Guide for Mentors and Practice Teachers: Community Specialist Practice Programme

Preparation, Continuing Professional Development & Support

2014 - 2015
Contents:

Preparation of Practice Teachers/Mentors of CSP students ........................................... 3
2. University Responsibilities in Supporting Mentors/Practice Teachers: ....................... 4
3. Practice Placement Provider Responsibilities: .......................................................... 5
4. Responsibilities of Mentors and Practice Teachers of CSP students: ....................... 5
5. Dealing with Problematic Situations ......................................................................... 6
6. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Mentors/Practice Teachers .......... 7
7. Standards Framework - The Domains ...................................................................... 8
Producing the Evidence .................................................................................................... 8
Appendix 1: Providing evidence against the standards - templates .................................... 1
Appendix 2: Record of Student Learners ........................................................................ 8
Appendix 3: Annual Updates .......................................................................................... 9
Appendix 4: Annual Updating Activity template .............................................................. 10
Appendix 5: Process for Triennial Review ...................................................................... 11
Appendix 6: Triennial Review Record ............................................................................ 12
Appendix 7: University of Bolton CSP programme – notes on practice supervision ....... 13
1. **Introduction & Background**

Welcome to the University. This guide is intended for practice teachers and mentors who support students on the Specialist Community Healthcare Programme. This guidance should be read in conjunction with:


For further information or queries regarding the guidance provided within this document please contact:

Jane Lovatt  
Programme Lead  
Practice Teacher/Teacher (NMC) programmes  
Tel: 01204 903727  
Email: J.Lovatt@bolton.ac.uk

Nyree Kendall  
Programme Lead  
SCHCN Programme  
Tel: 01204 903776  
Email: N.Kendall@bolton.ac.uk

Trish Houghton  
Programme Lead  
Multi-Professional Support of Learning and Assessment in Practice  
Tel: 01204 903756  
Email: T.Houghton@bolton.ac.uk

**Preparation of Practice Teachers/Mentors of CSP students**

Initial preparation for the role involves undertaking either a mentorship programme¹ or a Practice Teacher programme. The NMC do not require those supervising and assessing students on Specialist Qualification Programme (SQP) to be practice teachers however acknowledge that 'where commissioners of SPQ programmes may require the involvement of practice teachers this should continue e.g. for district nursing’ (NMC 2008; p.8)

The NMC state:

> ‘From September 2007 students on NMC approved specialist practice programmes leading to a recordable qualification on the nurses’ part of the register must be supported and assessed by sign-off mentors who have met additional criteria (paragraph 2.1.3), or practice teachers where this is a requirement by commissioners. The sign-off mentor must make the final assessment of practice and confirm that the required proficiencies for recording a specialist practice qualification have been achieved’ (NMC, 2008; p.3)

See section 2.1.3 ‘Criteria for a sign-off mentor’ of the NMC standards document for detailed guidance on achieving sign-off. You will see this requires completing 3 supervised sign-offs ‘which can occur with a student on any NMC approved programme’ (NMC, 2008: p.7).

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¹ Now called Multi-Professional Support of Learning and Assessment in Practice
Regardless of whether those supervising specialist community practice nurse (CSP) students have undertaken an NMC approved practice teacher or a mentorship programme they will of course be required to have:

- A working knowledge of current programme requirements, practice assessment strategies and relevant changes in education and practice for the student they are assessing.
- An in-depth understanding of the NMC registration requirements and the contribution they make to the achievement of requirements
- An in-depth understanding of their accountability to the NMC for the decision they must make to pass or fail a student when assessing proficiency requirements at the end of a programme

Note: at the University of Bolton we expect that those new to supervising and assessing students on the Specialist Community Practice (District Nursing/Practice Nursing Programme), regardless of whether they are already a sign-off mentor or not, attend our frequent updates and receive supervision for the first sign-off of a CSP student.

Students on the above programme must be allocated to supervised and assessed by a sign-off mentor or sign-off practice teacher (PT). Those practitioners who are not on the register as a sign-off mentor will be required to meet all the sign-off criteria as indicated in the aforementioned NMC (2008) standards whilst under supervision. The supervisor must be on the same part of the register and in the same area of practice. This ‘overseeing’ or supervising mentor/PT is accountable for assessment and confirming overall proficiency (or not) at the end of the students’ placement.

Supervision must be evidenced, and regular and rigorous enough so as to ensure:

That the supervisor is able to make safe judgements on
a) the students’ achievement of standards of proficiency for the programme, including the V100 element, through a variety of means of evidence including direct observation and witness testimony; and
b) the trainee mentor’s proficiency in assessing and supervising the student.

2. University Responsibilities in Supporting Mentors/Practice Teachers:

The university facilitates a range of learning and support opportunities for mentors/practice teachers of their CSP programmes in the form of the following:

- A range of CPD provision
- Electronic resources
- Programme updates and workshops
- Newsletters
- Links with lecturers on the academic programme that includes practice visits
- Additional support for dealing with challenging situations
3. Practice Placement Provider Responsibilities:

- Maintaining an up-to-date local register of current mentors and practice teachers including regularly reviewing the local register and adding or removing names of nurses and midwives as necessary’ (NMC, 2008.p.11)
- Ensuring a support system is in place for trainee mentors and PT’s who have not achieved sign-off
- Managing the triennial review process

(NMC, 2008)

4. Responsibilities of Mentors and Practice Teachers of CSP students:

The functions of the Sign off Practice Teacher/Specialist Practice Mentor in relation to the CSP programme at Bolton are to:

- Work collaboratively with the student to identify their individual learning needs in relation to past learning and the demands of the course.
- Negotiate a programme of learning experiences within the practice setting.
- Ensure the planning of experiences that will prepare the student for the full range of roles and competencies that they will be expected to fulfil upon completion of the programme.
- Ensure that the student’s time in practice is supernumerary and is educationally driven.
- Provide protected learning time to ensure that modular learning outcomes are achieved in practice.
- Facilitate learning through reflection in and on action in the practice setting.
- Provide a convincing role model.
- Monitor and support progress towards required levels of competence and the achievement of learning outcomes of modules undertaken at any point in the course;
- Engage in continuous formative and eventual summative assessment of the student’s competence, including the fostering of self-evaluation.
- Alert the Programme Leader to any concerns regarding progress or inadequacy in the experience available.

Additionally we expect mentors/practice teachers will:

- Have in place an explicit process for meetings for reflection and assessment of practice
- Be available to the student for advice and support throughout the programme
- Attend meetings with the link lecturer and the student on at least three occasions during the one year programme (normally at least once per term)
- Maintain documentary evidence of supervision processes and ongoing assessment in order to make transparent valid and reliable judgements about fitness to practice
5. Dealing with Problematic Situations

Problematic and challenging situations involving CSP students will be dealt with through the protocol for that particular programme and the mentor/practice teacher must refer to this in those cases. This can be found in Appendix 1: ‘Protocol for Raising Matters of Concern in Community Practice’ of the Community Specialist Practice Programme Handbook.

Where difficulties are experienced during the support and supervision of trainee mentors/practice teachers in relation to their educational role, or where trainee mentors/practice teachers themselves are identifying problems whilst undertaking the course at the University of Bolton, this is both a practice and a university concern. Most situations can be resolved through liaison and discussion. A tripartite meeting between the trainee mentor, the mentor/supervisor and the tutor is suggested. Mentors and supervisors are urged to speak to the programme tutor to clarify or resolve situations in an attempt to prevent escalation. Link tutors from the university on their practice visits are well placed to support practitioner’s faced with challenging situations in relation to supporting students. Problematic situations that cannot be resolved through these routes may need to be referred to the line manager and where it is felt the situation may impact on the CSP student the Programme Leader for that programme must be informed.

Where difficulties arise regarding a practitioner’s actual clinical and professional practice these must be discussed with the relevant line manager. All University of Bolton students are subject to the University Fitness to Practice policy and procedures:

http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Students/PoliciesProceduresRegulations/AllStudents/Documents/FitnesstoPracticeProcedureJuly2011.pdf

Remember tutors at the University are here to help and will be happy to support the development of solutions that lead to positive outcomes for all our students/course members.

Also the following process should be referred to when dealing with incidents involving students in the practice placement:

6. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Mentors/Practice Teachers.

The NMC requires all mentors and practice teachers to maintain and develop their knowledge, skills and competence in order to be maintained on the local register (see page NMC Standards (2008, p.12).

- Those supporting students on the CSP programme will undertake a preparation programme if they have not already done so. The placement provider/educational lead will be notified on successful completion.

- Each mentor/practice teacher will provide evidence of how they continue to meet all eight of the SLAiP standards over a three year period (in preparation for the triennial review).

- The trust educational lead (or equivalent) of the prospective mentor/practice teacher is responsible for maintaining the register and verifying that the practitioner may be included on the local register.

- All mentors/practice teachers must provide evidence of attendance at annual updates for the students’ programme of learning. Some face-to-face activity must take place as indicated in the bullet point below.

- Practitioners should have the opportunity to discuss issues relating to supervision, assessment of competence and fitness for safe and effective practice.

- Where mentors and practice teachers are signing off students for entry to the register they must demonstrate they meet the additional criteria for ‘sign-off’ mentors (NMC, 2008, pp. 21-22). Sign-off status must be annotated on the register only when sign-off criteria are met in full.

- Evidence must be included for their professional profile and made available if required during an NMC visit to the practice placement.

- The University will require verification that these processes have taken place as agreed with placement providers.
7. Standards Framework - The Domains

There are eight domains in the standards framework. Within these, outcomes have been identified for mentors, practice teachers and teachers so that there is clear accountability for making decisions that lead to entry to the register. The eight domains are:

1. Establishing effective working relationships
2. Facilitation of learning
3. Assessment and accountability
4. Evaluation of learning
5. Creating an environment for learning
6. Context of practice
7. Evidence-based practice
8. Leadership

Producing the Evidence

Practitioners will themselves decide how best to gather and present their evidence. It is important to note however that mentors/practice teachers need to demonstrate currency in both their clinical and their educational role. The evidence can then be reflected upon, discussed and reviewed with the appropriate line manager and then a summary of this evidence and verification of its' existence provided in the attached documentation. The attached documentation takes each of the 8 standards in turn, stating what the practitioner must demonstrate, and provides examples of evidence. These are of course examples and there may be other forms of evidence that are considered more appropriate.

Note: the standards reproduced below are the Practice Teacher Standards. This is because whilst those mentoring Community Specialist Practice Students may be classed as mentors and have completed mentor preparation, their role will usually involve the same activities and responsibilities of practice teachers.
Appendix 1: Providing evidence against the standards - templates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD 1: Establishing effective working relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Have effective professional and interprofessional working relationships to support learning for entry to the register and education at a level above initial registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be able to support students moving into specific areas of practice or a level of practice beyond initial registration identifying their individual needs in moving to a different level of practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support mentors and other professionals in their roles to support learning across practice and academic learning environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List the specific activities you have undertaken and the evidence which you have collected in relation to this standard(s).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of evidence may include:
• Timetables and/or induction plans and processes for learners
  • Evidence of working with other professionals (notes and minutes of meetings) for the purpose of developing and supporting learning in practice (liaising/initiating or attending meetings re education in practice/organising multi-professional learning experiences and/or interprofessional learning opportunities)
  • Clinical supervision documentation; tutorial support and appraisal records; preceptorship documentation
  • Supporting others in the team in terms of continuing professional development, including supervising trainee mentors) and initiating and facilitating support systems such as clinical supervision

| STANDARD 2: Facilitation of learning |
- Enable students to relate theory to practice whilst developing critically reflective skills
- Foster professional growth and personal development by use of effective communication and facilitation skills
- Facilitate and develop the ethos of interprofessional learning and working

**Examples of evidence may include:**
- A practice schedule/curriculum/timetable/induction plan
- Teaching plans and learner resources
- Anonymised examples of learning contracts and timetables demonstrating how the mentor/practice teacher encouraged the learner to manage their own learning.
- Learning needs analysis and self assessment
- Scheduled critical reflection/notes from clinical supervision
- Examples of arrangements for alternative practice
- Evidence of teaching a particular theory i.e. signs and symptoms of COPD

**STANDARD 3: Assessment and accountability**

- Set effective professional boundaries whilst creating a dynamic, constructive teacher-learner relationship
- In partnership with other members of the teaching team use knowledge and experience to design and implement assessment frameworks
- Be able to assess practice for registration and also at a level beyond that of initial registration
- Provide constructive feedback to learners and assist them in identifying future learning needs and actions, managing 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 NMC

List the specific activities you have undertaken and the evidence which you have collected in relation to this standard(s).
standards of proficiency in practice for registration at a level beyond initial registration and are capable of safe and effective practice

### Examples of evidence may include of:
- Anonymous formative and summative assessment documentation
- Testimonials from others (colleagues and student) and evidence of meetings working with and supporting others in making assessment decisions
- Completed anonymous assessment tools (i.e. communication skills checklist)
- Reflective account of dealing with a challenging situation or decision making in relation to assessment
- Record of observation of the learner in practice
- Clinical skills assessment pro forma

### STANDARD 4: Evaluation of Learning
- Design evaluation strategies to determine the effectiveness of practice and academic experience accessed by students at both registration level and those in education at a level beyond initial registration
- Collaborate with other members of the teaching team to judge and develop learning, assessment and support appropriate to practice and levels of education
- Collect evidence on the quality of education in practice, and determine how well NMC requirements for standards of proficiency are being achieved

List the specific activities you have undertaken and the evidence which you have collected in relation to this standard(s).

### Examples of evidence may include:
- Questionnaire evaluation and feedback from learners
- Reflections on and feedback from spoke placements
- SWOT analysis
- Reflections on teaching and learning
- Audit documentation
- Feedback from other stakeholders (team members, clients/patients, other NHS personnel)
- Evidence of working with others to increase reliability of assessments
- Participating in local audit and quality assurance processes

**STANDARD 5: Creating an environment for learning**

- Enable learners to access opportunities to learn and work within interprofessional teams
- Initiate the creation of optimum learning environments for students at registration level and for those in education at a level beyond initial registration
- Work closely with others involved in education, in practice and academic settings, to adapt to change and inform curriculum development

List the specific activities you have undertaken and the evidence which you have collected in relation to this standard(s).

**Examples of evidence may include:**

- Development of workbook and learning resources
- Creating student space (work space, timetable of practice learning)
- Student-led sessions and critical reflection sessions
- Practice development and MDT meetings in which knowledge and experience is shared
- Audit documents
- Interprofessional learning sessions
- Plans for alternative experiences (spoke placements)
- Minutes of staff meetings demonstrating reference to developing the learning environment
## STANDARD 6: Context of practice

- Recognise the unique needs of practice and contribute to development of an environment that supports achievement of NMC standards of proficiency
- Set and maintain professional boundaries, whilst at the same time recognising the contribution of the wider interprofessional team and the context of care delivery
- Support learners in exploring new ways of working and the impact this may have on established professional roles

List the specific activities you have undertaken and the evidence which you have collected in relation to this standard(s).

**Examples of evidence may include:**
- SWOT analysis
- Plans for facilitating access to a variety of learning experiences and professional role models
- Reflections/student feedback/testimonials on role modelling professional practice in a multi-professional setting
- Utilising strategies for linking theory/policy and practice such as reflective practice sessions, development of learning contracts
- Clinical supervision
- Student attendance at MDT meetings and plans for shadowing other team members/NHS professionals
- Attendance at serious case reviews
- Facilitation of student involvement in Active Case Management (ACM)

## STANDARD 7: Evidence based practice

- Identify areas for research and practice development based on interpretation of existing evidence
- Use local and national health frameworks to review and identify developmental needs
- Advance their own knowledge and practice in order to develop new

List the specific activities you have undertaken and the evidence which you have collected in relation to this standard(s).
practitioners, at both registration levels and education at a level beyond initial registration, to be able to meet changes in practice roles and care delivery
- Disseminate findings from research and practice development to enhance practice and the quality of learning experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of evidence may include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Research articles, current policy documents etc shared with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Practice development meeting demonstrating current evidence and promoting change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Providing access (for student) to local policies, guidelines and procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Evidence of own involvement in updating policies and guidelines</td>
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<td>- Attendance at appropriate workshops; study days and in-service training</td>
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<td>- Implementation of new evidence-based approaches in practice</td>
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<td>- Reflective practice</td>
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<td>- Attendance at mandatory training and providing support to the organisational development and learning department</td>
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<td>STANDARD 8: Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide practice leadership and expertise in application of knowledge and skills based on evidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Demonstrate the ability to lead education in practice, working across practice and academic settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Manage competing demands of practice and education related to supporting different practice levels of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lead and contribute to evaluation of the effectiveness of learning and assessment in practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List the specific activities you have undertaken and the evidence which you have collected in relation to this standard(s).

**Examples of evidence may include:**

- Reflection/testimonies/minutes of meetings demonstrating implementing change and supporting learners and others in the team to make changes
- Liaising regularly, and attending meetings, with staff and educators in both practice and the educational establishment (emails, minutes)
- Reflections on management of challenging situations within the team/learning environment
- Contribution to revision of policy documents
- Leading staff development/training activities
Appendix 2: Record of Student Learners

In order to meet triennial review requirements you must have supervised a minimum of one student (on any NMC approved programme) within the 3 year period.

Use this sheet to record some of the details of students you have supervised. You may also wish to record pre-registration students supported.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher Education Institution</th>
<th>Year Student Commenced</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Sign-Off Date</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>
Appendix 3: Annual Updates

In order to meet triennial review requirements, you are expected to participate in annual updating of your practice teacher role. The purpose of annual updating is to ensure that you have current knowledge of NMC approved programmes and current Department of Health Policy, are able to discuss the implications of changes to NMC requirements and have the opportunity to discuss issues relating to supervision, assessment of competence and fitness for safe and effective practice.

The annual update can be flexible according to local circumstances and the NMC suggest annual updates can be ongoing throughout the year, rather than consisting of a single annual event. They can incorporate face-to-face meetings which may consist of small, informal group discussions in the practice environment or more structured meetings led by programme providers. The meetings can be supported by other resources and activities such as newsletters, on-line resources, reflective practice, reading, reviewing literature etc.

Evidence to support annual updating activity might include:

- Attendance at local and university run practice teacher update sessions/workshops
- Information sessions from education facilitators and academic staff related to student programmes and documentation
- Conferences or seminars related to teaching and learning, learning and development and practice based education
- Participation in local mentor/practice teacher support forums or education groups
- Face-to-face discussion with education facilitators / academic staff on any aspect of supporting learners
- Reflective accounts of mentoring/practice teaching experiences, e.g. dealing with challenging students or assisting students to achieve a particular competence
- Anonymised examples of student assessments and action plans that you have contributed to
- Development of learning and teaching resources such as student induction packs / information booklets
- Reflective accounts on annual updating activity

Dates of attendance at update sessions and face-to-face contact / discussion with academic staff will be recorded on the University of Bolton mentor/practice teacher register. This and other updating activity can be recorded in the table below.
**Appendix 4: Annual Updating Activity template**

Use this table to record your annual updating activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Brief Description of Activity</th>
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<tbody>
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Additional copies of this page can be obtained from the programme leader.
Appendix 5: Process for Triennial Review

Mentors and practice teachers are accountable and responsible for evidencing their own updating activities and collating and documenting their ongoing learning and development in terms of the NMC standards. This triennial review document will help you in this process and should be submitted along with supporting evidence to determine whether you have met the NMC triennial review criteria.

The University of Bolton require that you attend at least one update within a twelve month period and mentors/practice teachers will be provided with the dates of these workshops at the start of the students’ programme.

On a three yearly basis (your triennial review) the placement register holder must map your competencies and progress against the NMC SLAiP standards. If the triennial review requirements have been met, then the mentor/practice teacher will remain on the local register.

If the requirements have not been met then it is likely that the mentor/practice teacher will temporarily be removed from the register.
Appendix 6: Triennial Review Record

Name: .................................................................................................................................
Practice Learning Environment: ...........................................................................................
Date of Triennial Review: ........................................................................................................

To be maintained on the local register the mentor/practice teacher must have evidence of having:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Achieved (Triennial Review Signatory)</th>
<th>Not Achieved (Triennial Review Signatory)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervised at least one student with due regard (extenuating circumstances permitting) within the three year period.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participated in annual updating - to include an opportunity to meet and explore assessment and supervision issues with other practice teachers.</td>
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<td>Explored as a group activity the validity and reliability of judgments made when assessing practice in challenging circumstances.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mapped ongoing development in their role against the current NMC mentor/practice teacher standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Been deemed to have met all requirements needed to be maintained on the local register as a mentor/practice teacher</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The mentor/practice teacher has met the requirements to be maintained on the local register?

Yes ☐  No ☐

If the criteria are met the next review date will be in three years. A date for review will be agreed.

Signature of Database holder: ......................................................................................

Signature of Mentor/Practice Teacher: ..............................................................................

Signature of Manager: ......................................................................................................

Next Review Date: ............................................................................................................

A copy of this form should be retained for staff records.
Appendix 7: University of Bolton CSP programme – notes on practice supervision

Below provides detail on the expectations of the CSP programme at the University of Bolton in terms of the support and supervision of its students.

Students must have a named mentor/practice teacher who should normally support only one CSP student at any point in time.

The mentor/practice teacher must:

- Have clinical currency and capability in the field in which the CSP student is being assessed
- Have in place an explicit process for meetings for reflection and assessment of practice
- Be available to the student for advice and support throughout the programme
- Attend meetings with the link lecturer and the student on at least three occasions during the one year programme (normally at least once per term)
- Maintain documentary evidence of supervision processes and ongoing assessment in order to make transparent valid and reliable judgements about fitness to practice