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Introduction

Welcome to the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Robert Gordon University and to supporting a Practice Teacher student undertaking module NUM031 - 'Supporting Professional Development in Practice'. This document is to provide guidance and consistency on supporting Practice Teacher students in practice. The module is delivered to students via the University’s virtual learning environment (VLE), CampusMoodle, and provides students with a structured programme of studies. There are discussion forums, email and other methods of communication established within CampusMoodle.

The Masters module is credit rated at 30 points at SCQF Level 11 (SCQF 2003) and has an NMC and non-NMC route (see Appendix 1). This means that it should be completed with a minimum of 100 hours private study, 180 hours directed study and 20 hours online activity of student effort. This module will include undertaking directed reading and reflection on sections of core texts, self-directed learning activities to provide the Practice Teacher student with the knowledge, understanding and skills to lead, support and enable teaching, learning and assessment in practice.

We hope you find supporting a Practice Teacher student an enjoyable learning experience. Should you wish to discuss any aspects of the course, please do not hesitate to contact myself or any other member of the course team by email or telephone using the contact details below.

Fiona Work
Module Leader

Module Team

<table>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
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Module Aim

The growing need for high quality support for learning across all healthcare disciplines is being driven by current health care policies. As a result, all healthcare professionals are being challenged to become increasingly involved in the supervision of professional practice to ensure quality care delivery, as well as securing strong working partnerships for learning together.
Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the Practice Teacher student is expected to be able to:

1. Critically analyse educational theories and models underpinning learning in practice.
2. Critically appraise expertise in the higher level skills required to support effective learning in practice.
3. Critically examine learning, teaching and assessment strategies and methods and apply as appropriate in practice.
4. Reflect critically on sources of support and contribute to the enhancement of local provision for self and others.
5. Evaluate own and others’ continuing professional development needs in order to achieve excellence in practice.

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to help you, the Supporting Practice Teacher, understand and develop your role whilst supporting Practice Teacher students undertaking NUM031 Supporting Professional Development. Your contribution is an essential component of the module. We hope you find this role a stimulating one which facilitates both the Practice Teacher student’s professional development and your own. As a Supporting Practice Teacher, we expect you to help Practice Teacher students develop their competence in practice, to challenge them to explore their own knowledge base and demonstrate the application of this knowledge in to practice.

This module is open to qualified practitioners in health care who have developed their level of knowledge, skills and competence beyond professional registration and, where appropriate, have gained specialist practice/specialist qualifications relevant to their field of practice. This normally means that they have a recorded qualification in their field of practice and have worked for at least 2 years post qualifying and have experience supporting the professional development of others. For nurses and midwives undertaking this module, they must have gained additional qualifications that will support students in specialist/advanced practice. The nurse/midwife must have met the NMC Standards to Support Learning and Assessment in practice criteria for Practice Teacher preparation.

Module Structure

The module has an NMC route and a non-NMC route (Appendix 1) and the table which follows gives a brief outline of the 24 week long module structure and scheduled dates for the release of topics, the discussion forum, live chats and the summative exam.

The online module material is supported by well sourced and relevant web-based sites and recommended reading, and Practice Teacher students will be encouraged to become involved in several activities including reflection, problem based scenarios, discussion groups, and online tutorials (synchronous and asynchronous).
<table>
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<th>Week</th>
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| 1/2  | **Topic 1: Evidence Based Practice Aim**  
Apply evidence based practice to your own work and contribute to the further development of such a knowledge and practice evidence base. |
| 3/4  | **Topic 2: Establishing Effective Working Relationships Aim**  
Demonstrate effective relationship building skills sufficient to support learning as part of a wider inter-professional team, for a range of students in both practice and academic learning environments. |
| 5/6  | **Topic 3: Creating an Environment for Learning Aim**  
To create an environment for learning, where practice is valued and developed, that provides appropriate professional and inter-professional opportunities and support for learning to maximise achievement for individuals. |
| 7/8  | **Topic 4: Facilitation of Learning Aim**  
Facilitate learning for a range of students within a particular area of practice and, where appropriate, encouraging self-management of learning opportunities and providing support to maximise individual potential. |
| 9/10 | **Topic 5: Assessment and Accountability Aim**  
Assess learning in order to make judgements relating to the learner’s growth and professional requirements. |
| 11/12| **Topic 6: Evaluation of Learning Aim**  
Determine strategies for evaluating the learning experience to ensure that professional regulations and external criteria have been met. |
| 13/14| **Topic 7: Context of Practice Aim**  
Support learning within a context of practice reflects health and social care and educational policies, managing change to ensure that particular professional needs are met within a learning environment that also supports practice development. |
| 15   | **Topic 8: Leadership Aim**  
Demonstrate leadership skills for education within practice and/or academic settings. |
| 16/24| **Learning in Practice** |
|      | **Assignment Submission** |
The module content and format are designed to encourage Practice Teacher students to optimise learning opportunities to integrate theory into practice and vice versa, actively promoting the development of a critical, analytical and reflective approach to professional practice. Practice Teacher students will be allocated an academic tutor who will support them with the work for this module. Additionally, there will be members of the Practice Learning Team (such as a Practice Educator or Practice Education Facilitator) to support you which is described in detail below.

**Practice Learning Team Support**

The School of Nursing and Midwifery developed a strategy to support learning of pre and post registration student nurses and midwives in practice in collaboration with NHS Grampian, NHS Orkney, NHS Shetland, members of the private, voluntary sector and with placement providers at a distance. See Practice Learning Support below.

The Practice Learning Team will provide support, education and development for students, Practice Teacher students and Supporting Practice Teachers from both pre and post registration education programmes; principally in clinical practice areas. This will entail the development and maintenance of a learning environment where both education and lifelong learning are seen as integral to clinical practice. Seen as an experienced practitioner, the Practice Learning Team member will both lead and facilitate practice learning developments to support staff to make the necessary changes in their practice as required by the profession and the service.

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*Practice Learning Team Support Model*
Continued Support for Supervising Practice Teachers

As a Supporting Practice Teacher, it is essential that you maintain and develop your knowledge, skills and competence through annual updating and meeting the requirements of the NMC standards (2008). Additionally, you need to maintain and develop the knowledge required for you to work within your specialist area (NMC 2008). It is important that you have a good understanding of these standards. The University can support you in this role to lead, support and enable teaching, learning and assessment in practice by facilitating:

- Bi-annual study days at RGU – these can be attended remotely via Skype, conference call etc.
- Access to CampusMoodle teamwork area
- Workshops in practice
- Practice visits
- Access to the Practice Education Team
- Teleconferences as required
- Videoconferences as required.

The Supervising Practice Teacher Relationship Model

Definition of a Supervising Practice Teacher

A Supervising Practice Teacher is a “a registrant who has gained knowledge, skills and competence in both their specialist area of practice and in their teaching role, meeting the outcomes of stage 3, and who facilitates learning, supervises and assesses students in a practice setting” (NMC 2008 p. 46).

As you will be supporting a Practice Teacher student who has undergone study that has resulted in a registerable qualification on the same part of the register as yourself, it is important that you reflect on the learning and development which is required by the NMC to attain this. Your Practice Teacher student will be supporting a registered nurse who is a post graduate student who is working towards an advanced practice qualification. At this stage we would suggest you

Sign-off Mentors and/or Practice Teachers

The requirement for the introduction of Practice Teachers for specialist practice programmes was revised in NMC Circular 08/2007. As a result, sign-off mentors are required for all students on specialist practice programmes leading to a recordable qualification on the nurses’ part of the register. The role of the sign-off mentor and/or practice teacher is to make judgments about whether a student has achieved the required standards of proficiency for safe and effective practice for entry to the NMC register. 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 either sign-off mentors who have met additional criteria or practice teachers where this is required by commissioners. For sign-off mentors, this includes having been supervised on at least three occasions for signing off proficiency at the end of a final placement by an existing sign-off mentor before being annotated as such on the local register. (This can occur with a student on any NMC approved programme).

Additional Options for Achieving Sign-off Mentor and/or Practice Teacher Criteria

The NMC Professional Practice and Registration Committee have agreed that the requirement for a prospective sign-off practice teacher to be supervised in signing off students on at least three occasions before they can be designated a sign-off mentor remains unchanged. However:

- First and second such supervisions may now be effected using a range of methods. These include activities which would test the skills required to sign off students safely, including: simulation, role play, objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) and interactive use of electronic resources. These will be determined locally by programme providers (approved education institutions and their partners) and will be considered by the NMC at programme approval and monitored during annual monitoring visits.
- The final supervision for signing off proficiency must be with an actual student undertaking an NMC approved programme. The alternative methods, such as those referred to in the paragraph above, are not permitted for this final supervision.
- Information for programme providers on arrangements for first and second supervisions, giving further details of the permitted alternative methods for testing the skills required to sign off students safely will be issued.

The NMC Circular 05/2010 p. 2 guides Practice Teacher students to provide evidence two simulated sign-offs during the NUM031 ‘Supporting Professional Development’ module. One simulated sign off is an interactive quiz and another is a reflective exercise based on the NMC (2008) standards.

Sign off Mentors should spend the equivalent of one hour per week per student to be spent (in addition to the 40% with the mentor) to allow time to reflect, give feedback and keep records of student achievement. It is also essential to review evidence from a sustained period of learning to assess proficiency for entry to the register (NMC 2008).
Practice Teachers for Students on SCPHN Programmes

Practice teachers are required for all students on SCPHN programmes unless a deferment application has been approved by the NMC as stated in NMC Circular 08/2007.

The NMC Framework to Support Learning and Assessment in Practice

The NMC (2008) has identified outcomes for mentors, practice teachers and teachers so that there is clear accountability for making decisions that lead to entry to the register.

There are eight domains in the framework, each with identified outcomes at the four developmental stages. The 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

The framework has been designed for application within the context of inter-professional learning and working in modern healthcare.

Triennial Review of Mentors and Practice Teachers

The NMC (2008) states that the nature of the triennial review of mentors and practice teachers is for the placement providers to determine, but may form part of an employer-led personal development appraisal.

To be maintained on the local register, the individual must have evidence of having:

- Mentored at least two students (practice teachers to have supervised at least one student) with due regard (extenuating circumstances permitting) within the three year period. Supervisors of midwives are required to mentor at least one student undertaking a supervisor of midwives programme during the three year period relating to triennial review as outlined in NMC Circular 01/2008.
- Participated in annual updating – to include an opportunity to meet and explore assessment and supervision issues with other mentors/practice teachers.
- Explored as a group activity the validity and reliability of judgements made when assessing practice in challenging circumstances.
- Mapped ongoing development in their role against the current NMC mentor/practice teacher standards.
- Been deemed to have met all requirements needed to be maintained on the local register as a mentor, sign-off mentor or practice teacher.
Practice Teacher Preparation Programmes

Practice teacher preparation programmes must:

- Be a minimum academic level of HE Honours (previously known as level 3) or SCQF Level 9.
- Include at least 30 days protected learning time – to include learning in both academic and practice settings.
- Include relevant work-based learning with the opportunity to critically reflect on such an experience, e.g. acting as a practice teacher to a student in specialist practice under the supervision of a qualified practice teacher.
- Meet the additional criteria for a sign-off mentor.
- Normally be completed within six months.
- Should provide a foundation for undertaking an NMC approved teacher preparation programme.
- Allow AP(E)L to be applied to up to 100% of the programme. Previous preparation of an equivalent nature and standard should be recognised. It is for the education provider to determine if this allows the individual to be placed immediately on the practice teacher register without the need for further preparation.
- The content of a previous mentor programme, where appropriate, may be accredited, enabling the practice teacher programme to be completed in less time (NMC 2008, p. 46).

Due Regard

The principle of due regard underpins the NMC (2008) standards to support learning and assessment in practice. Principle A of the NMC (2008, p. 79) of these standards states that NMC registrants "who make judgments about whether a student has achieved the required standards of proficiency for safe and effective practice must be on the same part or sub-part of the register as that which the student is intending to enter”.

However, there are various other models to support students but, in accordance with underpinning principle A, “only a registered SCPHN may sign-off a SCPHN student. The SCPHN must also be from the same field of practice that coincides with the field that the student has undertaken (see NMC Circular 26/2007, Annexe 3)”.

What is Expected of Students?

Regular and active engagement with the online learning materials and discussion forum activities is an essential component of e-learning. Therefore for Practice Teacher students to make the most of their online learning experience, it is very important for them to access and read the core literature for each topic in the module. To facilitate this process, all the reading is accessible electronically via Aspire.

Throughout the duration of the module there is an expectation that Practice Teacher students will access the VLE (CampusMoodle) a minimum of twice per week. However, it is also recognised that there may be times when this is not possible. Although there is an expectation that Practice Teacher students will participate in the learning activities during specific dates, all online discussion
forums will remain open and active beyond those dates to allow flexibility in learning and present an opportunity for Practice Teacher students to catch up when necessary.

**What Can Your Practice Teacher Students Expect From Academic Staff?**

Academic tutors will also normally access the CampusMoodle a minimum of *twice* per week and respond to any postings and queries on the discussion forum at least *once* per week. Students can expect individual support or feedback on skeleton plans, or at the tutor’s discretion, incomplete draft work, within *five* working days. Please note only one incomplete piece of draft work will be accepted and commented on.

Practice Teacher students will be notified via CampusMoodle if academic staff are on holiday, or not available, and provide details of the academic support cover that will be available during that time.

**Assessment Overview**

Practice Teacher students will be assessed on a summative ePortfolio of 4,500 words intended to address the module learning outcomes (see p. 2).

The assessment should be submitted no later than Week 24 of the module and will be marked using GradeMark, a paperless online assessment tool.

**Completion of the Module**

It is expected that, under normal circumstances, the module can be completed within 24 weeks by the Practice Teacher student. Should the Practice Teacher student encounter any difficulties in completing the module within this timeframe, due to exceptional circumstances, their Academic Tutor may authorise an extension, of up to four weeks, to enable them to complete the work necessary for submission of their summative ePortfolio.

**Award of Credits**

Confirmation of the Practice Teacher student’s success upon the achievement of Module NUM031 Supporting Professional Development will be provided following an appropriate University Assessment Board. Thus, while a Practice Teacher student may have successfully completed studies and provisionally passed the summative ePortfolio, there may be a period of time before this can be formally confirmed.

**Academic Tutorial System**

Practice Teacher students will be allocated an academic tutor for this module. This person will also be their main contact whilst undertaking this module.

The list below identifies what Practice Teacher students can normally expect from their academic tutor. Occasionally, there may be times when the expected responses are not achievable, in which case every effort will be made to notify Practice Teacher students in advance of such an occurrence. Practice Teacher students should note that the University is closed on UK Public and local Aberdeen holidays.
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<th><strong>Response to discussion forum messages and emailed queries</strong></th>
<th>The Practice Teacher student’s academic tutor will normally be able to monitor and respond to simple discussion forum messages and emailed queries within two to three working days. However, there will be periods where this will not be possible, for example during holidays or when the tutor is absent on other university business. The tutor will notify students in advance concerning any extended periods when he/she is unavailable. When the Practice Teacher student’s tutor is unavailable, they will normally arrange for someone else to provide tutor support. There may, however, be periods when no one is available and, again, any such periods would be notified in advance.</th>
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<td><strong>Assessment and return of coursework</strong></td>
<td>Summative ePortfolio will be reviewed, assessed and returned with comments within 20 working days of the submission date.</td>
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**Student Support**

Sometimes Practice Teacher students may experience personal problems, not directly associated with their study of the learning materials, tutor support or the assessment processes. These difficulties may be associated with health, financial, legal or other personal matters and there are numerous support systems available such as:

Study Skills and Access Unit:
http://www.rgu.ac.uk/student-life/student-advice-and-support/study-support/study-skills/study-skills/ [Accessed 6-07-16].

Student Counselling & Wellbeing Centre:

Our aim at RGU is to support the Practice Teacher students in completing their studies successfully, so if your Practice Teacher student does experience such problems, please advise them to contact their academic tutor or the module leader as soon as possible.

**Extenuating Circumstances**

Extenuating circumstances are exceptional, serious, acute and unforeseen problems or events which genuinely affect the student’s performance in relation to assessments or their ability to complete coursework on time, and which are out with their control.

In the normal course of life, Practice Teacher students may occasionally experience minor illness, unexpected or adverse events which coincide with the preparation of their coursework assignments or examinations. It is essential to recognise that these are part of normal life experience and that it is expected that some difficult circumstances have to be managed in addition to their studies. Such circumstances do not in themselves excuse failure or a poor performance. Practice Teacher students are expected to manage and organise their learning, coursework assignments and revision in a way which anticipates that events will not always run smoothly.
However, it is important that Practice Teacher students keep an academic member of staff fully informed of any difficulties at the time at which they occur. With early warning of a problem, it may be possible for the School or Department to provide support which will make a claim of extenuating circumstances unnecessary.

The two relevant forms are as follows:

- Coursework Extension Form, which is used to request an extension to a coursework submission date.
- Extenuating Circumstances Claim Form, which is used to inform the Assessment Board about any matter that has affected your assessment performance.

These forms are available from:

http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/academic-affairs/quality-assurance-and-regulations/academic-regulations-student-forms/academic-regulations-student-forms/ [Accessed 6-07-16].

Information and the relevant form for the cause for concern process can be accessed from the following link:


**Equality & Diversity**

The University is committed to the active promotion of equality across its functions and to addressing issues of discriminatory practice towards students, staff and external stakeholders. Further information on this is available at:


If you have any comments regarding discrimination or believe you have been subject to discrimination, please contact an appropriate member of staff within the School or alternatively the Student Services Manager, Dr Pamela Tosh (p.tosh@rgu.ac.uk).

**Complaints Handling Procedure**

The University has a complaints procedure which can be accessed at:

http://www.rgu.ac.uk/footer/complaints/complaints/ [Accessed 6-07-16].

Once again, we would like to thank you for your continued support for our future practice teachers.

**References**


Appendix 1: Routes and Entry on Local Mentor and Practice Teacher Register

Are you studying the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) or non-NMC route?

Non NMC route

Submit your 4500 word assessment ePortfolio to be credited with 60 credits at SCQF level 11.
You will not be added to your local mentor and PT register following the assessment board as a Practice Teacher.

NMC route as a Practice teacher (PT)

Will you have supported a Specialist Community Health Nurse (SCHN) student (who has completed their final placement with you and their verification of competencies will have been ‘signed-off’) before you complete the module?

No

Submit your 4500 word assessment ePortfolio to be credited with 60 credits at SCQF level 11 and complete the two simulated ‘sign-off’ online exercises on the module (quiz and reflective video).

At a later date, send in your evidence of supporting a final placement ‘sign-off’ assessment (verification of competencies) with a SCHN student supported by a Practice Teacher who is ‘live’ on a mentor and practice teacher register to Dr. Fiona Work (f.work@rgu.ac.uk).

Successful completion of NUM031 module and your Declaration of Practice Teacher form indicates you can now be added to your local mentor and PT register (following the next assessment board) as a Practice Teacher.

DN, HV and School Nurse, Practice Teacher notified and relevant PEF/Manager for entry on to local register.

Yes

Submit your 4500 word assessment ePortfolio to be credited with 60 credits at SCQF level 11, your two simulated ‘sign-off’ online exercises on the module (quiz and reflective video) and your evidence of supporting a final placement ‘sign-off’ assessment (verification of competencies) with a SCHN student supported by a Practice Teacher who is ‘live’ on a mentor and practice teacher register

Successful completion of NUM031 module and your Declaration of Practice Teacher form indicates you can now be added to your local mentor and PT register (following the assessment board) as a Practice Teacher.

DN, HV and School Nurse, Practice Teacher notified and relevant PEF/Manager for entry on to local register.