4.1 Supervising pre-registration students in practice

The NMC is very clear regarding the need for supervision of pre-registration students whilst they are undertaking their practice learning opportunities.

‘At all times students must be directly or indirectly supervised in the practice setting. The mentor’s responsibility is to plan and coordinate the student’s whole learning experience, determining the amount of direct supervision required by the mentor, and what experience may be through indirect supervision (student working independently). Some experience may be supervised by others, (other professionals, mentors or practice teachers). The named mentor is accountable for their decisions to let the student work independently with others’.

(NMC, 2008, p. 31)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Supervision</th>
<th>Indirect Supervision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor is directly observing and supervising the care the student is delivering.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly watching or listening to care being delivered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor is not physically present for all aspects of the care episode.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mentor is aware of the care the student is providing and can be readily contacted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indirect supervision can also mean that a mentor is available, rather than physically present. Being ‘available’ can include telephone, Skype, email or bleep. This means that a student can undertake a range of learning experiences with other healthcare professionals with a mentor available for contact if required.
Insight learning experiences – Nursing

Practice learning opportunities are an essential element for developing registrants who are competent to practice in primary, secondary and tertiary care settings in all fields across all providers and within very diverse populations. A variety of practice learning opportunities will provide students with the experiences they need to relate theory to practice; develop skills and achieve their required competencies in their chosen field of nursing.

The NMC requires all pre-registration nursing students who commenced their programme after September 2011 to have learning opportunities that provide contact with a range of client groups. (NMC 2010a) These client groups include:

- Babies
- Children
- Young people
- Pregnant women
- Postnatal women
- People requiring end of life care
- Adults
- Older people
- People with acute conditions
- People with mental health problems
- People with learning disabilities
- People with long term conditions

In order to facilitate this learning some students may have an opportunity of undertaking a practice learning opportunity in a field of practice that is different to their own field. Where this occurs, it may be referred to as an insight learning experience. In addition, some students may gain insight into other fields of practice through outreach learning experiences.

Mentoring students during insight learning experiences

**Initial interview**
- Establish the field of nursing in which the student is enrolled
- Discuss the learning opportunities available for the student to gain insight into your field of nursing
- Plan together how learning outcomes can be met during the practice experience

**Midpoint review**
- Reflect with the student on their progress in meeting learning outcomes
- Use the interim review action plan to highlight any learning needs and plan for specific learning experiences that will aid the student to gain insight into your field of nursing

**Final review**
- Final assessment and documentation of learning outcomes
- Document comments related to summative assessment
- Document in the ongoing achievement record indicating any areas of future development
### 4.3 Outreach learning experiences

In order to achieve learning outcomes and to engage with a wide variety of practice learning opportunities it is expected that students will be encouraged to undertake a range of ‘outreach’ learning opportunities during the practice learning opportunity. Outreach learning experiences should be relevant to their overall learning outcomes and expose students to a wider range of learning opportunities than they would otherwise achieve by staying in one practice area.

#### Benefits of outreach learning experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students experience different fields of practice</th>
<th>Students can work with a wider range of healthcare providers</th>
<th>Students exposed to opportunities for inter-professional learning</th>
<th>Students are able to pursue particular areas of interest related to their learning outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The type, number and location of any ‘outreach opportunity’ will be dependent on the type of practice experience and the local opportunities available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor indirectly supervises</th>
<th>Mentor indirectly supervises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach learning experience</td>
<td>Outreach learning experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base learning experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mentor directly and indirectly supervises
Examples of outreach learning experiences

### Practice learning experience - adult student
**Base experience - Surgical Ward in Hospital**

- Outreach
  - One day in theatre working with operating department practitioners in the anaesthetic room
- Outreach
  - One week working with acute pain team, assessing inpatients and attending outpatient follow-up clinics
- Outreach
  - Three days of working with occupational therapists, undertaking home visits for patients being discharged

### Practice learning experience - child student
**Base experience - Paediatric Community Team**

- Outreach
  - One week in Children’s Outpatient A&E working with triage nurse
- Outreach
  - Three days of working with London Ambulance Service attending emergency calls
- Outreach
  - One day working with NHS Direct nurses

### Practice learning experience - mental health student
**Base experience - Acute Mental Health Service**

- Outreach
  - One day of working with ‘Mind’ art facilitators and service users
- Outreach
  - One week working with Community Psychiatric Nurses
- Outreach
  - Three days of working with Practice Nurses undertaking 'new patient' assessment in GP practices

### Practice learning experience - learning disability student
**Base experience – Service Users home**

- Outreach
  - One day working with local adult education services
- Outreach
  - One week working with social workers or care managers
- Outreach
  - Three days of working with local 'Mencap' drop-in service
Mentoring students on outreach learning experiences

Outreach learning experiences expose students to a wider range of learning opportunities than they would otherwise achieve by staying in one practice area. The type, number and location of any ‘outreach opportunity’ will be dependent on the type of practice experience and the local opportunities available. As the mentor of a student undertaking outreach learning experiences you will need to adopt a flexible approach to how you stay in touch with your student and ensure that you are able to indirectly supervise them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One day outreach experience with mental health art facilitator at MIND</th>
<th>Three days outreach experiences with occupational therapists based in hospital</th>
<th>One week outreach experiences with social workers in local council services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor aware of where student is for the day and able to contact Mentor and student on the same shifts</td>
<td>Mentor aware of where student is and able to contact Mentor and student on the same shifts</td>
<td>Mentor aware of where student is for the week and able to contact Mentor and student on the same shifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student and art facilitator able to contact mentor by phone if needed</td>
<td>Student and occupational therapists can phone or return to ward to contact mentor</td>
<td>Student and social workers contact mentor by phone at midpoint in the week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the completion of the outreach learning experience the student and facilitator should document the details of the experience within the practice assessment document. There is a section available for the student to reflect on the experience and the facilitator to write comments related to the students performance and learning.

**Staying in touch**

For short outreach experiences the student and mentor may not need to contact each other directly, especially if the student is being supported by another healthcare professional during the learning experience. For longer outreach experiences, it is good practice for the mentor, supervisor and student to agree a pre-arranged time to make contact, either in person or by phone.
4.4 Snapshot/episodes of care practice assessments

As part of the practice assessment strategy some students may be required to undertake a 'snapshot /episode of care practice assessment' during their practice learning opportunity. Snapshot/episode of care assessments generally focuses on one aspect of competence where the student must demonstrate a range of related skills.

**Example of snapshot/episode of care assessment**

**Communication with a service user**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishes rapport</th>
<th>Effective communication</th>
<th>Engaging and responsive</th>
<th>Closes interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Effective introduction  
• Gains consent  
• Demonstrates compassion, dignity etc  
• Maintains confidentiality |
| • Appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication  
• Demonstrates empathy  
• Responds to, and poses questions |
| • Attentive, warm and kind  
• Responds appropriately  
• Listens and watches for verbal / non-verbal clues  
• Asks appropriate questions |
| • Confirms what has been said  
• Summarises conversation  
• Takes leave in caring way  
• Maintains professional boundaries |

**Role of the mentor in snapshot/episode of care assessments**

A snapshot/episode of care assessment will be pre-printed for mentors in the students practice assessment document. Mentors should discuss with students at the initial interview the most appropriate time for the assessment to take place. This should include opportunities for the student to gain experience in relation to the assessment criteria and obtain feedback on their performance.
4.5 Service users’ contribution to practice assessment

The NMC requires service user and carers to contribute to the assessment process of pre-registration students (NMC, 2010). This means that students who began their programme after September 2011 need to obtain comment from service users during each practice learning opportunity.

The term ‘service user’ includes clients, patients, relatives, carers and significant others. It is recommended that mentors discuss with the student how service user feedback will be obtained during the practice experience. This is best done at the practice orientation. The service user feedback can be recorded in the ‘Service Users Comments’ pages in the Practice Assessment Document.

Before obtaining feedback the mentor should ensure that the service user consents to having their comments recorded in the practice assessment document. The service user should be advised that they will remain anonymous and any discussion held in confidence by the student, mentor and university.
4.6 Documenting the ongoing achievement record

The NMC requires the mentor who assessed the student to provide a summary of the students' strengths, areas for development and weaknesses for the next mentor. It should provide an accurate account of any areas which the student will need to focus on if there are any concerns related to proficiency.

The main aim of the ongoing achievement record is to provide evidence of the student's progression throughout the programme. The sign-off mentor will be reliant on clear documentation within the ongoing achievement record to confirm that all practice competencies have been met and there are no ongoing concerns about a student's fitness for practice.

- Mentors should provide a documented overview of learning outcomes that have been achieved
- Specific examples of particular strengths should be included

- Mentors should provide a documented overview of learning outcomes that have not been achieved
- Specific examples of particular areas of concern should be included

- Mentors should provide advice to the student and next mentor of what areas require development
- Specific examples of where improvement are needed should be included
4.7 How your students evaluate practice

Students evaluate their practice learning opportunities in a number of ways. Students and mentors should evaluate the overall practice learning opportunity at the final interview. This will give mentors/practice teachers first hand feedback on the students experience and assist with planning learning opportunities for future students. This could be undertaken verbally and/or by completion of a written evaluation.

Evaluation can also take place in a student support group and may involve the Trust/Organisation Named Person. This allows the organisation to gain an understanding of students learning experience.

Students are required to formally evaluate their practice learning opportunity once they return to the university. Students are asked to respond to a series of questions that relate to the NMC ‘Standards to Support Learning and Assessment in Practice’ (NMC, 2008). The results of this survey are collated by the university and shared with the Trust/Organisation Named Person.

**Evaluation results**

Practice areas should use evaluation results to develop the practice learning opportunity for students in their areas. Individual student feedback and overall evaluation results can be a useful way for mentors to gauge their own mentoring performance and identify changes that could be made in the practice area to improve the student learning experience. Evaluation results will also be reviewed within the Educational Audit for each practice learning area.

**Improving the practice learning opportunity - example following student evaluation**

- **Student evaluates they did not know who their mentor was on first day**
- **Students identify they would like to attend MDT meetings**
- **Practice area identifies mentor allocated to student in orientation pack and off-duty**
- **Dates, times and location of MDT meetings identified on student notice board**

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