Guidance Notes for Supervisors in General Practice

(Version 1)

Guidance Notes for Practice Supervisors

What is the practice supervisor's role in general practice?

A practice supervisors' role is to support and supervise nursing students in the practice learning environment. All students must be supervised while learning in practice environments.

What do we mean by supervision, and what can students do?

Practice supervisors can provide supervision in different ways. These depend on different things such as the need to protect the public, the students' learning needs and programme outcomes and the level of support the supervisor is able to offer.
Supervisors are often concerned about what tasks the students are authorised to carry out. To help support supervisors and students with this, we have worked with local Universities and produced a separate guide called:

Practice Guidelines for Students in General Practice

This guide shows how the supervisors can ensure learning experiences and levels of supervision, are inclusive and tailored to the students' stage of learning, proficiencies and programme outcomes.

Who are practice supervisors and how are they prepared?

The practice supervisor can be any registered health and social care professional working in a practice environment. They have been prepared and supported to take up their role and have up-to-date knowledge and experience relevant to the student they are supervising. All nurses, midwives and nursing associates in any practice learning environment should be able to undertake a practice supervisor role.

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. Others who are not registered health and social care professionals but are working in a practice learning environment, such as phlebotomists, assistant practitioners or health care assistants may also contribute to student supervision. The role that non-registered professionals play depends on a number of things, including what skill is being taught, the experience and skills of the professional, what oversight there is, and the environment where learning is taking place.

Understanding Proficiencies

Practice supervisors should have an understanding of the proficiencies and programme outcomes they are supporting students to achieve. The skills students nurses should achieve on completion of their programme are set out in annex a and b of the "Future Nurse: Standards of proficiency for registered nurses" (NMC, 2018). These are reflected in their

Practice Assessment Document (PAD). Most students in the east of England will now be using the same Midlands Yorkshire and East (MYE) PAD. To help you understand the documentation, it is recommended you read the "Guide to using the Practice Assessment Document" (MYEPAD) – (see end of document for link).

Working within your scope of practice

Practice Supervisors support learning in line with their scope of practice to enable the student to meet their learning outcomes. They have current knowledge and experience of the area in which they are providing support, supervision and feedback.

Equality and Diversity

The University, with its practice learning partners, is responsible for ensuring that the equality and diversity needs of students and practice supervisors are taken into account. If needed, they should make reasonable adjustments.

Reasonable adjustments

Please see our reasonable adjustment guidance.

Keeping the public safe

All practice supervisors are responsible for upholding public protection when supporting and supervising students. This means that they must ensure that the supervision and support they provide protects the public. It can be done in a number of ways, including:
  ➢ Ensuring that students are not placed with a person or in a situation that is outside of their capability without suitable support
  ➢ Understanding and making clear that a person has the right to refuse having a student observe or participate in their care,
  ➢ Serving as a role model for safe and effective practice in line with their professional codes of conduct (including the relevant codes as set by the regulator(s) for each profession)
  ➢ Raising concerns about any impacts to public protection from student learning. This can mean risks to public protection from the student, but also any risks to people arising from the environment in which the student is placed, including if the practice supervisor has been asked to practice beyond their competence.
All practice supervisors also have a responsibility to abide by the duty of candour, as part of their role as a registered professional.

Providing learning experiences

Practice supervisors provide learning experiences for nursing and midwifery students within the practice learning environment. Learning experiences could include:

  ➢ Providing and facilitating opportunities for students to practise skills
  ➢ Sharing knowledge with the student and effectively demonstrating how to put that knowledge into practice safely
  ➢ Observing students

> Giving constructive feedback on student performance
> Empowering students to take advantage of available resources and learning opportunities
> Delegating learning opportunities to other practice supervisors and anyone else who may suitably enable learning
> Providing opportunities for students to learn 'independently' through less 'hands on' supervision, where appropriate
> Empowering students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Continuity of Learning

Practice supervision should be 'sufficiently continuous', so it upholds public protection and enables the student to meet their learning outcomes. 'Continuity' need not mean a student having the same practice supervisor for a period of time. It may be fulfilled by good record keeping and handover between practice supervisors, if appropriate.

Giving Feedback

Supervisors support and supervise students, providing feedback on their progress towards, and achievement of, proficiencies and skills. This feedback can take different forms depending on the role that the practice supervisor is playing in student education, including;

> Providing direct feedback to students on their conduct and achievement of proficiencies and skills, including where they don't think the achievement has been met, or could be improved on
> Providing constructive feedback to improve overall student performance
> Depending on the role of the practice supervisor in the student's education, potentially putting action plans in place to improve student performance

This process should be a collaborative one between the practice supervisor and the student. The way in which it will be done will depend on the role of the practice supervisor and their level of responsibility for student learning. A key part of giving feedback is adding relevant observations on the student's conduct, proficiency and achievement to the student's record(s) of achievement. These observations may include the observations of anyone else who has taken part in the student's education, depending on the way in which practice supervision has been organised.

Contributing to assessment and progression

Contributing to student assessments can take different forms depending on the role of the practice supervisor in student learning, the stage of learning, student competence, and other considerations. It can include:

> Direct communication with practice and academic assessors to share their views on student achievement, underachievement or areas to continue to work on
> Inputting into student documentation with their views on student achievement.

Raising concerns

Practice supervisors have a responsibility to raise concerns about student conduct and competence, in a timely and responsible manner. This should be done with relevant people, such as the student's practice and academic assessors, where appropriate. Practice

supervisors should raise concerns directly with the student first, if appropriate, and take steps to improve student performance. If this has been done and the student has not improved the practice supervisor may need to escalate a concern. The practice supervisor should escalate their concerns immediately if it is urgently needed to protect the public.

Allowing time

The NMC state that supervisors must have supported time and resources to enable them to fulfil their roles in addition to their other professional responsibilities. Practices will receive a tariff payment to cover the backfill costs of supervisor's time.

Al the above information can be found on the NMC website. For more information, please visit: https://www.nmc.org.uk/supporting-information-on-standards-for-student-supervision-and-assessment/practice-supervision/

The Practice Learning Environment

Consider the factors in the table below:

Good Learning Environment	Damaging Learning Environment
Consistent	Students not expected or welcomed
Available resources	Inadequate time with supervisors or too many students
Flexible	Short staffed and student used as a pair of hands
Enthusiastic, compassionate and approachable staff	Assessor or supervisor not interested in student
Given responsibility and clear opportunities to learn	Clash of personalities
Students respected and feel part of the team	Critical rather than constructive feedback

What are the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats in your learning environment? How can you improve your learning environment?

Providing Feedback

Feedback supports the development of the learner. It should be timely and expected, clear and specific, honest, open and objective, balanced and motivating. Where possible, record feedback either in the daily learning logs or the Practice assessment documents. Pendleton's rules are a common framework used in healthcare to support the feedback process:

(Pendleton, 1984)

1. *Ask the student what went well*
2. Tell them what went well (compliment)

3. *Ask the student what could be improved*
4. Tell them what could be improved

5. *Ask the student what their action plan is*
6. Approve / modify action plan

7. *Ask the student to summarise action*
8. Complement if necessary

Notes on the assessment process

Although it is the Practice Assessors role to make an evaluation of student competence over a period of time against certain criteria in the practice assessment document, supervisors can also contribute to student assessment. This can include:
  ➢ Direct communication with the practice and academic assessors to share their views on student achievement, underachievement or areas to continue work on
  ➢ Inputting into student documentation with their views on student achievement, including direct assessment of proficiencies.

Students are assessed in a range of areas including:

Areas of competence
Skills and Knowledge
Attitude
Behaviours
Team Working
Professional Values

Practice supervisors may use a variety of methods to contribute to assessment including:

Methods of assessment

Observation

Question and Answer

Direct supervision

Feedback

Discussion

Presentation

Joint reflection

When contributing to assessment, Practice supervisors should provide supporting information and / or evidence that could include:

Supporting Evidence

Notes taken during observation

Student reflections during assessment

Feedback from self and others

Outcomes from virtual experience tests

Many factors may affect assessment; practice supervisors should consider these when contributing to assessment decisions:

Factors affecting assessments

Bias towards student

Insufficient opportunities to observe and assess certain skills

Student's own readiness, preparation and/or nerves

Pre-conceived ideas based on other students' performance

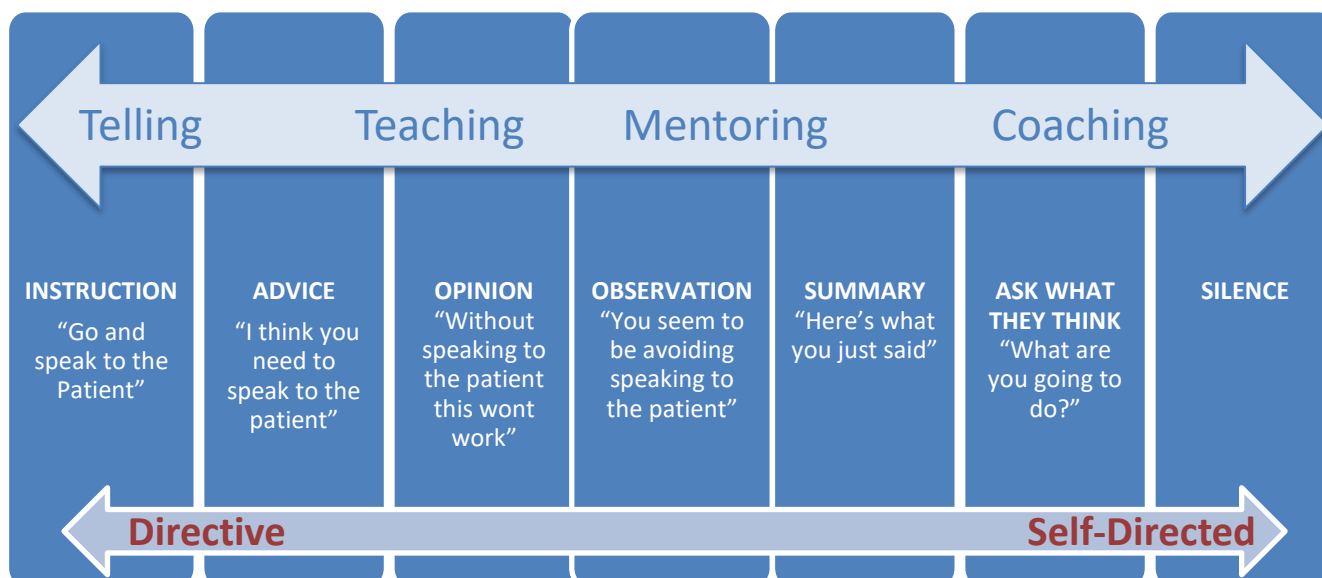Uncertainty of documentation and completion requirements

Workload pressures

Inadequate feedback

Communication skills relevant to students' supervision and learning

Having an awareness of the different approaches to development and different types of conversations, allows us to develop flexible communication skills.

Different situations suit different conversational approaches. For example, in urgent situations, or where the student has no knowledge of the topic, you would use a more directive approach. If you want to challenge the student and enable them take responsibility for their learning you would ask more questions and utilise a more self-directed approach.

Telling	Teaching		Mentoring		Coaching	
INSTRUCTION "Go and speak to the Patient"	**ADVICE** "I think you need to speak to the patient"	**OPINION** "Without speaking to the patient this wont work"	**OBSERVATION** "You seem to be avoiding speaking to the patient"	**SUMMARY** "Here's what you just said"	**ASK WHAT THEY THINK** "What are you going to do?"	**SILENCE**

Directive ← → **Self-Directed**

Coaching nursing students

The key advantages to coaching are:

- ➤ Coaching promotes greater student autonomy
- ➤ Coaching encourages students to take responsibility
- ➤ Coaching promotes an ethos of lifelong learning
- ➤ Coaching promotes questioning, enquiring and promotion of student centred learning, which is much more effective than historical "tell and teach" approaches.

Using the GROW model of coaching

GROW (Goal, Reality, Options and Will do) is a great ways to manage a single shift or a whole placement with a student. It can take the pressure off you as a supervisor as it encourages students to take ownership of their own development and learning. Coaching involves the use of skilful questioning and a belief that the student has the resources to find solutions for themselves.

Helpful Questions

GOAL (at the beginning of a shift or at the initial interview at the beginning of the placement)

- What do you want to focus on for this shift / placement?
- What do you want to achieve?
- Why is this important to you right now?
- What will make you feel like this time has been well spent?
- What is your goal for today?

These questions should help the student identify a goal for the shift / goals for the placement. Goals should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely)

REALITY

- What is happening now?
- Describe the current situation…
- What have you tried so far?
- What skills, knowledge, experience, attributes do you already have?
- What do you think you may want to do differently?
- What is currently working well?

OPTIONS

- What options are there?
- What else could you do OR What else could you try?
- If anything was possible, what would you do?
- How have you managed a similar situation before?
- What if...?
- I have a suggestion, would you like to hear it?

WILL DO

- What are you actually going to do now? (Specific)
- How will you measure your progress? (Measurable)
- How are you going to achieve it? (Achievable)
- What support do you need? (Realistic)
- When are you going to do it? (Timely)
- How will you overcome any challenges
- What do you need from me?
- What support do you need?
- How will you get this support?

Other resources available from The Inspire Project:

- Guidance notes for Practice Coordinators in General Practice
- Guidance notes for Practice Assessors in General Practice
- Practice Guidelines for Students in General Practice
- Reasonable Adjustment for students in General Practice
- General Practice - Practice Learning Environment policy

Also recommended

- Guide to using the Practice Assessment Document (MYEPAD)