addition we do not specify how the practice and academic assessor communicate, only that it should be timely and allow for an evidenced based recommendation on progression to be made.

If there are differences in the way in which the academic and practice years are organised, the AEI, with their practice learning partners, must manage this to ensure that communication takes place in a timely manner.

The AEI, with its practice learning partners, should also have in place mechanisms for managing disagreements about student progression, for example through appeals or complaints. This includes disagreements between the practice and academic assessors, and disagreements from students.

These mechanisms should ensure that public protection is upheld and student assessments are fair, evidenced based and reliable.

Support for the practice assessor role

Reference: PA4 Last Updated: 19/12/2018

Practice assessors must be given the ongoing support and time necessary for them to develop and perform their role, and to train as needed. This support can take a number of forms but must allow for our standards to be met and for practice assessors to prepare for and contribute to student assessment.

Where possible, it should be tailored to the practice assessor's needs and requirements. It should include any reasonable adjustments or equality and diversity considerations that may need to be met.

Relevant NMC standards for this section:

Standards for student supervision and assessment: 6.8 (page 8)

Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education: R4, 3–4 (page 11)

What our standards say

Reference: PA4-A Last Updated: 19/12/2018

We have several requirements in this area that must be met. The following standard is particularly relevant:

Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education:

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

R4.4: have supported time and resources to enable them to fulfil their roles in addition to their other professional responsibilities

This standard sets out our expectations of the supported time and resources provided for practice assessors. What 'supported time and resources' means will be different depending on the needs and ability of individual practice assessors, student learning needs and programme outcomes, and any equality and diversity considerations.

It's the AEI's responsibility, with its practice learning partners, to ensure the supported time and resources provided for practice assessors upholds public protection and enables them to carry out a reliable and evidenced based assessment.

What can 'support' mean?

Reference: PA4-B Last Updated: 19/12/2018

Support for practice assessors can take a number of different forms, such as access to student documentation, knowing what the student is expected to achieve, to recognising and prioritising all training needs, and support for raising concerns. It can also involve physical access to student learning space and those who have been involved in the learning of students. They should be supported to manage their time to carry out their role, including the completion of student records. What support is proportionate will depend on the individual practice assessor and what is needed for them to perform their role, to enable them to carry out an evidenced based and reliable assessment, and uphold public protection.

Equality and diversity needs

Reference: PA4-C Last Updated: 19/12/2018

The AEI, with its practice learning partners, is responsible for ensuring that practice assessors' equality and diversity needs are taken into account when deciding what support is needed to enable them to carry out this role. If needed, they should make reasonable adjustments for the practice assessor. The AEI and its practice learning partners should have policies and procedures to support this.