

Holding supervisor and assessor roles simultaneously

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

In our standards, when we state that the practice assessor is 'not simultaneously the practice supervisor and academic assessor' for the same student, we mean that they cannot take both these roles 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.

However, it should be noted that we have allowed for some flexibility for prescribing, SCPHN and community SPQ programmes, and sometimes a practice assessor on a prescribing, SCPHN or community SPQ programme 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 programmes or in remote locations, or where there is a distinct shortage of specialist professionals who are suitably prepared to undertake the supervisor and assessor roles for a particular qualification. In such circumstances the provider must be able to show us why this approach was necessary and how they've ensured that assessments are objective, evidence-based and fair. It would also be helpful for AEIs to clarify if the arrangement is a short term one and if so what sort of plan they have in place to address the gaps in qualified staff who can assess student learning.

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.

Case study

What do we mean by 'exceptional circumstances' where the practice supervisor and practice assessor can be the same person?

Scenario

Sarah is an SPQ GPN student who works in a small GP practice with only one other Registered Nurse, who also holds an SPQ GPN qualification.

Under the standards, all students must be assigned to a practice assessor for a placement or a series of placements, in line with local requirements.

Practice assessors are responsible for assessing a student's practice learning for a placement or series of placements. 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 student's overall performance for their practice learning, taking account of whether 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 to inform their decisions.

It has been discussed with the AEI whether the need for the RN to be both supervisor and assessor for this student would arise due to the rurality of the practice and the small nursing team.

The following standard from the Standards for post-registration programmes was highlighted:

- **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

Following this discussion, it was determined that this was not an exceptional situation, as it was identified that the District Nurses linked to the GP practice could act as the Practice Assessor for the SPQ GPN student, and that this would be in line with the NMC standards.

Relevant NMC standards for this section

Standards for student supervision and assessment

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

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

4.6.1: 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