Who can be a practice assessor and who can be an academic assessor?

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

Assessors must be a registered nurse (including level 2 or enrolled nurses), midwife, nursing associate, a specialist community public health nurse (SCPHN) or a community nurse with SPQ (specialist practice qualification). Who the assessor will be is dependent on the programme the student is studying.

- For students on pre-registration nursing degree programmes, their assessors must be a registered nurse with appropriate equivalent experience for the student's field of practice.
- For students on pre-registration midwifery degree programmes, their assessors must be a registered midwife.
- For students on nursing associate programmes, their assessors can be either a registered nurse or a registered nursing associate.
- For students on prescribing programmes, the practice assessor can be any suitably qualified and experienced prescriber, whilst the academic assessor must be a registered healthcare professional with suitable equivalent qualifications.
- For students on SCPHN/SPQ programmes, their assessors must be an experienced registered SCPHN or community nurse with SPQ for the programme that the student is undertaking. They must have either undertaken a period of preceptorship as SCPHN or community SPQ nurse; or must be able to evidence prior learning and relevant practice assessor experience that would enable them to engage in fair, reliable and valid assessment in the SCPHN/community nursing SPQ context. This requirement enables professionals with relevant teaching qualifications and experience to be able to assess students, recognising the diversity and value of varied career pathways.

When we say that an assessor must have 'equivalent experience for the student's field of practice', we mean that the 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.

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.

The role of assessing a student for progression is the joint responsibility of academic and practice assessors. The AEI may appoint additional roles to support student learning and assessment across theory and practice; we do not mandate these roles – this is a local decision for the AEI to take.

Relevant NMC standards for this section

Standards for student supervision and assessment
6.1: all students on an NMC approved programme are assigned to a different nominated academic assessor for each part of the education programme

6.3: 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

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

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

Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education

R3.8: are assigned and have access to a nominated practice assessor for a practice placement or a series of practice placements in addition to a nominated academic assessor for each part of the education programme, in accordance with the NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment

S4.1: Theory and practice learning and assessment are facilitated effectively and objectively by appropriately qualified and experienced professionals with necessary expertise for their educational and assessor roles

R4.3: receive relevant induction, ongoing support and access to education and training which includes training in equality and diversity

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

Standards for prescribing programmes

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

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

Standards for post-registration programmes

4.5: ensure practice and academic assessors:

4.5.1: have undertaken a period of preceptorship in line with the NMC principles for preceptorship as SCPHNs or community nurses with a SPQ or,

4.5.2: can evidence prior learning and relevant practice assessor experience that enables them to engage in fair, reliable and valid assessment processes in the context of SCPHN and/or community nursing SPQ

4.6 ensure the student is assigned to a practice assessor who is an experienced registered SCPHN or community SPQ

urse for the
rogramme the student is undertaking

4.6.1 in exceptional circumstances, the same person may fulfil the role of practice supervisor and practice assessor for a part of the programme where the SCPHN/community nursing SPQ student is undergoing education and 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 practice assessor roles to be carried out by the same person