Who can be a practice supervisor?

Reference: PS1-A Last Updated: 25/03/2024

Practice supervisors must be registered health and social care professionals. This means that they must be registered with a professional regulator such as the NMC, GMC, GPhC, HCPC or Social Work England; or with a professional health and social care organisation accredited by the PSA. This not only includes registered nursing associates but also includes what are sometimes referred to as ‘level 2’ or ‘enrolled’ nurses – they too may all perform the role of practice supervisor. Health and social care professionals who are not registered with a professional regulator or a PSA accredited body cannot be practice supervisors.

We also consider Registered Care Managers as suitable for being practice supervisors, as they are registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in England, the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC), the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) or Social Care Wales (SCW) and follow a process to register as an individual rather than as an organisation.
This does not mean that other professionals cannot support student learning. Others who are not registered health care professionals but working in health and care environments, such as phlebotomists, teachers (in a primary or secondary school) or maternity support workers, may also contribute to student supervision.

These professionals can contribute to student learning and assessments by providing feedback, sharing observations and their knowledge, skills and techniques to demonstrate how multi-professional team working and learning looks like in practice. The role that these professionals can perform will depend on the skills being taught, their own interest and experience, the setting and other factors. It is an excellent opportunity for students to learn from other professionals in a way that would be similar to ‘real life working’. Further information will be provided on this in the section on the practice learning environment.

Practice supervision should be organised in a student-centric way, enabling students with diverse needs and abilities to learn effectively from the most appropriate colleagues. For example, a health care assistant (HCA) may be best placed to help a student learn about washing and dressing patients, teaching assistants in a special education needs school can provide valuable insights to into communication skills with children, or reception staff at a GP surgery can demonstrate to students how they can de-escalate tense situations when people accessing services becoming agitated or disturbed.

It’s the approved education institution's (AEI’s) responsibility, with its practice learning partners, to make sure that practice supervision and learning are delivered in a way that enables students to meet their learning outcomes and does not compromise public protection.