MENTOR POLICY FOR PRE-REGISTRATION STUDENTS OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY

1. Introduction
In 2008, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) published the second edition of ‘Standards to Support Learning and Assessment in Practice’. These standards stipulate mandatory requirements for all NMC registered mentors, teachers and practice teachers and introduce a new ‘Sign-Off Mentor’ status. This policy applies to the practice mentors and sign off mentors which support, teach and assess pre-registration nursing and midwifery students during practice placements.

- Every student must have a named mentor for each period of practice learning. Whilst giving direct care in the practice setting at least 50% of a student’s time must be spent being supervised (directly or indirectly) by a mentor.
- A range of student evidence and mentor assessment methods should be used to inform assessment decisions however the majority of practice assessments should be through direct observation.
- An on-going achievement record (PPDF) must be passed from one placement to the next to enable judgements to be made on the student’s progress.
- Mentors will assess competence in practice and confirm that students are capable of safe and effective practice in all placements except the final placement. The NMC acknowledge that as part of inter-professional learning and working, others will contribute to learning and assessment in practice and assess practice competencies. These may be registrant from other professions but only where that specific skill is transferable. They cannot act as a sign-off mentor.
- Sign-off mentors must make the assessment of practice in the students final placement for nursing students and all placements for midwifery students.

2. Definition of a Mentor
“A registrant who has achieved the outcomes of stage 2 (see point 4) and who facilitates learning and supervises and assesses students in practice setting.”
NMC (2008) pp 45

3. Applying due regard to learning and assessment in practice
Nurses and midwives who intend to take on the role of mentor must be registered on the same part or sub-part of the register as the student they are to assess and for the nurses’ part of the register be in the same field of practice (adult, mental health,
learning disability or children’s). However, where it is appropriate for student nurses or midwives to gain experience with someone from a different profession the NMC have described methods of feeding back to the mentor or sign off mentor. See NMC Circular 26/2007 for further information in relation to nursing and NMC Circular 02/2008 with regard to midwives.

4. **Criteria to be a mentor**
   A mentor must meet the following criteria:-
   
   - Be a first or second level nurse, midwife or health visitor with current NMC Registration
   - Have completed at least twelve months full time post-qualifying experience (or equivalent part-time) and completed their period of preceptorship
   - Successfully completed an approved programme of mentor preparation
   - Participate in annual updating to demonstrate mentor development in line with required standards
   - Once entered on the register as a mentor complete triennial review

NMC Registrants already holding a mentor qualification recognised by programme providers, should map their current qualification and experience against the new NMC standards and meet any outstanding outcomes through continuing professional development – your Practice Placement Facilitator will be able to advise.

5. **Competence and Outcomes for a Mentor**
   Mentors must be competent in relation to the following mentor roles and responsibilities:-

   **Establishing Effective Working Relationships**
   - Develop effective working relationships based on mutual trust and respect.
   - Demonstrate an understanding of factors that influence how students integrate into practice settings.
   - Provide ongoing and constructive support to facilitate transition from one learning environment to another.

   **Facilitation of Learning**
   - Use knowledge of the student’s stage of learning to select appropriate learning opportunities to meet their individual needs.
   - Facilitate selection of appropriate learning strategies to integrate learning from practice and academic experiences.
   - Support students in critically reflecting upon their learning experience in order to enhance future learning.

   **Assessment and Accountability**
   - Foster professional growth, personal development and accountability through support of students in practice.
   - Demonstrate a breadth of understanding of assessment strategies and the ability to contribute to the total assessment process as part of the teaching team.
   - Provide constructive feedback to students and assist them in identifying future learning needs and actions. Manage failing students so that they may either
enhance their performance and capabilities for safe and effective practice or be able to understand their failure and the implications of this for their future.

- BE accountable for confirming that students have met, or not met, the NMC competencies in practice. As a sign-off mentor, confirm that students have met, or not met, the NMC standards of proficiency in practice and are capable of safe and effective practice.

**Evaluation of Learning**

- Contribute to evaluation of student learning and assessment experiences – proposing aspects for change as a result of such evaluation.
- Participate in self and peer evaluation to facilitate personal development, and contribute to the development of others.

**Creating an Environment for Learning**

- Support students to identify both learning needs and experiences that are appropriate to their level of learning.
- Use a range of learning experiences, involving patients, clients, carers and the professional team, to meet defined learning needs.
- Identify aspects of the learning environment which could be enhanced – negotiating with others to make appropriate changes.
- Act as a resource to facilitate personal and professional development of others.

**Context of Practice**

- Contribute to the development of an environment in which effective practice is fostered, implemented, evaluated and disseminated.
- Set and maintain professional boundaries that are sufficiently flexible for providing inter-professional care.
- Initiate and respond to practice developments to ensure safe and effective care is achieved and an effective learning environment is maintained.

**Evidence Based Practice**

- Identify and apply research and evidence-based practice to their area of practice.
- Contribute to strategies to increase or review the evidence-base used to support practice.
- Support students in applying an evidence base to their own practice.

**Leadership**

- Plan a series of learning experiences that will meet students defined learning needs.
- Be an advocate for students to support them accessing learning opportunities that meet their individual needs – involving a range of other professionals, patients, clients and carers.
- Priorities work to accommodate support of students within their practice roles.
- Provide feedback about the effectiveness of learning and assessment in practice.

*stage 2 outcomes NMC (2008) pp 20*

If you require any further information, please contact your Practice Placement Facilitator.

6. **Sign-Off Mentor**

**Student Nurses**
For student nurses who commence their nursing course from September 2007, a sign-off mentor, who has met additional criteria, must make the final assessment of practice (final placement of the programme) and confirm to the NMC that the required proficiencies for the entry to the register have been achieved.

Only NMC sign-off mentors may confirm overall achievement of proficiency that demonstrates a student’s fitness to practice. The sign-off mentor will use other evidence including the student ongoing achievement record (PPDF) in addition to achievements on the current placement to determine achievement of proficiencies.

**Midwifery Students**

All midwife mentors from September 2007 must be a sign-off mentor.

Please note that as per NMC Circular 09/2008, The Faculty of Health and Life Sciences have migrated those who were qualified as mentors pre-2007, on to the Practitioner system as sign off mentors.

**7. Additional Criteria required to be a sign-off mentor**

In addition to fulfilling the criteria roles and responsibilities of a mentor, a sign-off mentor must;

- 7.1 Be on the same part or sub part of the register as that which the student is intending to enter.
- 7.2 Identified on the Live Register of Mentors as a sign-off mentor.
- 7.3 Have clinical currency and capability in the field of practice in which the student is being assessed
- 7.4 Meet the NMC requirements to remain on the live register of mentors
- 7.5 Have been supervised on at least 3 occasions for signing off proficiency by an existing sign-off mentor
- 7.6 Have a working knowledge of current programme requirements, practice assessment strategies and relevant changes in education and practice for the student they are assessing
- 7.7 An understanding of the NMC registration requirements and the contribution they make to meeting these requirements.
- 7.8 An in-depth understanding of their accountability to the NMC for the decision they make to pass or fail a student when assessing proficiency requirements at the end of a programme.

**7. Further Advice and Information**

Further advice and information on any aspect of this policy can be obtained by contacting the relevant Practice Placement Facilitator. Contact details for all Practice Placement Facilitators are available via the Placements and Partnerships website at [www.northumbria.ac.uk/hcesplacements](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/hcesplacements).

**References**


A useful question and answer page may be accessed at [http://standards.nmc-uk.org/Documents/nmcSPNEfaqs.pdf](http://standards.nmc-uk.org/Documents/nmcSPNEfaqs.pdf)
S:\HCES Placements\Policies & Procedures\RATIFIED\Mentor Policy for all Nursing & Midwifery Students.doc

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**The Mentor Journey**

**Pre September 2007**
- Mentor status recorded on the mentor register
- Complete mapping exercise against current qualifications and experience
- Access to CPD to meet outstanding outcomes
- Successfully achieves mentor standard
- Outstanding outcomes identified

**Post September 2007**
- Mentor status recorded on the mentor register
- Experience log and annual mentor updates
- Annual Mentor update
- Triennial Review
- Requirements met
- Requirements not met

**Post September 2007 (continued)**
- Annotated as mentor and sign-off mentor on the mentor register
- Successful completion of Facilitating Learning & Assessment in Practice Module
- Mentor Experience log, working toward sign-off status
- Active on Mentor Register

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