Standards to support learning and assessment in practice

Annual Updates and Triennial Review

Guidance for mentors, practice teachers and managers

November 2013

(Review of this document to take place November 2016)
‘You must facilitate students and others to develop their competence’
(NMC, 2008a)
Background

This document is intended to provide some general guidance for mentors, practice teachers and managers regarding the maintenance of the Nursing and Midwifery Council 'Standards to support learning and assessment in practice' (NMC, 2008b). All staff recorded on their local placement mentor register as a mentor/sign-off mentor for pre-registration nursing/midwifery students or as a practice teacher for post-registration nursing students, 'must demonstrate their knowledge, skills and competence on an ongoing basis' (NMC, 2008b, p11).

The importance of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and service providers working in partnership was emphasized by the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting (UKCC) in its 'Fitness for practice' report (UKCC, 1999). NHS Grampian, Orkney, Shetland, Tayside and Highland & Western Isles along with The Robert Gordon University have established 'Partners in Practice Agreements' which, along with 'The Service Education Collaborative Strategy to Support Student Learning in Practice' (RGU, 2004) provides a structure for partnership working.

Clinical managers therefore must take responsibility along with education providers in ensuring that the mentor standards are enacted in the practice setting. The mentor standard needs to become embedded within the culture and practice of nursing and to form part of each nurse's annual review through the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework process (Scottish Executive, 2004). The competencies and outcomes for mentorship can be reviewed within the 'Standards to support learning and assessment in practice' (NMC, 2008).

The NMC state that:

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

- Mentored at least two students (practice teachers to supervise 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 judgments 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.

(NMC, 2008b, p12)
The NMC has issued further guidance regarding annual updating in its document ‘Additional information to support implementation of NMC Standards to support learning and assessment in practice’ (NMC, 2009).

This gives further clarity regarding the nature of an update and states:

‘The annual updating process must include the opportunity to meet and explore assessment and supervision issues with other mentors/practice teachers (face-to-face) and explore as a group the validity and reliability of judgments made when assessing practice in challenging circumstances’

(NMC, 2009).

The NMC recognises that arrangements for updating need to allow flexibility according to local circumstances and suggest the following points regarding approaches to the annual update:

- Be ongoing throughout the year, rather than consisting of a single annual event.

- Include a number of approaches and methods. The face-to-face meetings may consist of small, informal group discussions in the practice environment or more structured meetings led by programme providers or placement facilitators. The meetings can be supported by other resources and activities such as news letters, on-line resources, reflective practice, reading, reviewing literature, shadowing, role-play etc.

- Encourage mentors and practice teachers to take responsibility for collating and documenting their ongoing learning and development, clearly demonstrating to programme providers that they continue to meet the respective NMC standard (NMC, 2009).

- This guidance includes:
  - How evidence is recorded
  - Arrangements for the triennial review
  - Completion of the triennial review form
  - Triennial Review Process Algorithm
  - Issues that may arise at the triennial review
  - Triennial Review form (Appendix 1)
  - Competency Domains form (Appendix 2)
  - Examples of evidence that would constitute an annual update (Appendix 3)
  - Resources
**Triennial Review Process**

**How evidence is recorded**

The NMC do not state the minimum amount of time that should be spent on an update. Dates of attendance should be recorded and held with the mentor/practice teacher register. Details of the nature of the update and supporting evidence may be kept within staff member’s Personal Professional Profile (PPP) which is part of the Post-registration Education and Practice (PREP) requirement (NMC, 2006).

The e-KSF system provides a mechanism for recording details of the annual update however, there will still be a requirement to keep evidence either in a hard copy, for example, certificates of attendance at learning events and associated written reflections or scan any non-electronic documents to an electronic folder. Managers may want to set up a local departmental system for recording evidence; this may be similar to their existing arrangements for other mandatory training, for example, basic life support.

Mentor’s/Practice Teacher’s are professionally accountable and are therefore responsible for their own updating activities. They must make their managers aware when they undertake an updating activity. Clinical managers are responsible for the maintenance of an accurate and up to date live register for their area which must be available on request.

**Arrangements for Triennial Review**

Mentors/practice teachers yearly review meeting with their manager is the ideal opportunity for the annual update to be discussed and, when due, for the triennial review to be conducted. Mentors/practice teachers should take their evidence of annual updating to appraisal meetings in order for the manager to verify that the requirement has been met. There is a requirement to keep evidence and this can be recorded in a variety of way, for example, hard copy; electronic such as, within the NES e-portfolio within the mentor updating section.

If the update requirement has not been met, the mentor/practice teacher and manager should agree arrangements for an update to be undertaken within an agreed timeframe.
Completion of the Triennial Review Form

At the triennial review meeting, the mentor/practice teacher and manager must complete the triennial review form and Competency form (Appendices 1 and 2). The manager should verify that a minimum of two students have been mentored by the staff member in the preceding three years or a minimum of one student for a practice teacher. For practice teachers, ‘this would be a student intending to enter the SCPHN part of the register, or record a SPQ on the nurses’ part of the register, or an ANP student’ (NMC, 2008, p8).

The manager must verify that all competencies have been achieved by reviewing the nature of evidence that relates to each. Examples of the types of evidence that could relate to individual competencies for a mentor can be seen in Appendix 3. Please note that this list is not exhaustive and there may well be other types of activity that are relevant in verifying a mentor’s or practice teacher’s competence.

SCPHN – Specialist Community Public Health Nurse
SPQ – Specialist Practice Qualification
ANP – Advanced Nurse Practitioner
Triennial Review Process Algorithm

NMC Standards to Support Learning and Assessment in Practice

Triennial Review is due
Date agreed for:
   a. submission of evidence to manager
   b. review meeting

Mentor prepares evidence for submission to manager to demonstrate achievement of NMC standards for mentoring by date agreed (usually 2/52 before the review meeting)

Manager reviews evidence submitted prior to the review meeting

Sufficient information received

Additional information requested

Review meeting
Mentor and Manager review and discuss evidence submitted

NMC standards achieved

Documentation completed and Mentor register updated

NMC standards not achieved

1. Name removed from mentor register
2. Any students the mentor is supporting allocated to another mentor [maybe implications for areas if there is only one mentor]
3. Action plan developed to facilitate achievement of NMC standards
4. Date set for 2nd review meeting
5. Contact PE/PEF/PEL

Contact PE/PEF/PEL for guidance and support

PE/PEF/PEL can be contacted for advice

Refer to the Triennial Review form and Annual Updates and Triennial Review guidance document for details of evidence that need to be included

Guidance sought from Practice Education Team prior to arranging any further review meetings

NMC standards achieved, documentation completed & mentor register updated

2nd review meeting – Mentor & Manager

NMC standards not achieved
**Issues that may arise at the Triennial Review**

Below are some issues that could emerge and some suggested ways to avoid them occurring or to address them if they do arise.

1. **The member of staff has not mentored at least 2 students within the three year review period (at least 1 student for a practice teacher).**

   - Has the mentor / practice teacher had the opportunity to mentor the required number of students?
   - Are there any ‘extenuating circumstances’ which may have prevented this, such as a prolonged period of absence from the clinical area?
   - Is there a shortfall related to the number of students allocated to the area in the last 3 years and / or to the number of mentors available?
   - Is co-mentoring / team mentoring used within the placement area?
   - Is there a rota for allocation of students to mentors within the area?
   - Has the mentor / practice teacher made an effort to mentor the required number of students?

   The Triennial Review Form cannot be signed until the standard is met. The manager and mentor / practice teacher should therefore agree an action plan to achieve this, giving consideration to the reason why the standard has not been met. For example, if the reason relates to a shortfall in the number of students allocated to the area, could the mentor support a student from a neighbouring clinical team? The manager should ensure rotation of allocated students around all mentors / practice teachers to enable all to support the required number of students. The Practice Education team will be referred to for advice and support in the decision making process. Dates should set to review the action plan, and another meeting arranged to sign the Triennial Review form once the standard has been met.

2. **The member of staff can not provide evidence of annual updating.**

   - Is the mentor / practice teacher aware of the standards for mentoring and their requirements?
   - Is the mentor / practice teacher aware of what constitutes an annual update?
   - Has the mentor / practice teacher had the opportunity to complete an annual update? (In addition to local updates, practice teachers have the opportunity to attend specialist sessions run by the HEIs to meet their requirements)

   Staff should be made aware of available mentor / practice teacher update activities. The manager should discuss the mentoring activities that the staff member has been involved with. Some of these activities may in themselves constitute an update, for example the development
of learning resources. Other activities, for example meeting students’ learning needs, could be used as a basis for a reflective account which may then be counted as the update. If required, refer to the Practice Education team for advice and support (Please see examples of evidence in Appendix II).

3. The member of staff requests to be taken off the mentor / practice teacher register.

- Is being a mentor / practice teacher included within the employee’s job description and/or e-KSF outline?
- Is this a temporary measure due to a planned period of leave?
- Is this a temporary measure for a period of development to enable the mentor / practice teacher to meet the required standards?

The manager should explore the mentor’s / practice teacher’s request, for example, has the mentor / practice teacher had a negative experience in supporting a student? The manager should then refer them to the NMC Code 2008 and Job Descriptions and try to resolve the issue. For example, the mentor / practice teacher could have additional support, or training in the area of concern, or be given the opportunity to shadow or act as deputy mentor / practice teacher with another member of staff. The mentor / practice teacher should be made aware of the importance of mentoring to the team and the organization as a whole and also made aware that if they decline to mentor, this may have an impact on career progression. The Practice Education team may be asked for advice and support.

4. The member of staff does not want to be a sign off mentor.

- Is the mentor / practice teacher aware of the standards for mentoring and their requirements?
- Has the mentor had the opportunity to be a deputy mentor with an experienced sign off mentor to gain insight into the role?
- Has the manager discussed the requirement for the mentor to take on the role of a sign off mentor to meet the needs of the team and updated the local register to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of sign off mentors to support students allocated to the placement area who require signing off
- Are there sufficient sign off mentors within the department to provide supervision in order for ordinary mentors to become sign off mentors?
- Is being a sign off mentor a requirement of the employee’s post?

The manager should explore the reason why the mentor does not wish to become a sign off mentor. The Practice Education team may be asked for advice and support. It is the manager’s responsibility to ensure that they have an adequate number of sign-off mentors within their area.
5. The mentor/practice teacher moves practice setting.

When a mentor / practice teacher moves to another practice setting it is their responsibility to take the following documents with them:

- Declaration of mentorship/sign-off mentor status certificate
- Copies of their completed Triennial Review forms
- Details of recent mentor updates attended

This information must be given to their new manager who will ensure that their details are added to the live mentor register for the area.

6. The mentor / practice teacher is not able to demonstrate the required competence.

- Is the mentor / practice teacher aware of the standards for mentoring and their requirements and do they understand their responsibility to provide evidence of competence in each of the domains?
- Has the mentor had ample opportunity to gather evidence to demonstrate their ongoing development?
- Has there been a concern reported regarding the mentor/practice teacher where their competence has been called into question e.g. a student or a colleague raised issues about a mentor’s / practice teacher’s performance?

The Triennial Review form should **not** be signed if the mentor / practice teacher is unable to demonstrate the required competence and the individual’s name should be removed from the mentor register. The manager must identify where there is insufficient competence and agree an action plan with the mentor/practice teacher to rectify this. Dates should be agreed to review the action plan and another meeting arranged to sign the Triennial Review Form. Once the required competence has been achieved the mentor’s name should be reinstated onto the mentor/practice teacher register. Where competence has been called into question, and this relates specifically to mentoring, the Practice Education Team **must** be informed.

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**If there are concerns about an employee’s capability or conduct in relation to the mentor / practice teacher standards and the development plan put in place has not resolved the issue, further Line Management, Human Resources Department or NMC involvement may be required.**
References


NURSING AND MIDWIFERY COUNCIL. 2009. Additional information to support implementation of NMC Standards to support learning and assessment in practice, London: Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).


Robert Gordon University and NHS Grampian, Orkney, Shetland, Tayside and Highland & Western Isles, Partners in Practice Agreement, Aberdeen: Robert Gordon University and NHS Grampian, Orkney, Shetland, Tayside and Highland & Western Isles.


**Triennial Review Working Group**

A working group with representatives from RGU and NHS Grampian, Orkney and Shetland was formed to review the original document 'Standards to Support learning and assessment in practice – Annual updates and Triennial Review – Guidance for mentors, practice teacher and managers' (June 2008).

**Members**
- Helen Muir, PEL, RGU (Chair)
- Alison Doyle, PEF, Surgical 1, ARI
- Pam Kelly, PEF, Community
- Ann Ogle, PEL, RGU
- Linda Park, PEF, Anchor Unit, ARI

**Contact information**

For further advice and support with annual updates and the triennial review in your local area, please contact your Practice Education Facilitator/Educator or Practice Education Lecturer.

The contact for my area is:

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Details</th>
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For general queries related to this document you may contact: PEF/PE/PEL for your area

For all other queries you may contact:
Alison Mclennan, Head of Practice Learning, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen

[Email] a.mclennan@rgu.ac.uk
### NMC Standards to Support Learning and Assessment in Practice (2008)

#### Triennial Review Form for Mentors and Practice Teachers

To be completed by the mentor and manager every three years. This will demonstrate to employers and NMC quality assurance agents how the mentor/sign off mentor/practice teacher has maintained and developed their knowledge, skills and competence. Annual updates will be recognised as part of the triennial review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Work Base and Address:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designation:</td>
<td>Telephone number:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you a sign off mentor: Yes/No</td>
<td>Email address:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are you a Practice Teacher: Yes/No</td>
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<td>(delete as appropriate)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Triennial review:</th>
<th>Number of students supervised in the preceding 3 years:</th>
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<tr>
<th>Dates of annual updates: 1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
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In relation to my role as a mentor or practice teacher the annual updating activities that I have undertaken have ensured that I continue to:

(delete as appropriate)

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<tr>
<th>Have current knowledge of NMC approved programmes: Yes/No</th>
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<th>Understand the implications of change to NMC requirements: Yes/No</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Understand issues relating to students: Yes/No</th>
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<tr>
<th>Make valid and reliable assessments of competence and fitness for safe and effective practice: Yes/No</th>
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<tr>
<td>Competency Domain</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Establishing effective working relationships</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitation of learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment and accountability</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Evaluation of learning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Create an environment for learning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Context of practice</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Support learning within a context of practice that reflects health care and educational policies, managing change to ensure that particular professional needs are met within a learning environment that also supports practice development.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Evidence-based practice</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apply evidence-based practice to their own work and contribute to the further development of such a knowledge and practice evidence base.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Leadership</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate leadership skills for education within practice and academic settings</td>
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**Signatures in support of remaining live on the locally held Mentor Register**

Mentor .......................................................... Date .................

Supporting Placement Manager Name...........................................

Date ..............

Date of Next Triennial Review..................................................
**Triennial Review Mentor / Practice Teacher Competency Domains**

Please note these are only examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPETENCY DOMAIN</th>
<th>EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Establishing effective working relationships** | • Witness testimony from a manager or members of the multidisciplinary team that confirms team working and relationship building skills.  
• Support given to new members of the team, e.g. induction or involvement with Flying Start.  
• Communication with partners involved in learning, e.g. working groups or meetings involving the practice education team.  
• Anonymised written feedback from learners.  
• Written evaluation of formal tutorials in the clinical area and/or academic setting.  
• Attendance at information sessions from programme providers related to the curriculum and/or programme documentation assessment. |
| **Facilitation of learning**              | • Documented evidence of orientation / induction plans developed for learners allocated to the clinical area.  
• Anonymised examples of learning contracts and timetables demonstrating how the mentor/practice teacher encouraged the learner to manage their own learning. This may be with different types of learners and at different stages.  
• Record of different stages of students mentored and participation in the development of learning outcomes.  
• Involvement in implementing timetables/pathways to maximise the number of learners accommodated within the placement area whilst enhancing/not compromising the quality of the learning available.  
• Mentor/practice teacher facilitating a learner to discuss their learning and how they have progressed. This may be from witness testimony (the manager has observed the exchange) or from the mentor’s/practice teacher’s reflective accounts. |
**Assessment and accountability**

Assess learning in order to make judgments related to the NMC standards of proficiency for entry to the register or for recording a qualification at a level above initial registration.

- Attendance at and reflection on mentor/practice teacher related activities that focus on assessment.
- Anonymised examples of completed assessment documentation demonstrating the feedback given.
- Peer evaluation of meetings with learner where feedback/assessment is given.
- Anonymised examples of completed assessment tools, e.g. formative assessments or competency checklists related to a particular skill.
- Anonymised examples of action plans developed to address particular learning needs.
- Reflective account of dealing with a challenging learner or a learner with additional support needs.
- Testimony from colleague or student.
- Record of discussion with students to achieve evidence of their learning through use of simulation/examples.

**Evaluation of learning**

Determine strategies for evaluating learning in practice and academic settings to ensure that the NMC standards of proficiency for registration or recording a qualification at a level above initial registration have been met.

- Involvement in developing and using local evaluation tools relating to the placement as a whole or to particular learning resources that have been developed.
- Involvement in reviewing evaluation data and, where required, implementing changes.
- Development of action plans to address areas where concern is raised with the quality of learning opportunities - evidence of action plan review.
- Evidence of applying quality standards to the placement area, e.g. NES QSPPs (see web resources).
- Involvement with audit of the learning environment.
- Through one to one discussion demonstrates knowledge of the course requirements and assessment strategies.

**Create an environment for learning**

Create an environment for learning, where practice is valued and developed, that provides appropriate professional and interprofessional learning opportunities and support for learning to maximize achievement for individuals.

- Delivery of teaching – formal or informal, may be lecture, tutorial, group work or individual, e.g. a nursing topic or clinical skills, examples of teaching plans and evaluations received can be provided.
- Involvement with orientation/induction programmes.
- Development of teaching resources, e.g. resource files, learning activities, information folders, audit, S.W.O.T analysis or risk assessment of the learning environment, local workbooks and worksheets.
- Facilitation of inter-disciplinary learning.
- A testimony from manager, student or colleague can be used as evidence in some situations.
**Context of practice**

Support learning within a context of practice that reflects health care and educational policies, managing change to ensure that particular professional needs are met within a learning environment that also supports the practice development.

- Attendance at and reflection on mentor related activities, e.g. Mentor Support Forums, mentor/practice teacher development days.
- Attendance at and reflection on study days, training events, conferences or seminars that focus on learning and development or are pertinent to the role of the mentor, e.g. NHS Grampian learning and development topics such as presentation skills, knowledge and skills framework sessions, where skills gained can be applied to mentoring activities.
- Written report, reflective account or witness testimony of involvement in the management of change within the placement area, particularly in relation to learning.
- Knowledge and understanding of current healthcare and educational policies demonstrated by discussion with manager or completion of reflective account, e.g. ‘Standards to support learning and assessment in practice’, Essential skills clusters.
- Involvement with practice development, e.g. policies, standards or care pathways.
- Reading newsletters or e-bulletins from NMC, NES or NHS-G with information pertinent to mentors and reflecting on how the information can be incorporated within the learning environment.
- Critique of a document related to learning and development and how this can be applied to personal practice, e.g. journal article, book chapter, policies, standards or guidelines – leading to discussion at CLET or at team meetings, e.g. discussions about assessment or cause for concern process.
<table>
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<td>Apply evidence-based practice to their own work and contribute to the further development of such knowledge and practice evidence base.</td>
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| • Witness testimony of the practitioner’s application of evidence based practice.  
• Membership of clinical groups either local or national, e.g. Tissue Viability or Record Keeping – needs to demonstrate attendance and work undertaken and shared with the group.  
• Participation in research and/or audit.  
• Literature search and review, relevant to area.  
• Presentation or attendance and reflection on study days, conferences or seminars, e.g. clinical or professional topics.  
• Journal Club, e.g. attendance and reflection on.  
• Use of web-based learning resources, e.g. Practice Education website http://www.rgu.ac.uk/practice-education |
| | • Participation in Clinical/Education meetings, e.g. CLET or other relevant working groups.  
• Evidence of cascading information related to learning and development within or across departments.  
• Notes of planning and organisation of student placement.  
• Witness testimony of mentor acting as an advocate for learners.  
• Significant Event Analysis or Critical Incident related to learning and development.  
• Evidence of organisation of training events to meet the needs of students and other mentors |

Flying start ® (NES, 2006) http://www.flyingstart.scot.nhs.uk

Further examples of web based resources can be seen in Appendix III.
**Web Resources**

Flying start ® (NES, 2006) [http://www.flyingstart.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.flyingstart.scot.nhs.uk)


Learning Centre [http://www.learningcentre.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.learningcentre.scot.nhs.uk)

Learning and Teaching [http://www.learningandteaching.info/](http://www.learningandteaching.info/)


Making Practice-Based Learning Work [http://www.practicebasedlearning.org](http://www.practicebasedlearning.org)

Practice Education Website [http://www.rgu.ac.uk/practice-education](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/practice-education)


*The Development of Quality Standards for Practice Placements* [http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/practice%5Feducation/work/qualitystandards/](http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/practice%5Feducation/work/qualitystandards/)