



**Supporting Effective
Practice Learning**

Unit 1

Roles and responsibilities

Introduction

This unit is for practitioners preparing to be a practice supervisor and/or practice assessor and will take approximately 1.5 hours to complete.

The aim of this unit is to support your preparation as a practice supervisor and/or practice assessor, by gaining greater understanding of the new roles. Supporting you to understand what needs to be in place to deliver safe and effective learning experiences for students in practice.

On completion of this unit you should be able to:

- ⊕ Demonstrate knowledge of the NMC (2018a) standards for student supervision and assessment.
- ⊕ Describe how the roles of practice supervisor, practice assessor and academic assessor work together to supervise and assess students.
- ⊕ Appraise the responsibilities of the practice supervisor and practice assessor and what this means for your practice.

This unit is aligned to NMC (2018) Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (SSSA), National Framework for Practice Supervisors, Practice assessors and Academic Assessors (NES 2019) and the Health and Care Professions Council (2017) Standards of Education and Training.

Preparing to be a Practice Supervisor and/or Practice Assessor

Where are you now?



Take time

Take some time to reflect on what has motivated you to decide to become a practice supervisor or practice assessor and what you might need to support you to undertake the new role.

Write down the key points.

This unit will provide you with the knowledge and skills needed to support your understanding of how the roles of practice supervisor, practice assessor and academic assessor work together to help you to support students in practice.



Reading

In the following sections you will be directed to find out more about the practice supervisor, practice assessor and academic assessor roles. If you haven't already done so, take some time to familiarise yourself with the [NMC Education Standards](#).

These will form the basis for all following activities.

Understanding the roles

Alongside the changes to the standards for pre-registration programmes and proficiencies that nurses and midwives will need to demonstrate before they can enter the professional register, the NMC reviewed how students on pre and post-registration programmes will be supervised and assessed in both theory and practice (NMC 2018).

The roles of mentor, sign-off mentor, practice teacher and teacher (NMC 2008) have been withdrawn, and three new roles introduced to undertake the supervision and assessment of students; the practice supervisor, practice assessor and academic assessor as shown in Figure 1 below.

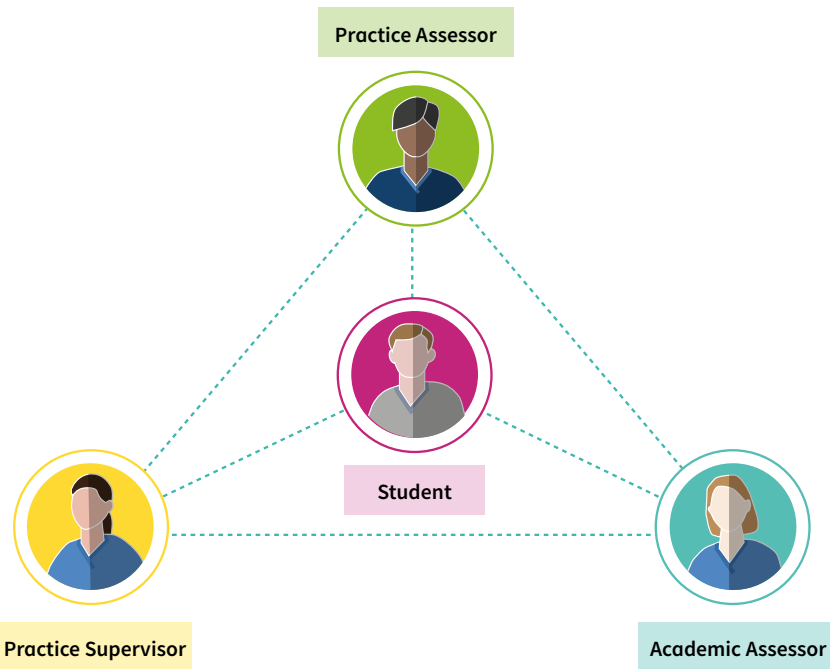


Figure 1: Three new roles introduced to undertake the supervision and assessment of students

The new standards differentiate these roles to strengthen assessment decision-making thus introducing the role of practice supervisor and practice assessor. Practitioners cannot be the practice supervisor and practice assessor for the same student (unless in an emergency sanctioned by the NMC (2020) as per [COVID-19 measures](#))

NMC (2018) states that “Practice supervisors must be registered with a professional regulator like the NMC, GMC or HCPC. Health and social care professionals who are not registered with a professional regulator cannot be practice supervisors. The practice assessor will be a registered nurse, midwife, or specialist community public health nurse (SCPHN)”.

The normal exception to this is nurses and midwives undertaking NMC approved post-registration prescribing programmes, where, “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. The NMC website has [supporting information on the standards for student supervision and assessment](#).

After completing the following sections, you may find it useful to reflect on your role and to review the supporting information to help you think about how you will apply the new standards for the supervision and assessment of nursing and midwifery students in your practice.

Practice Supervisor Role and responsibilities

All student nurses and midwives on pre-registration programmes and for nurses and midwives studying for NMC (2018) approved post-registration qualifications, such as specialist community public health and prescribing, require to be supervised in practice. This is the role of Practice Supervisor.

As a practice supervisor you will supervise such students as highlighted above to learn in practice and work towards achievement of their programme learning outcomes and proficiencies. You will also be a key source of support for students along with the practice assessor and other staff, such as senior charge nurses / midwives / care home managers / integrated team leader and academic assessor.

A role summary of the practice supervisor, and their relationship to the practice assessor in supervising and assessing students is summarised in Figure 2 below.

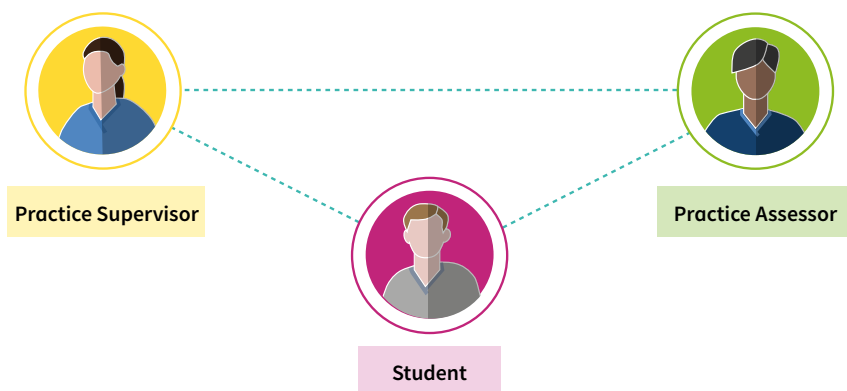


Figure 2: The role of the practice supervisor, and their relationship to the practice assessor in supervising and assessing students

Practice Supervisor

What they do:

- + Act as a role model
- + Support and supervise
- + Provide feedback
- + Record observations
- + Contribute to assessments
- + Raise and respond to student conduct and competence concerns
- + Engage with the practice assessor and academic assessor, where required

Practice Supervisor

What they need to know:

- + Current knowledge and experience
- + Understanding of student proficiencies, programme outcomes and practice assessment document
- + Effective supervision, student learning and assessment methods



Activity

To find out more about what practice supervisors will do go to the [national framework for practice supervisors, practice assessors and academic assessors in Scotland \(NES2019\)](#) and read **section 3.6.** and think about what this will mean for you.

Write down the key points that are relevant to you.

Review sections 3.7 to 3.9 for further information on the role of practice supervisor and how you can be supported in the role. Identify where your local contacts are and take a note of them below.

What development activities could you be considering for the future?

Practice Assessor

Role and responsibilities

All student nurses and midwives on pre-registration programmes and for nurses and midwives studying for NMC (2018) approved post-registration qualifications, such as specialist community public health and prescribing, require to be assigned to a practice assessor for a practice placement or a series of practice placements. This is the role of Practice Assessor.

It is worth noting that under the new standards, prescribing students can be supervised and assessed by any registered healthcare professional (including a nurse or midwife) who is an experienced prescriber with suitable equivalent qualifications for the programme the student is undertaking. This role was previously only held by a medical doctor registered with the General Medical Council (known as Designated Medical Practitioners).

As a practice assessor you will be one of the sources of support for students, along with the practice supervisor and academic assessor and other staff, such as senior charge nurses / midwives, team leaders or care home managers.

Your role as practice assessor differs from the practice supervisor through seeking feedback from practice supervisors regarding student conduct and performance during practice placements to inform assessment decisions of students. During each part of the programme, at least one of the practice assessors, in partnership with the nominated academic assessor will communicate and collaborate to evaluate and recommend the student for progression.

The relationship between the role of practice assessor, practice supervisor and academic assessor in supervising and assessing students is summarised in Figure 3.

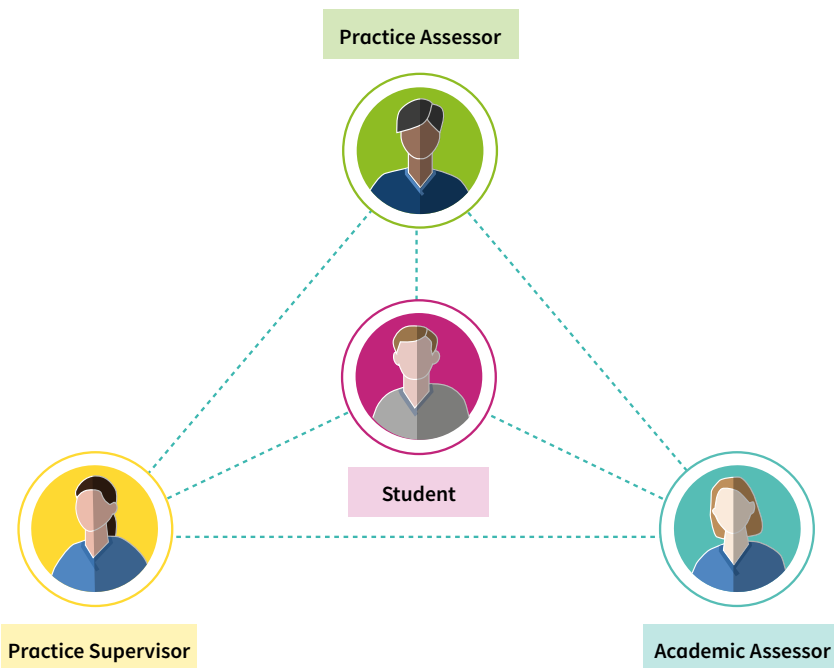


Figure 3: The role of the practice assessor, and their relationship to the practice supervisor and academic assessor

Practice Assessor

What they do:

- + Seek feedback from practice supervisors
- + Periodically observe students
- + Draw on evidence from other sources
- + Communicate and collaborate with the nominated academic assessor
- + Make and record objective, evidence-based assessments on student conduct, proficiency and achievement

Practice Assessor

What they need to know:

- + Current knowledge and experience for programme they are assessing
- + Understanding of student proficiencies, programme outcomes and assessment document
- + Skills relevant to student learning and assessment
- + Conducting objective evidence-based assessments
- + Providing feedback



Activity

To find out more about what practice assessors will do go to the [national framework for practice supervisors, practice assessors and academic assessors in Scotland \(NES 2019\)](#) and read **section 4.6.** and think about what this will mean for you.

Write down the key points that are relevant to you.

Review sections 4.7 to 4.9 for further information on the role of practice assessor and how you can be supported in the role. Identify where your local contacts are and take a note of them below.

What development activities could you be considering for the future?

Academic Assessor Role and responsibilities

All student nurses and midwives on pre-registration programmes, returners to practice and for nurses and midwives studying for NMC (2018) approved post-registration qualifications, such as specialist community public health and prescribing, require to be assigned to a different nominated academic assessor for each part of the education programme. This is the role of Academic Assessor.

The academic assessor role reflects the way learning and assessment is structured in the academic environment, and their role in collating and confirming the student's academic achievement. The academic assessor will communicate and collaborate with the practice assessor to conduct assessments related to student achievement of proficiencies and programme outcomes for progression from one part of the programme to another.

The role of the academic assessor and their relationship with the practice assessor in collating evidence and assessing students is summarised in Figure 4.

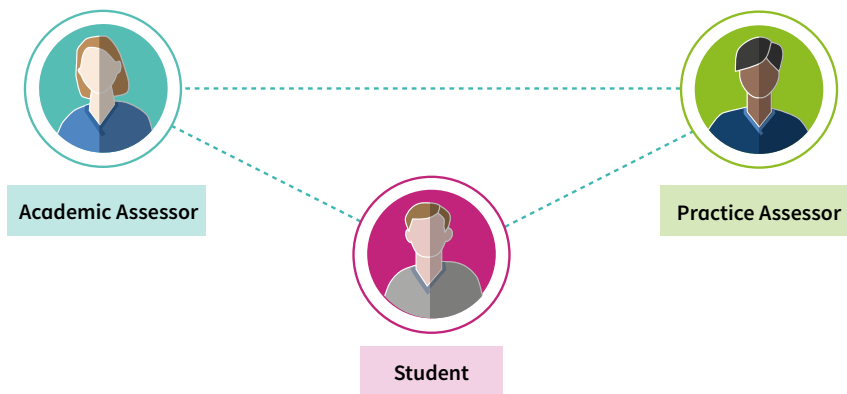


Figure 4: The academic assessor role and relationship to the practice assessor and student

Academic Assessor

What they do:

- + Draw on evidence from other sources, which may include practice supervisor observations, where appropriate
- + Communicate and collaborate with practice assessors
- + Make and record objective evidence-based assessments on student conduct, proficiency and achievement
- + In partnership with the practice assessor, make recommendations for progression for a part of the programme

Academic Assessor

What they need to know:

- + Adult learning theories and teaching
- + Current knowledge and expertise for programme they are assessing
- + Understanding of student proficiencies, programme outcomes and assessment document
- + Conducting objective evidence-based assessments
- + Providing feedback



Activity

To find out more about what academic assessors will do go to the [national framework for practice supervisors, practice assessors and academic assessors in Scotland \(NES 2019\)](#) and read **section 5.6.** and think about what this will mean for you.

Write down the key points that are relevant to you.

End of unit summary and assessment guidance

You should now have an understanding of the roles of practice supervisor, practice assessor and academic assessor and your responsibilities.

Remember to record your learning from this unit in your professional portfolio and share with your line manager. This can be used as evidence for your annual appraisal and revalidation requirements.

Helpful Resources

In this section we have put together some resources that you may find helpful to further your learning.

Websites

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) website – standards section where you can access the standards for nurses and midwives

NMC Supporting information on standards for student supervision and assessment – this section of the website contains really helpful guidance on practice supervision, practice assessment, academic assessment, learning environments and experiences and student empowerment.

NHS Education for Scotland (NES) website – **Scottish Future Nurse and Midwife Programme Board pages**

Guidance

NHS Education for Scotland: **A National Framework for Practice Supervisors, Practice Assessors and Academic Assessors in Scotland** – this framework provides guidance on the implementation of the new supervision and assessment roles in Scotland.

Unit 1

Summary of learning

Now you have completed Unit 1, the following is a summary of the information you will have learned.

The three new roles described by the Nursing and Midwifery Council are:

- + Practice Supervisor
- + Academic Assessor
- + Practice Assessor

The following are described by the NMC as roles and responsibilities of the practice supervisor

- + serve as role models for safe and effective practice in line with their code of conduct
- + support and supervise students, providing feedback on their progress towards, and achievement of, proficiencies and skills
- + contribute to the student's record of achievement by periodically recording relevant observations on the conduct, proficiency and achievement of the students they are supervising
- + contribute to student assessments to inform decisions for progression

The practice supervisor should have:

current knowledge and experience in the area they are providing support, supervision and feedback in.

The following can be undertaken by the practice supervisor

- + Undertake student induction and orientation to practice placement
- + Document observations of student performance in the Practice Assessment Documentation
- + Be the nominated person for the student

All nurses and midwives in any practice learning environment can be practice supervisors.

Students can be supervised by any registered health and social care professional.

All appropriately prepared registered nurses, midwives, or specialist community public health nurses (SCPHN) can be practice assessors.

You cannot undertake the role of practice supervisor and practice assessor at the same time, except in exceptional circumstances like the prescribing programme.

The following can be a practice assessor for a nurse or midwife who is completing a post-registration prescribing course

- + A pharmacist who is also a prescriber
- + An advanced nurse practitioner who is also an independent prescriber

Some examples of the types of evidence practice assessors can draw upon to make informed decisions on a student's learning are:

- + Feedback from practice supervisors who have worked with or supported the student
- + Direct observation
- + Student self-reflections

References

Health and Care Professions Council (2017) *Standards of education and training Your duties as an education provider*. Health and Care Professions Council. London. Available at: <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/resources/standards/standards-of-education-and-training/>

NHS Education Scotland (2019) *National Framework for Practice Supervisors, Practice Assessors and Academic Assessors in Scotland*. NHS Education for Scotland. Edinburgh. Available at: https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/4354527/scottish_approach_to_student_supervision_and_assessment_interactive.pdf

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2008) *Standards to support learning and assessment in practice*. Nursing and Midwifery Council. London. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards-for-education-and-training/standards-for-student-supervision-and-assessment/>

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2018) *Realising professionalism: Standards framework for education and training. Part 2: Standards for student supervision and assessment*. Nursing and Midwifery Council. London. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards-for-education-and-training/standards-for-student-supervision-and-assessment/>

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2020) *Coronavirus (COVID-19): Information and advice*. Nursing and Midwifery Council. [online] Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/news/coronavirus/>

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

This resource may be made available, in full or summary form, in alternative formats and community languages. Please contact us on **0131 656 3200** or e-mail: **altformats@nes.scot.nhs.uk** to discuss how we can best meet your requirements.



NHS Education for Scotland

Westport 102, West Port

Edinburgh EH3 9DN

Tel: 0131 656 3200

www.nes.scot.nhs.uk

© NHS Education for Scotland 2020

You can copy or reproduce the information in this document for use within NHSScotland and for non-commercial educational purposes if referenced in full. Use of this document for commercial purposes is permitted only with the written permission of NES.

NESD1240 | Designed by the NES Design Service