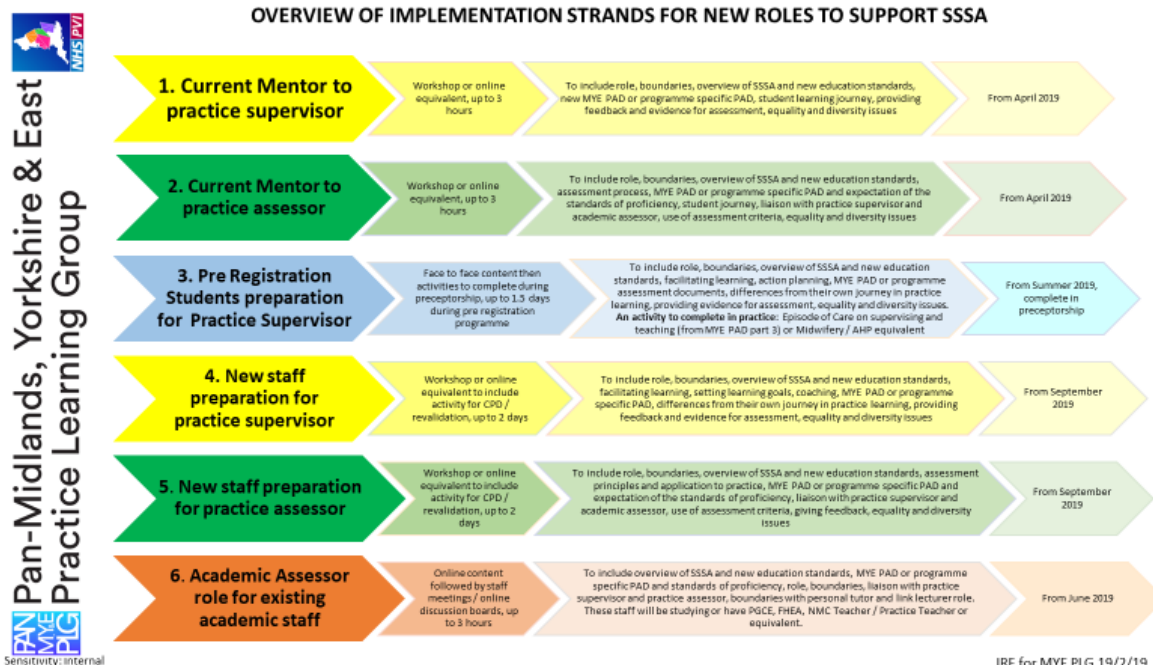


FAQ re transition for existing mentors and preparation of non- mentors to new NMC standards for student support and assessment (SSSA)

Q How many hours do mentors get given to transition to PS/PA? And how long do we suggest is given to staff who have never been a mentor, to become new PS or PA?

A. Guidance below from NMC regarding how long transition or preparation may take, this is included in current area's training budget. Time can be negotiated directly with line manager, or where possible, and with agreement done within usual working hours.



Q How long after becoming a supervisor can you undertake assessor preparation?

A. NMC and NES do not specify a time as this will depend on the individual practitioner's experience and confidence and the service areas requirements and should be discussed with line manager.

Q. If only supporting students doing specialist courses do you need to complete the transition/preparation?

A. NMC standards say '6.7 - students studying for an NMC approved post-registration qualification are assigned to practice and academic assessors in accordance with relevant programme standards' therefore all registered staff supporting students should transition or prepare to become practice supervisor +/- practice assessor.

Q. Do line managers (if they are a registered member of staff) need to transition when they never have students?

*A. NMC standards say
'1.11 - All nurses, midwives and nursing associates contribute to practice learning in accordance with The Code. And
All NMC registered nurses, midwives and nursing associates are capable of supervising students, serving as role models for safe and effective practice.
Therefore they should complete transition/preparation.*

Q. How do line managers know staff have done enough to transition or prepare?

A. The document that staff complete is a self-assessment document and is used for individual staff to identify their own areas for development. The line manager should have a discussion with them to ensure their self assessment document accurately reflects their requirements for additional learning but different staff members will have different needs and requirements.

Q. How long does the practice assessor need to spend with the student to make an assessment decision, do they actually need to work with the student?

A. NMC standards say that

'there are sufficient opportunities for the practice assessor to periodically observe the student across environments in order to inform decisions for assessment and progression and

7.1 practice assessors conduct assessments to confirm student achievement of proficiencies and programme outcomes for practice learning'

This will vary dependant on student's stage of progress and ability

Q. How will the academic assessor be involved how will they link with practice, will they be in touch for every student?

A. The NMC state

'we do not specify how the practice and academic assessor communicate, only that it should be timely and allow for an evidenced based recommendation on progression to be made.'

In most cases communication will be via the PAD (student's electronic record) but this is something that will need to be arranged between the PA/AA. In the case of a student requiring an action plan to support them to pass their placement the academic assessor and PEF should be consulted at an early stage, as is the case at present.

Q. What is practice teacher's role for DN trainees regarding PS/PA?

A. As you will see from this document *NMC Standards for supervision and assessment and national framework for practice supervisors, practice assessors and academic assessors within Scotland* the NMC have left it fairly open as to who can assess/supervise students including DN Trainees. Page 8 on the following handbook explains it simply: *https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/4354713/handbook_supervisor_and_assessor.pdf*

For DN Trainees (like all students), they must have a Practice Assessor and Practice Supervisor assigned to them. The Practice Assessor must be on the same part of the register (ie. SPDN) but it does not stipulate this for the Practice Supervisor.

Q. As the NES units are not interactive (Sept 2020) should staff hold off completing them in case they have to redo them again once they become interactive?

A. This will be dependent on the needs of the service area in which they work regarding urgency of requirement for practice supervisor and the availability for training and development. It should be discussed between staff member and line manager. When the units become interactive it is unlikely you will be asked to re-do them, however we do recommend periodically checking the future nurse/midwife programme information page for updates and additional resources and material

Q. If staff have been a mentor but not a sign off mentor is it ok to transition to the practice assessor as well as practice supervisor

A. The NES National Framework states:

'The knowledge, skills and experience of nurses and midwives who have previously undertaken the roles of mentor, sign-off mentor, practice teacher and teacher WILL be directly transferable to the new NMC roles.'

Q. I have never been a sign off mentor so is it ok if only take on the practice supervisor role until I become more confident to be an assessor as well?

A. This will be dependant on the needs of the service area in which they work regarding urgency of requirement for practice assessors. It should be discussed between staff member and lie manager. New Practice assessors should be supported in their role by more experienced staff, line managers as well as Academic assessor and PEF.

Q. How much time does a PS and PA spend with a student?

A. Practice Supervisors - NMC standards state that

'2.5 - there is sufficient coordination and continuity of support and supervision of students to ensure safe and effective learning experiences

What is 'sufficient' coordination and continuity of practice supervision will change depending on the circumstances. '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.

A decision on what's appropriate in what circumstances can be reached by taking into account the student's learning outcomes, confidence, competence and increasing independence, and any equality and diversity considerations alongside an understanding of the knowledge, skills and availability of practice supervisors.

When supervising students practice supervisors should decide what level of continuity is appropriate for each individual student at each point in their learning or programme.'

Practice assessors – NMC standards state that

'They must have sufficient opportunities to observe the student across environments in order to inform their decisions.'

It is a requirement for the practice assessor to observe the student when making an assessment of their practice learning. We do not specify when or how this must happen, only that it must form part of the overall assessment, and evidence base.'

NES National Framework also say:

'Throughout the practice placement or series of practice placements – the practice assessor, where possible, creates opportunities to observe the student, such as during handovers, team meetings and / or when providing nursing or midwifery care and seeks feedback from practice supervisors.'

Towards the end of the practice placement - the practice assessor draws on evidence from other sources (practice supervisors, patients, student reflections and other colleagues) and their own observations to undertake a fair and objective assessment of the student's conduct, proficiency and achievement of their learning outcomes and records this in the PAD.

If there is a cause for concern with the students conduct or performance, the practice assessor will seek feedback from other practice supervisors, contact and provide feedback to the academic assessor, and where required the PEF / CHEF for support.

There is no minimum/maximum time set by the NMC as this will vary with each student and PS/PA

Q. How many students can a PS and PA support?

A. *This will depend on the needs of the area, the NMC do not state a maximum number of students that a practice supervisor or assessor can support. However, each student should have a named practice supervisor and a named practice assessor, and they should not be the same person.*

Q. How do I keep myself up to date as a PS and PA?

A. *NMC standards state:*

'The practice assessor also has a responsibility to proactively develop and remain 'up to date' with their own professional practice, and to think about how their previous experience may enable them to perform in this role. For nurses, midwives and nursing associates who are practice assessors this can mean, amongst other things, reflecting on their role in student learning and assessment when they revalidate. This may also be true for those practice assessors who are from another regulated profession, such as pharmacists. Professionals who are not registered with us may want to seek advice from their professional body on this.'

NES National framework says:

'Professional development of practice assessors should include the first two bullet points and may include a selection or all of the remaining, depending upon prior knowledge and experience:-

- *Effective practice learning should become a focus for discussion within annual appraisal and revalidation.*
- *Reflection on student assessment, feedback from students, practice supervisors or academic assessors and continuing professional development hours focusing on the practice assessor role may form part of the evidence for NMC revalidation.*
- *Undertake continuing professional development activities related to equality and diversity, reasonable adjustments in practice placements, unconscious or implicit bias, providing feedback about poor performance and raising a cause for concern about a student's conduct or competence.*
- *Undertake development activities related to methods of competence assessment, resilience and strategies for responding to students who challenge assessment decisions, assessment of borderline and underperforming students, providing feedback about performance and HEI fitness to practice processes.*
- *Opportunity to explore / discuss practice related and individual feedback received from students, practice supervisors, academic assessors and PEFs or CHEFs.*
- *Undertake development opportunities related to self-assessment, critical reasoning and reflection as educational tools.*
- *Building on the practice assessor role regarding adult learning theories, teaching and skills- based aspects of the role – teaching, supervising, communication, feedback AND wider professional development in relation to teaching and learning, utilising relevant educational resources.*

- *Enhancing knowledge of the academic environment, including curriculum content, delivery and assessment methodologies and the research and science of higher education.*

Q. If staff are an assessor does this automatically make them a supervisor?

(Previous mentors)

A. Yes- if previous mentor/sign off mentor or practice teacher staff will transition to become both a practice supervisor and practice assessor

Q. Who do I need to send my completed self assessment form too?

A. Your completed self assessment document should be discussed with your line manager, who will then update on e-roster (if available).

Q. Can I become a practice assessor at the same time as a practice supervisor (non mentors)?

A. NMC and NES do not specify a time that you are a practice supervisor before becoming a practice assessor as this will depend on the individual practitioner's experience and confidence and the service areas requirements and should follow discussion between staff member and line manager. However NES say that to be a practice assessor you must be a registered nurse or midwife and

have completed preparation for the role and have prior experience as a practice supervisor,

Q. Line managers/charge nurses/midwives have asked what they need do to support staff

A. SCN Guidance link below:

<http://intranet.lothian.scot.nhs.uk/HR/About/ourservices/EducationandEmployeeDevelopment/staffdevelopment/nursing/Documents/SCN%20SCM%20Guidance%20SSSA%20Transition.docx>

References and resources

Preparation for Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors (NES, 2020)

Link:

https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/oxucjfrc/nesd1240_introduction_v3.pdf

Standards for student supervision and assessment (NMC, 2018)

Link: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/education-standards/student-supervision-assessment.pdf>

NES webpage Covid 19 – supervision and assessment (nursing and midwifery)

Link: <https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/covid-19-supervision-and-assessment-nursing-and-midwifery/>

A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR PRACTICE SUPERVISORS, PRACTICE ASSESSORS AND ACADEMIC ASSESSORS IN SCOTLAND (NES 2019)

Link:

https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/fxdd4d01/scottish_approach_to_student_supervision_and_assessment_interactive.pdf

Practice Learning Handbook: for Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors (NES, 2019)

Link:

https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/f3ajj03l/handbook_supervisor_and_assessor.pdf