Supported time and resources for those supporting students in practice

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The practice supervisor role is crucial to the learning of nursing and midwifery students, on pre- and post-registration programmes. They are key in helping to ensure that students achieve the required outcomes of their chosen programme and are capable of safe, effective and kind practice.

The practice supervisor should be supported in their role for student supervision and assessment. Support for practice supervisors can take a number of different forms from the practical, such as access to student documentation, to knowing what the student is expected to achieve, to recognising and prioritising all training needs, and support for raising concerns. The type of support will depend on the individual practice supervisor and what is needed for them to perform their role, to enable the student to meet their learning needs, and to provide safer, better care.

They should also be given all the necessary information, time and support by the university and/or their employer to enable them to carry out the role effectively.

Other colleagues supporting student learning in practice must also be given the ongoing support and time necessary for them to develop and perform their role, and to complete any training as needed. This support can take a number of forms such as protected time and must allow for our standards to be met and for practice supervisors to prepare for and contribute to student learning and assessment. Practice supervisors might need more formal training and preparation while other colleagues supporting students might need protected time. This could be to provide the actual support for students while balancing their usual job duties and it could also mean having the time to understand the intended outcomes for the student learning.

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

Colleagues supporting students in practice need to be given the time to carry out the role effectively, including completing the necessary paperwork and spending time receiving and giving constructive feedback to students, but also to liaise effectively with those in other supervision and assessment roles for students. Reflective time individually and with the student they're supporting is crucial to consolidate learning, record joint observations and prepare learning plans and suggestions that keep the student at the center at all times.

Colleagues could also use their experience of supporting students to consider their own continuing professional development needs and revalidation requirements.

For example, a student midwife could be placed in the sonography clinic of a hospital where women are offered ultrasonographic scans to test the growth of their babies in the womb. The sonographer can contribute to student supervision indirectly while the midwife in the clinic can be the practice supervisor. Both professionals spend some time understanding the proficiencies that the student midwife would gain by observing how communication should be tailored to each women's circumstances, providing adjustments such as a chaperone or interpreter where needed. This enables the student midwife to consider the cultural aspects of pregnancy and midwifery.

Relevant NMC standards for this section

Standards for student supervision and assessment
1.5 :there is a nominated person for each practice setting to actively support students and address student concerns

2.3 :the level of supervision provided to students reflects their learning needs and stage of learning

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

Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education
R1.5: ensure students and educators understand how to raise concerns or complaints and are encouraged and

supported to do so in line with local and national policies without fear of adverse consequences

R1.6: ensure any concerns or complaints are investigated and dealt with effectively

R1.7: ensure concerns or complaints affecting the wellbeing of people are addressed immediately and effectively

R2.1: comply with all relevant legal, regulatory, professional and educational requirements

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

Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes

4.1: ensure that support, supervision, learning and assessment provided complies with the NMC Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education

4.2: ensure that support, supervision, learning and assessment provided complies with the NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment

Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes

4.2: provide support, supervision, learning opportunities and assessment that complies with the NMC Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education

4.2: provide support, supervision, learning opportunities and assessment that complies with the NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment

Standards for post-registration programmes

4.2: liaise, collaborate and agree the necessary approach to the preparation, education, training, ongoing learning, support and expertise necessary for practice supervisors, practice and academic assessors that support SCPHN and community nursing SPQ student learning and assessment*

This links directly to Part 1: Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education and in particular requirement 1.7

Standards for prescribing programmes

4.2: ensure that support, supervision, learning and assessment provided complies with the NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment

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