

Enhancing Practice Learning Strategy: Recognising and Building on Excellence for Nursing and Midwifery Council Award Programmes

Introduction

The Enhancing Practice Learning Strategy is for all programmes leading to an NMC award. This includes pre-registration nursing and midwifery, specialist community public health nursing and modules leading to a NMC prescribing qualification. Practice learning includes a range of activities including learning which takes place during practice placements, mandatory training and simulated practice as permitted by the relevant NMC programme standards, for example, [Standards for Pre-registration Nursing Programmes](#) (NMC 2018a). The use of simulated practice will vary across programmes and fields. Simulated practice is not currently permitted under the [Standards for Pre-Registration Midwifery Programmes](#) (NMC 2019). Simulated learning is also used across programmes but does not always contribute to practice learning hours.

Practice learning is integral to the development of resilient, caring healthcare professionals who can provide evidence-based care as part of an interprofessional team. The partnership working between the Faculty, practice learning partners (PLPs), service users, carers and students demonstrates a commitment to provide an effective practice learning experience for students on programmes and courses leading to an NMC award. However, areas for development to further enhance the practice learning experience have been identified by students, PLPs, service users, carers, and Faculty staff. These have been identified in several data sources, such as student surveys, placement evaluations, Faculty Practice Learning Partnership meetings and the practice learning partnership committee.

The Enhancing Practice Learning strategy will evolve over time and is informed by the NMC [Standards Framework for Nursing and Midwifery Education](#) (NMC2018b) and [Standards for Students Supervision and Assessment](#) (NMC 2018c) which set out the key principles for approved education institutions and practice learning partners to ensure this is achieved. The importance of the learning culture and student empowerment set out in the NMC Education Framework (NMC 2018b) is reflected in the University's five steps to transformative education which emphasize the *provision of a learning environment that stimulates curiosity, supports intellectual endeavour and encourages independence over time* [Vision 2029](#). The Enhancing Practice Learning Strategy will also be linked directly to the principles and values of the [Faculty Student Experience Strategy¹](#), (appendix one). The Faculty and PLPs are also responsive to the NMC Emergency Standards (2020) that have been published since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and adapt the practice learning experience to reflect these changes as they occur.

The strategy is designed around five core areas of action which are of equal importance and interwoven:

- Student engagement and feedback
- Partnership working
- Quality assurance and enhancing practice learning evaluation
- Innovation and sharing best practice
- Communication and transparency

¹ Please note links in italics are currently housed on internal Faculty pages. This will be addressed as part of the Enhancing Practice Learning Strategy: communication and transparency.

These areas focus on the student's experience of practice learning across the university and practice learning setting as a core component of programmes of study. Integration of theory and practice throughout the student journey is central to the development of nurses and midwives committed to excellence. Practice learning is shaped by the learner's sense of belonging, which is influenced by acceptance and respect, integration into the clinical team and shared personal and professional values (Levett-Jones and Lathlean 2008). Four attributes of the practice learning environment influence the sense of belonging for learners, these are: the physical space, psychosocial and interaction factors, organisational culture and teaching and learning components (Flott and Linden 2016). The actions set out in this strategy are underpinned by the attributes of the practice learning environment to strengthen the student experience in practice and enhance practice learning.

1. Student engagement and voice

The Enhancing Practice Learning Strategy is one aspect of student engagement and voice which is supported by the Faculty Student Experience Strategy. Student engagement and voice is woven throughout and is reflected in the membership of the [Practice Learning Partnership Committee](#). Students will continue informing the Enhancing Practice Learning Strategy which will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Following feedback from students, work is in progress revisiting the management and delivery of mandatory training to enhance the student experience. This review will be completed by July 2021.

A range of support offered by the Faculty and PLPs is available for students to support learning in practice.

Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment

The Faculty and PLPs are utilising the NMC (2018) Standards for Students Supervision and Assessment (SSSA) to support student learning in practice. Practice supervisors (PS) and practice assessors (PA) will be prepared using the [PLPLG eLearning and workshop](#). The Faculty will run at least two practice assessor workshops per academic year for Private and Voluntary Organisations (PVOs). Annual updates are delivered for practice supervisors and practice assessors, which provides an opportunity to share feedback from students and best practice for supporting practice learning. These annual updates will be provided by the PLP, with support from the link lecturer team as appropriate. The Faculty will run at least two annual updates for practice supervisors and practice assessors per academic year for PVOs.

The [Faculty Strategy for the Implementation of the SSSA](#) sets out the details of the academic assessor (AA) role who supports the student and practice assessor throughout the duration of the programme of study. The academic assessor cannot be the same person for consecutive parts. If a practice assessor has concerns regarding a student in practice they must liaise with the academic assessor. Further details of the roles and responsibilities of students, practice supervisors, practice assessors and academic assessors, along with a guide to the Pan London Nursing PAD 2.0 can be found [here](#).

Further details of the roles and responsibilities of students, practice supervisors, practice assessors and academic assessors along with a guide to the Midwifery Ongoing Record of Achievement (MORA) can be found [here](#). A section for undertaking the academic assessor role will be included on the [Practice Learning KEATs](#) site. This will be available for all academic and teaching staff including non-registrants who may be personal tutors.

Faculty partnership leads and link lecturers

Each PLP has an identified Faculty Partnership lead whose role is pivotal to partnership working to

ensure a high-quality and effective learning environment for pre-registration students, ensuring compliance with regulatory frameworks and support for post-registration education, continuing professional education and workforce development. They support the practice learning of pre-registration nursing and midwifery students by leading the link lecturer team to develop and deliver appropriate support. This may include in person or virtual drop-in sessions or teaching sessions hosted by the PLP.

Clinical teachers

Clinical teachers contribute to the practice learning experience of all students utilising a variety of teaching, learning and assessment strategies across different placement settings. They complement existing roles such as practice supervisors/practice assessors, trust education teams, the link lecturer team and teaching staff in the Faculty. Secondment from PLPs to the clinical teacher role provides an opportunity for practice staff to engage in professional development whilst supporting practice learning within the clinical setting alongside membership of the teaching team for clinically based modules. The clinical expertise of clinical teachers supports the practice focused education for students including contributing to Interprofessional education (IPE) and simulated practice strategies.

PLP practice learning support

Each PLP has a designated team/person who supports practice learning. The role of this team/person will vary across PLPs but includes developing and updating practice supervisors and practice assessors, involvement in placement mapping, communication between the PLP, Faculty and students. The team/person also acts as a point of contact for any concerns that students or practice staff may have during a practice learning placement. These may be related to personal concerns or clinical practice, for example, professional values.

Practice preparation

Whilst support for practice learning is ongoing, formal practice preparation will be provided at the start of each part (pre-registration nursing) or academic year (pre-registration midwifery). This will be delivered by the programme or cohort lead before the first placement in the part. This will provide an opportunity to explore the links between theoretical and practice learning, the practice assessment documentation and any questions students may have.

Personal tutor support

Personal tutoring is a key component of the support provided to all students in the Faculty. The focus of the tutor/tutee meetings will address key elements of the programme depending on the time of year and includes the practice learning experience, academic progress, career progression and health and wellbeing. There is an expectation that students will meet their personal tutor prior to commencing their first practice learning placement, and subsequently after each placement. At the end of each part the student must meet with their academic assessor for the progression meeting and their personal tutor as part of the regular pastoral support processes.

Peer support and feedback

As well as support from Faculty and practice learning staff, students are also able to support each other. Peer support is facilitated in a number of ways: working with students across a range of programmes and cohorts while in practice, attending drop-in sessions facilitated by the link lecturer team or the PLP education team and teaching sessions hosted by the PLP. Engaging in peer review and receiving feedback from peers exposes students to a diversity of perspectives as well as enabling students to develop skills in peer review and feedback. This enables students to develop feedback literacy by appreciating feedback and the variety of ways it can be provided, being able to make judgements on their own learning and that of peers, manage the impact of feedback in a proactive way and to be able to respond to the feedback and take action (Carless and Boud 2018). Peer feedback is formative and can be included with the practice assessment documentation.

2. Partnership working

Partnership working with all key stakeholders is central to the provision of high-quality practice learning which is underpinned by the sharing of best practice and evidence. Whilst relationships between PLPs, Faculty staff, service users, carers and students are key, the following activities focus on supporting partnership working.

Practice Learning Partnership Committee

The [Practice Learning Partnership Committee](#) (PLPC) leads the strategic development and enhancement of practice learning for pre-registration and post qualification students; and supports the Faculty Education Committee to assure the quality of practice learning. It will do this in partnership with PLPs and student representatives by monitoring the implementation of NMC, university and Faculty standards, policies and practice and making recommendations for changes in policies and practice where required. The PLPC will meet termly and report to the Faculty Education Committee. Standing items for discussion will include student, PLP and Faculty feedback; health and safety; equality, diversity, inclusion; innovation and best practice; and continuing professional education and workforce development.

Faculty and Practice Learning Partnership meeting (formerly key account meetings)

The overall aim of the [Faculty and Practice Learning Partnership meeting](#) is to promote partnership working to ensure a high-quality learning environment for pre-registration students, ensuring compliance with regulatory frameworks and support for post-registration education, continuing professional education and workforce development. The partnership meeting supports the Practice Learning Partnership Committee to assure the quality of practice learning. It will do this by monitoring the implementation of NMC, Faculty, and PLP standards, policies and practice and by sharing best practice. These meetings will take place twice a year (November and May/June) and inform the work of the PLPC. To support transparency the Faculty will share an update prior to each meeting including information under the following topics: practice learning, health and safety, recruitment, learning, teaching and quality as well as information on postgraduate taught studies, continuing professional education and workforce development. Standing items for discussion will include student feedback, PLP and Faculty feedback, health and safety, equality, diversity and inclusion and innovation and best practice.

Pan London Practice Learning Groups

The Faculty is a member of the Pan London Practice Learning Group (PLPLG) which represents universities offering nursing across London. It focuses on development, support, monitoring and evaluation of a standardised London wide approach to practice learning and assessment for a range of learners on pre-registration nursing programmes. The Faculty is also a member of the Midwifery Practice Assessment Collaboration (MPAC) which represents universities offering pre-registration midwifery programmes across England and Northern Ireland. Membership of the PLPLG and the MPAC support the sharing of best practice across programmes reducing variation in the practice learning experience for students.

Service users and carers enhancing practice learning

The experience and perspective of service users and carers provides an opportunity to further enhance student experiences in practice learning. The practice assessment documentation for pre-registration nursing and midwifery students includes service user feedback as part of the assessment process. Service users are also partners in Curriculum design and development. Partnership working

with service users and carers is key to the development of nurses and midwives who are able to meet the needs of service users and carers mindful of the variety of individual needs and experience. Service users and carers are also able to provide feedback regarding pre-registration students using excellentstudent@kcl.ac.uk.

3. Quality assurance and enhancing practice learning evaluation

The quality of the practice learning experience plays a key role in student learning and is the responsibility of all involved, the PLPs, Faculty and students. The following core actions support the quality of the practice learning experience.

Evaluation of Practice Learning

Feedback from regarding the practice learning experience is a valuable source of information to ensure the ongoing delivery and development of high-quality practice learning.

To this end all pre-registration nursing and midwifery students are required to complete the placement evaluation at the end of each placement. Students have a responsibility to ensure that the evaluations are completed to support the identification of best practice and themes for further development. At the end of each academic year a summary of the placement evaluations reviewed to identify best practice. The summary will be presented at the first Faculty Education Committee of the academic year.

Students on the specialist community public health nursing and modules leading to a NMC prescribing qualification undertake practice learning within their employing organisation. Practice learning evaluation is undertaken as part of the programme and module evaluation.

Rounded experience

The placement pattern for each pre-registration nursing and midwifery student is designed to ensure a rounded experience which encompasses the range of healthcare delivery. The rounded experience reflects healthcare service delivery and as such includes a range of inpatient and community settings. For example, for pre-registration midwifery students the rounded experience encompasses the range of healthcare delivery in maternity, including antenatal, postnatal, labour, and community. Details of the rounded experience for all programmes can be found in the [Practice Learning Handbook](#). The Faculty is working with PLPs and Quantum, the provider of InPlace (the placement management tool), to introduce a placement management system which can support auto allocation of placements in line with the rounded experience for September 2021.

Education audit

The Pan London Practice Learning Environment audit is used to review, monitor and enhance the quality of the practice learning environment for pre-registration nursing and midwifery and specialist community public health nursing. For the NMC prescribing qualification a practice learning environment audit is also undertaken. The educational audit process may lead to the production of a specific action plan, where needed. This ensures that the practice learning environment continues to meet agreed standards or is supported in enhancing quality where necessary. The audit will 'normally' be undertaken every two years unless there is a significant change in the learning environment. Ongoing monitoring will be undertaken in several ways, e.g., through student and staff feedback, partnership review meetings and informed by Care Quality Committee and other related reports.

External Examiners

External Examiners are appointed for each programme to ensure that assessment processes are fair,

rigorous, and operated equitably. The practice assessment documentation for all NMC awarding programmes and modules is reviewed by an external examiner. At least once a year external examiner reviewing the practice assessment documentation will have an opportunity to meet with practice supervisors and practice assessors. This will take place at a virtual meeting held before the relevant assessment sub board.

4. Innovation and sharing best practice

Practice learning needs to reflect the evolving nature of health care delivery. To achieve this, it is imperative that sharing of best practice and opportunities for innovation are shared by PLPs, the Faculty and students. This is supported by several actions set out in this strategy including the Practice Learning Partnership Committee, Faculty and Practice Learning Partnership meeting, membership of the Pan London Practice Learning Group and Midwifery Practice Assessment Collaboration as well as placement evaluations and other avenues of student feedback.

For the purpose of the Faculty [Simulation Strategy](#) the term simulation is used to encompass all aspects of simulation from haptic and psychomotor skills to high fidelity scenarios. This includes face to face simulated learning and practice as well as developing virtual simulation. The responsiveness of the Faculty has led to several innovations during the past 12 months, which include the use of the practicum and the virtual international elective placement for some pre-registration programmes. Opportunities to share the best practice from these innovations will take place at the Practice Learning Partnership Committee and the Programme Management Boards for adult, child, mental health, midwifery and Specialist Community Public Health Nursing.

Piloting the use of the Pan London ePAD with the 2020 MSc pre-registration nursing students provides an opportunity to move to an online process for the assessment of practice learning. The ePAD has potential to enhance communication between the student, practice supervisor, practice assessor, academic assessor and personal tutor. The pilot provides an opportunity to evaluate the ePAD and consider how it could be used to support facilitation and assessment of practice learning including completion of hours contributing to practice learning. The Faculty is part of a Pan London research evaluation of the ePAD being led by Middlesex University.

5. Communication and transparency

Communication and transparency are woven throughout the Enhancing Practice Learning Strategy, as evidenced in the Practice Learning Partnership Committee and Faculty and Practice Learning Partnership meetings.

Faculty Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Vision, Values and Goals

The Faculty is embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into everything. This includes championing positive action, driving change and celebrating individuality. The Faculty vision is to ensure fairness and equity adopting an intersectional approach: recognising multiple identities can impact on equality, diversity and inclusion by addressing barriers and co-creating solutions. Student-related priorities include: (i) Race equality and anti-racism, (ii) Inclusive education (student attainment and widening participation), (iii) Trans and gender non-binary inclusion, (iv) Preventing bullying and harassment. The Faculty and students with disabilities and long-term conditions are coproducing resources to facilitate communication with practice partners about disability and mental health.

Allocation of host practice learning organisation and placements

All pre-registration nursing and midwifery students are allocated a host practice learning organisation where they will undertake most of their practice learning. Some students may also undertake a small number of placements outside their host practice learning organisation in order to meet the

requirements for the rounded experience. The host practice learning organisation is allocated at the start of the programme. Whilst the address provided by the student is taken into consideration for the allocation students may not be based at the nearest geographical practice learning organisation. To achieve the rounded experience pre-registration nursing students will be required to undertake placements across all sites within the host practice learning organisation. Pre-registration midwifery students may be required to travel to alternative sites for some placements. The [Host Practice Learning Organisation Transfer Policy](#) sets out the criteria which would be considered for a change of host practice learning organisation, for example, travel time over 3 hours and 20 minutes per day. Students who live outside London can expect to travel further to placement, this criterion will not normally apply to students whose home address is outside London. The policy provides a mechanism for students to request a host practice learning organisation transfer.

The placement pattern for each pre-registration student is designed to ensure a rounded experience which encompasses the range of healthcare delivery. To achieve this placement location will vary across the host practice learning organisation and may include a small number of placements with a different provider. The [Change of Placement Allocations Policy](#) is for pre-registration students who have exceptional circumstances which affect their ability to attend the allocated placement. The policy provides a mechanism for students to request a change of placement.

Practice learning zone

The [Practice Learning Zone](#) is an external facing website that acts as a resource for PLPs, including practice assessors, practice supervisors and education teams. The Practice Learning Zone complements the [practice learning Keats](#) site which is available for pre-registration nursing and midwifery students. The Practice Learning Zone includes links to the pre-registration practice assessment documents for nursing and midwifery programmes, Faculty practice learning policies and guidance and the practice learning handbook. In order to support practice staff working with students an overview of the pre-registration nursing and midwifery programmes and Specialist Community Public Health Nursing including details of the modules taught each term is available on the practice learning zone and can be found [here](#).

Practice learning handbook

The [Practice Learning Handbook](#) sets out the key information required before during and after pre-registration nursing and midwifery practice learning placements. The handbook is updated annually in preparation for the new academic year. The handbook is available on the Practice Learning Zone for students, academic and teaching staff and PLPs, including practice supervisors and practice assessors.

Practice Learning Keats site

The [Practice Learning Keats site](#) is for pre-registration nursing and midwifery students and academic and teaching staff. The site provides key information regarding practice learning and includes professional values, learning in practice, uniform and dress, health and safety, practice assessment and process details such as travel expenses. The site is being reviewed and student representatives have been asked to feedback on the structure and content. Going forward the site will include a section for academic assessors and personal tutors which will be hidden from the students. The site is designed to supplement the Practice Learning Handbook which provides key information for pre-registration nursing and midwifery students, PLPs and academic and teaching staff.

Host organisation KEATs site

The Host Organisation Keats site is for pre-registration nursing and midwifery students and academic

and teaching staff. The site provides information on the PLP and Faculty practice learning support staff, PLP information, PLP based teaching and health and safety. Work is underway to provide access to the host organisation Keats site to the PLP team/person who supports practice learning to facilitate the timely updating of information and sharing practice learning opportunities.

6. Key Performance Indicators

To support the Enhancing Practice Learning Strategy as a live document, several key performance indicators (KPIs) have been set out. These KPIs set out the expectations of the Faculty, PLPs and students.

KPI 1: Placement details for pre-registration nursing students to be confirmed by the PLP and Faculty placement teams 6 weeks prior to the start of the placement to enable the clinical area to prepare for the student, including the student's rota to be made available 4 weeks prior to the placement starting. It is acknowledged that where service delivery changes are required this KPI may not be met.

KPI 2: Placement details for pre-registration midwifery students to be confirmed by the PLP and Faculty at the start of the academic year. The student's rota to be made available 4 weeks prior to the placement starting. It is acknowledged that where service delivery changes are required this KPI may not be met.

KPI 3: Each PLP to have a generic email address for practice learning and student support to support timely information sharing between the PLP, Faculty and students.

KPI 4: If the student's rota is not available four weeks prior to the placement starting there will be flexibility for the first two weeks of the placement to enable the students to plan for caring responsibilities and commitments.

KPI 5: Each clinical area supporting student practice learning will have an induction pack available for students to support orientation to the practice learning setting.

KPI 6: Practice assessors who have concerns regarding a student in practice must liaise with the academic assessor. A tripartite meeting between the practice assessor, academics assessor or their nominated representative and the student must take place, virtually or in person, to discuss the concerns and agree an action plan for the student.

KPI 7: At least 80% of students will complete the placement evaluation at the end of each placement. These evaluations will be shared with the PLP and discussed at the partnership meeting to identify areas of best practice and themes for further development.

KPI 8: Emails to the nightingaleplacements@kcl.ac.uk email will be responded to within three working days. During busier periods this may be extended dependant on the nature of the query.

KPI 9: Links to all information related to practice learning, for example Terms of References, Student Experience Strategy and the Simulation Strategy will be available to external partners by the end of August 2021.

References

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Appendix One: The Student Experience Strategy: Vision, Principles and Mission

OUR VISION	Supporting student success, so they realise their full potential, regardless of their previous experience
OUR PRINCIPLES	To achieve this, we will aim high; make every action count; and involve, listen, and adapt
OUR MISSION	To support student success, we expect all staff and students to aim for S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

S

Student-Centred – *Commitment*

We expect our staff to be committed to enabling the success of every student, and adapt their practice accordingly	We expect our students to be committed to their personal and professional development at university and in practice, and throughout their studies
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U

Unique – *Care*

We expect our staff to be inclusive in their practice and committed to embrace the diversity of our students while improving their journey whether they are disabled, international, mature, full- or part-time, or from a non-academic background, and regardless of their race, gender, sexuality, ability, religion, or age	We expect our students to contribute their unique and diverse experience to enhance the experience of all in their learning community, at university and in practice, and whenever possible
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C

Challenging – *Courage*

We expect our staff to be bold in their practice and challenge students to be the best professionals possible	We expect our students to take ownership of their learning and face every challenge with courage and integrity
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C

Collaborative – *Communication*

We expect our staff to work in partnership with all students, academic, teaching, and professional services staff to improve the experience of all by listening to each other, accepting feedback, and applying visible change whenever required	We expect our students to work collaboratively, listen to others and take their views into account, and actively engage with everyone in their learning community, students and staff, at university and in practice
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E

Evidence-based – *Competence*

We expect our staff to be experts in their field, using data and best practice, whether it is academic, clinical, or administrative, and to keep their practice up to date	We expect our students to be competent professionals by acquiring the required level of skills, and by always using evidence to support their practice and research
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S

Supportive – *Compassion*

We expect our staff to listen to students and each other in an empathetic way, and actively support each other to create a peaceful and productive environment, and increase the well-being of all in our community, so no one feels excluded	We expect our students to be compassionate professionals, and be supportive and empathetic towards other students and staff, who are doing everything they can to provide them with the best experience possible
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S

Success-oriented – *World-Leaders*

We expect our staff to be leaders in providing the best student experience, academic, clinical, and administrative, in the world, thus enabling students to be successful in their studies and be confident leaders in their field	We expect our students to be committed to their personal and professional development at university and in practice, and throughout their studies, and be leading professionals, who will always be proud King's alumni
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