

# Midwifery SSSA Preparation Handbook



Realising Professionalism: Standards for education & training – Part 2:  
Standards for student supervision & assessment (SSSA) (NMC 2018)

# Contents

Introduction	3
Key Roles & Responsibilities	4
Practice Nominated Person (PNP) Roles & Responsibilities	5
Student Responsibilities	5
Student supervision & assessment- an overview	6
Preparation and on-going support for Practice Supervisors	
Preparation and on-going support for Practice Assessors	
Preparation and on-going support for Academic Assessors	
Reference List	10

# Introduction

The Nursing & Midwifery council (NMC) has introduced new Standards for Education entitled 'NMC Realising professionalism: Standards for education & training' (NMC 2018). These replace the 2008 Standards for Learning & Assessment in Practice (SLAiP) and move away from the current arrangements for 1:1 mentor support & assessment requirements of students. (Health Education England 2018). The NMC recognises that traditional methods of supervision has been labour intensive (NMC 2018), initiating a move towards alternative approaches to supervision & assessment.

The NMC Standards for Student Supervision & Assessment (SSSA) set out expectations for the learning, support and supervision of students in the practice environment (2018). The key principles are:

- Effective practice learning - All students are provided with safe, effective and inclusive learning experiences
- Supervision of students – Practice supervision enables students to learn and safely achieve proficiency and autonomy in their professional role
- Assessment of students & confirmation of proficiency – Student assessments are evidence based, robust and objective

This document aims to summarise the principles of the NMC (2018) Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment and ensure clarity of the roles and responsibilities of Practice Supervisors (PS), Practice Assessors (PA) & Academic Assessors (AA); inclusive of the transition requirements and operational application of the NMC Standards. A cohesive and standardised approach to supervising and assessing students in practice will ensure the safety of women, babies and their families whilst supporting students to develop as midwives.

The requisite transition learning will contribute to your on going professional development and will form part of your NMC Revalidation supporting evidence.

# Key Roles & Responsibilities

## Practice Supervisors

All NMC registered nurses, midwives and nursing associates are capable of supervising students, serving as role models for safe and effective practice. Students may be supervised by other registered health and social care professionals. Practice supervision enables students to learn and safely achieve proficiency and autonomy in their professional role (NMC, 2018).

Practice Supervisors – ‘support and supervise students, providing feedback on their progress towards and achievement of, proficiencies and skills (NMC, 2018).

## Practice Assessors

All students on an NMC approved programme are assigned to a nominated Practice Assessor for a series of practice placements, in line with local and national policies.

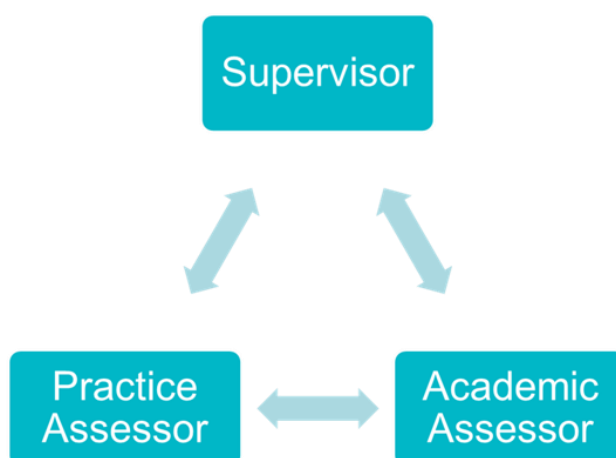
Practice Assessors conduct assessments to confirm student achievement of proficiencies and programme outcomes for practice learning. Practice Assessors ensure assessment decisions are informed by feedback sought and received from practice supervisors and make and record objective, evidenced-based assessments on conduct, proficiency and achievement, drawing on student records, direct observations, student self-reflection, and other resources (NMC, 2018)

## Academic Assessors

Each student has a nominated Academic Assessor who works in partnership with the nominated Practice Assessor to evaluate and recommend the student for progression for each part of the programme, in line with programme standards and local and national policies.

Academic Assessors collate and confirm student achievement of proficiencies and programme outcomes in the academic environment for each part of the programme. Academic Assessors make and record objective, evidence based decisions on conduct, proficiency and achievement, and recommendations for progression, drawing on student records and other resources.

All students will be assigned a different academic assessor for each part of the education programme’ (NMC, 2018)



## Practice Nominated Person (PNP) Role and Responsibilities

The Practice Nominated Person (PNP) is responsible for co-ordinating student placements and ensuring suitable learning environments and opportunities are provided appropriate to the student's stage in training. The PNP works in partnership with the Approved Educational Institution (AEI) to ensure students are appropriately placed. The PNP is known as a Practice Development Midwife (PDM) in some NHS trusts.

The PNP is responsible for preparing the annual audit identifying key learning opportunities for the area and suggestions for wider placement experiences, for example key contact details for multi professional / agency colleagues who could support learning opportunities whilst a student is allocated to the placement area. In addition, the PNP is responsible for preparing student off duty for the placement duration ensuring the ratio of Practice Supervisors to students is appropriate per shift / working hours and for ensuring Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors named to support students have received adequate preparation and ongoing support.

## Student responsibilities

Students have a responsibility to make contact with their Practice Assessor, arrange the initial meeting and review meetings and make contact with placement and attend according to the off duty. Students should work with a variety of Practice Supervisors and be proactive in maintaining adequate records of learning and evidence for achievement in the MORA document. Students will be required to access ARC for details of their practice placements and make their MORA available to the Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessor at all times.

Students are made aware of further placement preparation requirements in the related practice module.

## Supervision & Assessment in Practice – an overview

Students will be in contact with people throughout their education and it's important that they learn in a safe and effective way. Every Practice Assessor, Practice Supervisor, PNP and Academic Assessor working with students, has a responsibility in ensuring that students are provided with safe, effective and inclusive learning experiences.

UWE midwifery supervision and assessment processes comply with the NMC standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (2018) and NMC Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education (2019). Students, Practice Supervisors, Practice Assessors and Academic Assessors are supported to work together through adequate preparation and training and effective organisation and governance of practice supervision and assessment processes. UWE, in partnership with NHS trusts, ensures there are suitable and clear systems, processes, resources and individuals in place to ensure safe and effective coordination of learning within practice learning environments.

Figure 1. summarises the supervision, assessment and learning process for UWE midwifery students over the course of each academic year/part of the programme. At the start of the academic year, students are informed of the named Academic Assessor and Practice Assessor. Both the Practice Assessor and Academic Assessor will oversee learning progression through a series of placements over the course of the academic year and meet with the student at regular intervals. A variety of Practice Supervisors will work with students in placement areas, observing and documenting achievement of proficiencies and professional behaviour feeding back to the Academic Assessor and Practice Assessor who jointly make a decision about the student progression.

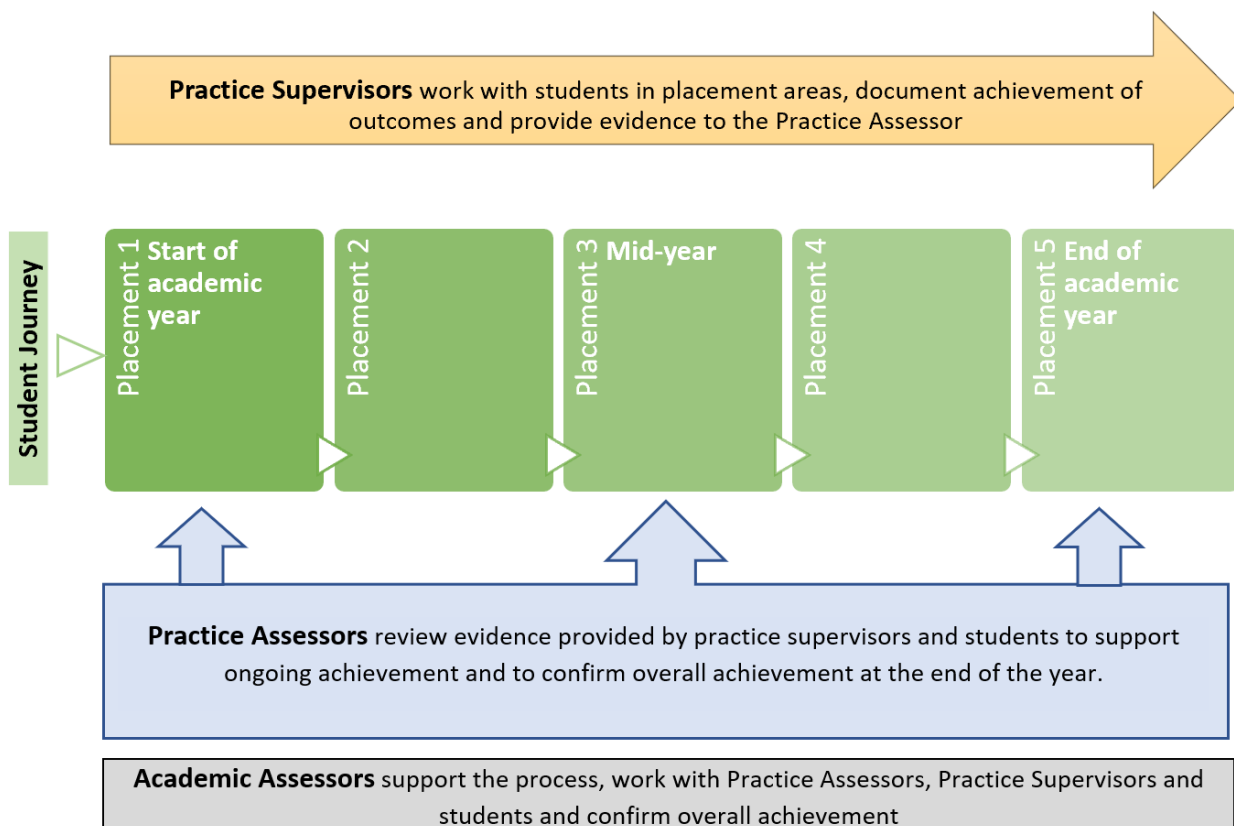


Figure 1.

# Preparation and on-going support for Practice Supervisors

## Preparing to supervise students

All NMC registered nurses, midwives and nursing associates are capable of supervising students and serving as role models for safe and effective practice. Students may also be supervised by other registered health and social care professionals (NMC, 2018). All students in practice must be supervised and practice supervision enables students to learn and safely achieve proficiency and autonomy in their professional role. As a professional, you have a responsibility to adequately prepare yourself to support students as a Practice Supervisor.

The NMC stipulate that Practice Supervisors need to have an understanding of the proficiencies and programme outcomes they are supporting students to achieve

AND

Practice supervisors should be supported to prepare, reflect and develop during the supervision of students.

Before you supervise a student, UWE require you read the Standards of proficiency for midwives (NMC, 2019) and the Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (NMC, 2018) available online at, <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/standards-for-midwives/> and read this handbook.

In addition to the requirements, it is recommended that you attend an annual midwifery Practice Supervisor and Practice Assessor update prior to supervising a student. Details about scheduled opportunities for annual midwifery updates can be obtained from your PDM/PNP. The updates provide information about keeping up to date with changes to supervision and ongoing professional development and help you to reflect on supervision.

Practice Supervisors are encouraged to communicate with a student's named Practice Assessor before or during supervision to prepare to supervise, make contributions to the students learning and assessment and reflect on supervision. You may wish to formalise a written reflection for your NMC revalidation following student supervision.

## Observing and documenting student progress- Practice Supervisors

As a practice Supervisor, you will document and communicate student progression in skills, knowledge and professional behaviour to the Practice Assessor through the student electronic Midwifery Ongoing Record of Achievement (MORA). You will be required to login to the student MORA and record your observations and achievement of proficiencies. This directly feeds into feedback and progression decisions at the mid-year tripartite review and holistic end of year summative assessment. It is advisable that you take the time to thoroughly read the guidance contained in the MORA. This will provide a clear understanding of your responsibilities in completing documentation when supervising students in practice. The MORA is an essential tool for communication between yourself, the Practice Assessor and Academic Assessor.

## Responding to concerns about student conduct or progress- Practice Supervisors

If you have a concern about a student's conduct or progression, you are expected to appropriately raise the concern. In the first instance, and in most cases, it is appropriate to raise concerns directly with the student and the Practice Assessor, providing clear documentation of concerns within the MORA. The Practice Assessor usually assumes responsibility for contacting the Academic Assessor to support the student further through a progression plan, if necessary. However, depending on the nature and/or severity of the concern you may raise concerns directly with the Academic Assessor, PDM/PNP and the PALM. Any concerns you raise will be supported and taken seriously. You can expect an appropriate response from the Practice Assessor and Academic Assessor, which is proportionate and supportive. A plan will be made, or action taken depending on the individual circumstance or concern and in line with NMC standards and UWE process.

## Preparation and on-going support for Practice Assessors

All students on an NMC approved programme are assigned to a nominated practice assessor for a series of practice placements. Practice Assessors conduct assessments to confirm student achievement of proficiencies and programme outcomes for practice learning and decisions are informed by feedback sought and received from Practice Supervisors. Practice Assessors must have sufficient opportunities to periodically observe the student across environments and sufficient opportunities to gather and coordinate feedback from Practice Supervisors, in order to inform decisions for assessment and progression. Decisions for assessment and progression will be jointly made between the Practice Assessor and Academic Assessor. The Practice Assessor and Academic Assessor will meet at intervals through the academic year to provide formative and summative feedback and to evaluate and recommend the student for progression.

Practice Assessors are not simultaneously Practice Supervisors and Academic Assessors. All Practice Assessors are NMC registered midwives. PNP/PDM and the Lead Midwife for Education maintain records to ensure an individual does not hold joint roles and are NMC registered midwives.

### Preparation and ongoing support for Practice Assessors

Practice Assessors play a key role in ensuring assessments are evidence based, robust and objective. Practice Assessors and Academic Assessors ensure assessments and confirmation of proficiency are based on an understanding of student achievements across theory and practice. UWE supports two pathways to enable midwives to become Practice Assessors. The NMC stipulate that Practice Assessors must undertake preparation or evidence prior learning and experience that enables them to demonstrate achievement of the following minimum outcomes:

- interpersonal communication skills, relevant to student learning and assessment
- conducting objective, evidence based assessments of students
- providing constructive feedback to facilitate professional development in others, and
- knowledge of the assessment process and their role within it

**Pathway 1** An NMC registered midwife may become a Practice Assessor by reading the Standards of proficiency for midwives (NMC, 2019) and the Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (NMC,



2018) available online at, <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/standards-for-midwives/> The midwife must also complete the self-declaration and pass it on to the PDM/PNP who maintains the database of Practice Assessors.

OR

**Pathway 2** An NMC registered midwife may become a Practice Assessor by completing the 6-hour online SSSA Practice Assessor training package <https://sway.office.com/QVXHvmSrnT7Sdv6p>, which meets the minimum outcomes above. The midwife must also read the Standards of proficiency for midwives (NMC, 2019) and the Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (NMC, 2018) available online at, <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/standards-for-midwives/> and complete the self-declaration passing the completed declaration on to the PDM/PNP who maintains the database of Practice Assessors.

In addition to the above, all Practice Assessors are encouraged to attend an annual midwifery Practice Supervisor and Practice Assessor update. Details about scheduled opportunities for annual midwifery updates are held and communicated by the PDM/PNP and Academic Assessor. The updates provide information about keeping up to date with changes to supervision, provide support for ongoing professional development and provide opportunity for reflection.

## Preparation and on-going support for Academic Assessors

Academic Assessors support, collate and confirm student achievement of proficiencies and programme outcomes in the academic environment for each part of the UWE midwifery programme. It is essential Academic Assessors have an understanding of the student's learning and achievement in practice and work in communication and collaboration with Practice Assessors to evaluate and recommend student progression.

The Academic Assessor will review the student's MORA when completed by the Practice Assessor, to determine if the student meets the requirements for progression in each part of the programme. Academic Assessors will review; Practice Episode Records, achievement of proficiencies, assessment of professional behaviours, practice hours, feedback from service users, Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors and performance descriptors to verify suitability for student progression. To support student progression, the Academic Assessor is responsible for ensuring that processes relating to confirmation of eligibility for progression at the AEI are followed. Academic Assessors are expected to appropriately raise and respond to concerns regarding student conduct, competence and achievement, and are supported in doing so.

The NMC (2018) requires Approved Education Institutes to assign a different nominated Academic Assessor for each part of the education programme. At UWE, Academic Assessors are assigned to each student for either, years 1 and 3 combined, or year 2 only. Academic Assessors must not simultaneously be the Practice Assessor and Practice Supervisor for the same student and must be NMC registered midwives. In this respect, the Lead Midwife for Education holds a database ensuring all requirements are met.

## Preparation for Academic Assessors

Approved Education Institutes, in partnership with practice placements, are required to provide ongoing support and preparation for Academic Assessors. All Academic Assessors must receive support to ensure they demonstrate that they have achieved the following minimum outcomes:

- interpersonal communication skills, relevant to student learning and assessment
- conducting objective, evidence based assessments of students
- providing constructive feedback to facilitate professional development in others, and
- knowledge of the assessment process and their role within it

Many Academic Assessors at UWE are experienced NMC Teachers with current knowledge and expertise in supporting learning and teaching. Nevertheless, UWE require Academic Assessors to undertake an initial preparation workshop and annual update workshops, which support a learning culture and encourage teachers to continually and proactively develop their professional practice and knowledge in order to fulfil their role. The preparation workshop covers the four main themes and provides additional opportunities for personal and professional reflection. Mandatory pre-reading materials ensure an understanding of the proficiencies and programme outcomes that the student they confirm is aiming to achieve. Following completion of the Academic Assessor preparation workshop, Academic Assessors are required to complete a self-declaration form and submit a copy to the Lead Midwife for Education who maintains a database of Academic Assessors.

## Ongoing support for Academic Assessors

Ongoing and continual development of professional practice is supported through annual appraisal meetings with the Lead Midwife for Education and annual Academic Assessor updates. Academic Assessors are encouraged to continually develop their professional practice. All Academic Assessors are either working towards or hold qualifications in Professional and Higher Education teaching and learning.

All members of the midwifery teaching team are able to utilise their five weeks of scholarly activity to update knowledge and skills or undertake educational /research-based activities.

Midwifery Academic Assessors have access to institutional learning resources as well as ongoing professional development that includes opportunities for group reflection on practice. Academic Assessors who are new to the university or unfamiliar with the MORA document will be provided with additional learning opportunities for navigation and using the MORA document effectively in collaboration with students and Practice Assessors.

## References

[Nursing & Midwifery Council](#) (2018) Realising Professionalism: Standards for education & training, NMC: London

Nursing & Midwifery Council (2019) Standards of Proficiency for Midwives, NMC: London  
<https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/standards-for-midwives/>

Midwifery SSSA Practice Assessor eLearning Training Package:  
<https://sway.office.com/QVXHvmSrnT7Sdv6p>