

Evidenced based decisions

Reference: AC3-1-A Last Updated: 06/02/2019

All confirmations and recommendations, must be supported by a relevant and reliable evidence base. These are the standards that set out our expectations of evidenced based decisions:

Standards for student supervision and assessment

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

9.5 academic assessors have an understanding of the student's learning and achievement in practice

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

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 decision the academic assessor must collate the relevant evidence, taking into account amongst others things, the student's learning needs, the stage of learning, and the course outcomes.

Many AEs will have well established processes in place for the collation of student information, academic assessors should work within these where relevant.

Sources of evidence can include the following:

- Student documentation, such as a practice assessment document or the ongoing record of achievement
- Academic course work and assessments demonstrating student learning and achievement
- Communication with staff delivering and assessing academic components of the programme, if relevant
- Communication with the practice assessor(s)
- Student self reflection
- Communication and an ongoing relationship with the student
- Communication with anyone else who may be involved in the education of the student

In order to collate and confirm the evidence, academic assessors must be given access to the relevant documentation, processes and databases, as well as the means to contact academic staff and practice assessors, if relevant.

The academic assessor must be able to show that the evidence that has been collated comes from all relevant sources and that it informed their decisions and recommendations on progression.

The AEI, with their practice learning partners, should develop and manage appropriate systems and processes to facilitate access to student documentation and other relevant resources.

All decisions must be evidenced by good record keeping, in line with local procedures. It is the responsibility of the academic assessor to ensure that all records or information 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:

10 Keep clear and accurate records relevant to your practice

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

10.1 complete 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 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 records are kept securely

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.

The academic assessor is responsible for their decision on recommendations for student progression for each part of the programme.

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

In order to make an evidence based decision and recommendation for progression, the evidence collated must be fair and reliable. The academic 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 academic assessor may come across times in which the evidence that has been presented to them is not in their view reliable or fair or the correct processes were not followed. For instance student documentation may be incomplete, or the student or academic assessor may feel that the feedback received is not accurate.

When this happens the academic assessor may want to do one or more of the following things:

- **Raise concerns:** If there are concerns that the evidence is not reliable, for example if academic staff have not performed their role properly, or the environment in which the student has been placed was not conducive to effective learning and assessment, the academic 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](#).
- **Refer their concerns:** Following the internal processes of their AEI for dealing with gaps or inconsistencies in student records. Academic assessors should ensure they are working within and taking account of these processes where relevant.
- **Improve the evidence:** If the evidence is not sufficient to make a fair and reliable assessment, the academic assessor will need to receive additional evidence which can be relied on before making any decisions. This may be done by talking to relevant academic staff, the student's practice supervisors and practice assessor, and anyone else involved in the education of students. What level of responsibility the academic assessor will have in this process will depend on the way in which learning and assessment has been organised, and the internal processes of the AEI.

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

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.