

**Definition of Practice Assessor (PA) Role in Relation to**

**NMC (2018): Standards for Learner Supervision and Assessment for Short Course Learning**

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# Background

This document was designed to clarify how you may be asked to support and assess learners in clinical practice and to consider evidence of your own knowledge and competence to undertake the role of a Practice Assessor. This is based on the principles set out in in NMC Part 2: Standards for student supervision and assessment (2018) which sets out how learners are assessed across theory and practice. These principles ensure learning within the clinical setting is safe, effective, and accountable with patient safety being central to the education.

The role of a mentor has been updated to Practice Assessor in line with NMC Standards (2018). It is recommended that if you are new to the PA role you undertake the NHS Education for Scotland (NES) Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors learning resource unit 1 to 6, which will enable you to fully understand the role of PA in the context of both pre and post-registration learners. This will prepare you for the pre-registration student nurse supervision and assessor role and could contribute towards taking pre-registration students in your practice, and to support post-registration learners undertaking learning such as CPD Connect modules.

You may also want to seek guidance from an experienced PA to address any learning requirements that you identify. You should also discuss your PA role with your employer to allow for protected time to allow you to prepare for the role and to support the learner.

# The Practice Assessor Role

The role of the PA is to oversee, support and assess the competence of learners, in collaboration with NHS Education for Scotland, during the period of learning in practice.

Practice assessor responsibilities:

* maintain current knowledge and expertise relevant to the proficiencies and programme outcomes being assessed, for example cervical screening, asthma, COPD.
* have a clear understanding of the student’s theoretical learning and achievement.
* ensure sufficient opportunities to periodically observe the student in practice to inform decisions for competency sign off.

Practice assessors should undertake preparation or evidence prior learning and experience that enables them to demonstrate achievement of the following minimum outcomes:

* providing constructive feedback to facilitate professional development in others
* knowledge of the assessment process and their role within it
* interpersonal communication skills relevant to student learning and assessment

They should also continue to proactively develop their professional practice and knowledge to fulfil their role and understand the proficiencies and programme outcomes that the learner they assess is aiming to achieve.

(Adapted from NMC, Part 2: Standards for student supervision and assessment, 2018)

# Competency for the Practice Assessor Role – Personal Characteristics

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| **Personal Characteristics**  |
| **Examples of Evidence*** Experience in practice educator, assessor, or supervisor roles
* Reflects on own experience of their learning experience whilst undertaking education
* Experience in informal/formal mentoring/teaching
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| Recognises the responsibility of PA role |  |
| Demonstrates a desire to support the learner |  |
| Is open and approachable |  |
| Creates and facilitates a positive learning environment to promote participation |  |
| Demonstrates leadership in their clinical practice  |  |

# Competency for the Practice Assessor Role – Professional Skills and knowledge

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| **Professional Skills and Knowledge** |
| **Examples of Evidence*** Member of a professional and regulatory body
* Awareness and understanding of professional code of conduct
* Evidence of education in the activity being supervised
* Evidence of continuing professional development
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| A registered practitioner who works in line with their professional, regulatory, legal, and organisational standards |  |
| Is competent and up to date demonstrating an appropriate level of knowledge in the activity being supervised |  |
| Understands the role of the practice assessor |  |
| Is aware and knowledgeable of all guidelines and protocols regarding the supervised subject matter |  |

# Competency for the Practice Assessor Role - Supporting Education Skills

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| **Supporting Education Skills** |
| **Examples of Evidence*** NHS Education for Scotland (NES) Practice supervisors and practice assessors’ learning resource, units 1-6
* Mentorship/teaching/practice assessor/supervisor educator training
* Other teaching training
* Evidence of feedback in Learning Log
* Engage with NES as appropriate
 |
| Previous experience of mentoring or training in clinical practice, including supervising. |  |
| Facilitates learning by encouraging and supporting learning through open dialogue, adapting to educational developments in clinical area, setting aside sufficient time to provide support |  |
| Facilitates learning by encouraging reflection and critical thinking |  |
| Has knowledge of a range of educational assessment processes in clinical practice |  |
| Reflect on role as PA |  |
| Communicate and work with the learner to establish a plan to achieve training competences allowing for discussion time and feedback |  |
| Communicate any concerns regarding the learner to education provider in a timely manner |  |
| Take appropriate action if there are any concerns regarding the learner |  |
| Awareness of different learning styles |  |

# Competency for the Practice Assessor Role – Governance

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| **Governance** |  |
| **Example of Evidence*** **Example standards** NES Cervical Screening Standards for Education
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| Understands the governance in place within their local Health Board |  |
| Understand the governance in place within their clinical practice |  |
| Awareness of how to escalate any concerns regarding a learner to the education provider |  |
| Awareness of the support available for the PA role and how to access support |  |
| Awareness of any clinical standards that are in place |  |
| Engage with practice management to ensure support and guidance if required. |  |

# Practice Assessor Supporting Learning Resources

* Teaching and learning in practice (some principles of teaching practice):

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

* Practice supervisors and practice assessors’ learning resource unit 1-6:

<https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/45749/future-nurse-and-midwife/practice-supervisors-and-practice-assessors-learning-resource>

# References

<https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/45749/future-nurse-and-midwife/practice-supervisors-and-practice-assessors-learning-resource>

<https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/standards-of-proficiency/standards-for-student-supervision-and-assessment/student-supervision-assessment.pdf>

<https://www.nmc.org.uk/supporting-information-on-standards-for-student-supervision-and-assessment/practice-assessment/what-do-practice-assessors-do/>

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2018).*Standards of proficiency for registered nurses*. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/standards-for-nurses/standards-of-proficiency-for-registered-nurses/>

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2018). *The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives, and nursing associates.* NMC: London