Scoping Report of the
Implementation of the National
Approach to Mentor Preparation:
Core Curriculum Framework

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This report is based on a study commissioned by NHS Education for Scotland

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Disclaimer
The views expressed in this report are those of the Research Team, and not necessarily those of the Commissioner/Funder - NHS Education for Scotland

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# Glossary of terms

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<tr>
<td>GCU</td>
<td>Glasgow Caledonian University</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEI</td>
<td>Higher Education Institution</td>
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<td>HoS</td>
<td>Head of School</td>
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<td>MREC</td>
<td>Multicentre Research Ethics Committee</td>
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<td>NES</td>
<td>NHS Education for Scotland</td>
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<td>NHS</td>
<td>National Health Service</td>
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<td>NMC</td>
<td>Nursing and Midwifery Council</td>
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<td>NU</td>
<td>Napier University</td>
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<td>PCG</td>
<td>Project Consultative Group</td>
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<td>PEF</td>
<td>Practice Education Facilitator</td>
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<td>RGU</td>
<td>Robert Gordon University</td>
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<td>UD</td>
<td>University of Dundee</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>University of Stirling</td>
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<tr>
<td>UWS</td>
<td>University of West of Scotland</td>
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<td>CORE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>National Approach to Mentor Preparation for Nurses and Midwives (NES 2007)</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project report will discuss the findings of a baseline/scoping exercise of the National Approach to Mentor Preparation for Nurses and Midwives (Core Curriculum Framework) (NES 2007) to six mentor preparation programmes in Scotland. The baseline/scoping exercise was commissioned by NHS Education for Scotland to evaluate the first phase of the implementation of the Core Curriculum Framework (NES 2007) to prepare mentors in Scotland.

The project was completed by a collaborative group of lecturers and Practice Education Facilitators from Napier University, University of Dundee, Queen Margaret University, NHS Lanarkshire and NHS Lothian.

Aims:
- Establish a base line of current practice in the delivery of mentor preparation programmes in provider institutions
- Scope the implementation of the national core curriculum framework by HEIs and Service Providers when preparing local programmes of mentor preparation
- Identify potential measurable performance indicators for an evaluation study

Design
Six HEIs were invited to take part, and six volunteered. Ethical approval was sought from each HEI's Ethics Committee. Following feedback necessary changes were made to information sheets and consent forms as appropriate and favourable ethics opinion was provided from each. No changes were requested in relation to the interview schedule. Heads of Schools provided management approval.

The baseline/scoping exercise study had 2 stages:
Stage 1: Documentary Analysis/Scoping Exercise of mentor preparation

- Scoping of pre-September 2007 mentorship programmes
- Review and analysis of the post-September 2007 curriculum / programme documentation within each HEI (n=6)
- Individual interview with mentorship programme leader within each HEI

A mapping tool (Appendix I) was configured by the Research Team, and each mentorship preparation programme was reviewed. From this exercise, a range of interview questions were formulated by the research team for use in the next stage of the study (Appendix 2). None of the programmes had reached its conclusion, and therefore there were no formal student evaluation data available.

Stage 2: Interviews to develop deeper understanding of the implementation process for post-September 2007 curriculum/programmes

- Focus group interviews (n=7) with service staff (e.g. PEFs) and senior lecturers/lecturers for each HEI

At each focus group interview, data were collected via recorded verbatim. A total of 7 focus groups and 3 one-to one telephone interviews (due remote and rural circumstances) were conducted. Thirty participants took part in interviews: 6 Programme Leaders, 6 senior lecturers/lecturers, 1 mentor and 17 Practice Education Facilitators, from a range of nursing (Adult, Child, Learning Disability, Mental Health) fields of practice, and midwifery. Each HEI provided a Programme Leader and one senior lecturer/lecturer and between 2-5 Practice Education Facilitators to take part.

None of the programmes had reached its conclusion, and therefore there were no newly qualified mentors available to set up such a focus group.
These data were constantly compared across the sites, with the literature and current research in this area, in order to meet the aims of the baseline/scoping exercise.

**Key Findings**

In summary the findings indicate that the National Approach to Mentor Preparation for Nurses and Midwives (Core Curriculum Framework) (NES 2007) was accepted and adopted over the 6 HEIs and their service partners. The work was seen as invaluable to providing a programme and work-based learning that was consistent and transparent – the main advantage of the work seemed to be in the nationally recognised transferability of the programme within Scotland. In other words, the movement of an individual mentor from one area to another meant that HEIs/service partners were willing to recognise this learning and place the mentor on their database. There was a general feeling that the Core Curriculum Framework had provided additional confidence in learning completed within other HEIs/work-based portfolios where the HEI had used the Core Curriculum Framework as a basis for their programme development.

Review of pre-September 2007 programmes demonstrated that these programmes varied in nature of delivery, their underlying philosophy, and the length of the programme. For example, in some HEIs the programme lasted 2 days while in others it lasted 3 days with additional written work required.

The Core Curriculum Framework had flexibility to respond to the diverse and changing context of learning by developing innovative and appropriate approaches to, and choices in, learning, assessment and supporting students. This is demonstrated in the concepts that were very similar across the programmes such as:

- mentors were developed as facilitators of learning;
- mentors were developed in such a way that they learned about guiding and supporting the learner using a variety of learning, teaching and assessment approaches applicable to the work-based environment;
the discussion and use of the mentor, and their professional judgement, in ongoing learning opportunities within the clinical environment and robust assessment of the student; and,

there was an emphasis on the development of a collaborative support and assessment process between the student and the mentor.

A recurrent theme within the data was that of increased emphasis on mentor accountability and the image of mentorship within the nursing and midwifery professions. All focus groups commented on these themes as the major differences between pre-September 2007 mentorship programmes to those developed to address the NMC Standards to Support Learning and Assessment in Practice (2008).

There were also concepts in which there were differences in emphasis or usage of the Core Curriculum Framework content within mentorship programmes, which was often as a result of the need to respond to the local needs of the area. For example, concepts such as the usage of the framework’s learning outcomes; the ‘prescribed’ versus ‘unprescribed’ nature of the portfolio of evidence; the accredited and non-accredited pathways through the programme; the criteria used for allocation as a supervising mentor (i.e. those involved in supervising student mentors); and the extent to which the flexible and fixed elements of the framework were used.

Recommendations and Further Research
This report on introduction of the Core Curriculum Framework encourages further development and research on the future of mentorship preparation and practice in Scotland. The collegial nature of decision-making and development of the Core Curriculum Framework to such preparation suggests that there is strong ‘buy-in’ to the concept of transferability of learning, and overall programme philosophy.
Future development of mentorship preparation and practice in Scotland: the findings suggest that staff from HEI and their practice partners, would value future developments, such as:

- Sharing good practice on learning, teaching and assessment approaches to mentorship preparation (e.g. conference, online repository)
- Sharing good practice on learning, teaching and assessment approaches to mentors’ annual updating and triennial review
- Continue with a national network for mentorship to encourage this collegial nature of working especially among programme leaders
- Set a date for framework review in light of experience from implementation of mentorship programmes and any further evaluation study findings
- Consider and develop a national template for portfolio structure, available electronically or hard-copy

Measurable performance indicators for an evaluation study: the findings suggest that further evaluative work could be carried out, with the following as main categories for measurable performance indicators:

- The impact of the framework on the standard of support and assessment for pre-registration nursing and midwifery students
  - Pre-registration students who have experienced mentorship before and after the framework’s implementation
  - Mentors’ perceptions and experiences on how well they felt the mentorship programme prepared them for mentorship practice
  - The number of mentors completing the programme annually and completing triennial review across Scotland
- The impact the framework has had (or not) on the image of mentorship, and the understanding of the role, within the nursing and midwifery professions
- Perceptions of mentorship preparation and the role of the mentor at strategic and operational levels of the HEIs, the NHS and other service partners
- Extent to which the mentorship role has been integrated into the KSF outline Personal Development Plans, Clinical Education Career Pathways and performance review for practice-based staff in Scotland
- Perceived influence the framework has had on AHP professions considering/implementing similar support and assessment systems for pre-registration students
  - The extent of transferability of mentorship preparation
    - Experiences of mentors who have transferred
    - Case study approach to compare a sample of portfolios of evidence between institutions
1. Context

There were a number of drivers which led to the formulation of the National Approach to Mentorship Preparation for Nurses and Midwives (Core Curriculum Framework) (NES 2007) in the preparation of mentors in Scotland. This section will provide an overview of the context to the Core Curriculum Framework.

The mentor has an integral and accountable role in the development of competence of student nurses and midwives as they progress towards registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). The mentor plays a pivotal role in protecting the public by ensuring that students are fit for purpose and practice through the planning and supporting of learning experiences and robust assessment processes.

The NMC (2006) Standards to Support Learning and Assessment in Practice (which has been revised in 2008) stated statutory requirements, making explicit the requirement for programme and placement providers to implement the standards, which have been mandatory since 1\textsuperscript{st} September 2007 (NMC Circular 17/2007).

The NMC define mentors as:

“...a registrant who, following successful completion of an NMC approved mentor programme or comparable preparation that has been accredited by an AEI as meeting the NMC mentor requirements has achieved the knowledge, skills and competence required to meet the defined outcomes.”

(NMC 2008:19)

Students on NMC approved pre-registration nursing education programmes, leading to registration on the nurses’ part of the register, must be supported and assessed by mentors. Students on NMC approved pre-registration midwifery programmes, leading to registration on the midwives’ part of the
register, can only be supported and assessed by mentors who have met additional criteria for sign-off (NMC 2008 section 2.1.3; p. 21).

The National Approach to Mentorship Preparation for Nurses and Midwives states:

“Previous mentor preparation programmes resulted in a variety of approaches by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The outcome of a scoping exercise and regional event conducted by NES in June 2006, highlighted challenges for those placement providers who were required to prepare mentors to support students from more than one institution. The consultation also demonstrated a need to refocus current mentor programmes on the principles supporting learning which would be transferable across programmes and disciplines, rather than on the content of pre-registration programmes.”

(NES 2007: 5)

In 2007 NES facilitated the development of a core curriculum framework for mentor preparation in Scotland. This was produced by a working and steering group with representation from HEIs in Scotland, Scottish College Sector, NHS Boards, NHS Education for Scotland, Scottish Government, Independent Sector, and Open University. The framework had the potential for Scotland wide consistency and transferability, and to be flexible in delivery to meet local and specific areas of care requirements, as well as individual student’s learning needs.

The framework has informed the development of local programmes of mentor preparation in Scotland in 2007/2008. Utilising best/evidence based practice, the framework incorporates learning outcomes, suggested content, and work-based assessment which meets the requirements of the NMC mentor standard 2.1 (NMC 2008, p.19-21) and includes guidance to evidence achievement of the NMC mentor standard. Stakeholder information is included which offered support to implement and maintain a mentorship programme which is fit for purpose.
The core curriculum framework guides Programme Leaders in the development of local programmes of preparation and guides mentors to consistently achieve the learning outcomes required of NMC (2008) within a work-based portfolio which empowers mentors to become a credible, effective, valued, and a practical supporter of learning and assessment in clinical practice. The framework emphasises the following elements to mentorship preparation:

- Mentors should be facilitators of learning.
- The learning experience should develop the student.
- Mentors should guide and support the learner using a variety of learning, teaching and assessment approaches applicable to the work-based environment.
- The mentor-learner relationship should encompass the notion of a collaborative process between an experienced practitioner and a learner.
- The framework will have flexibility to respond to the diverse and changing context of learning by developing innovative and appropriate approaches to, and choices in, learning, assessment and supporting students.
- The implementation of the framework will encourage experienced mentors to use professional judgement in learning, teaching and assessment.

2. **Aims of the project**

The overall aims of the project were to:

- Establish a base line of current practice in the delivery of mentor preparation programmes in provider institutions
- Scope the implementation of the national core curriculum framework by HEIs and Service Providers when preparing local programmes of mentor preparation
- Identify potential measurable performance indicators for an evaluation study
3. Convenience Sample
Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU), Napier University (NU), Robert Gordon University (RGU), University of Dundee (UD), University of Stirling (US), University of the West of Scotland (UWS) volunteered to take part in the study – there were 6 participating institutions. All necessary ethical approval was sought and a favourable ethics opinion provided. Ethical approval was sought from each HEI’s Ethics Committee. Following feedback, necessary changes were made to information sheets and consent forms as appropriate and favourable ethics opinion was provided from each. No changes were requested in relation to the interview schedule. Heads of Schools provided management approval.

Each HEI was allocated a dedicated researcher from the research team and a Practice Education Facilitator (PEF). At each focus group interview, data were collected and recorded verbatim. A total of 7 focus groups and 3 one-to-one telephone interviews (due to remote and rural circumstances) were conducted. Thirty participants took part in each interview: 6 Programme Leaders, 6 senior lecturers/lecturers, 1 mentor and 17 Practice Education Facilitators, from a range of nursing (Adult, Child, Learning Disability, Mental Health) fields of practice, and midwifery. Each HEI provided a Programme Leader and one senior lecturer/lecturer and between 2-5 Practice Education Facilitators to take part.

Each participating HEI will not be identified within the findings, and reporting will be anonymised.

4. Design

There are multiple issues to consider when evaluating any educational programme. The research team took cognisance of the fact that the delivery of mentorship preparation programmes is complex (in terms of variables such as people, events etc.), dynamic (can change unpredictably), variable and is dependent on its context. The project was undertaken during which time HEIs and their service partners were developing and implementing their mentorship
programme for the first time and therefore did not have the benefit of reflecting upon running the programme to its conclusion. The researchers sought views and experiences of the individuals involved within the development and implementation of the mentorship programmes and were an essential part of data.

A combination of data collection methods were used to capture the complexity of the experiences and improve validity of findings (Jacobs 2000; Edelenbos & Buuren 2005; Bezzi 2006; Brown 2006). The use of mixed methods ensured that we gained different perspectives and understandings so as to provide a rich and comprehensive insight in terms of the implementation process. It also serves to further validate findings and add to the rigor of the research (Halcomb & Andrew 2005; Williamson 2005).

The mentorship programmes have distinct parts which needed to be understood and compared: what is written in the programme documents and prospectus; what is described by the teaching staff as their intentions; what is actually delivered; and what is perceived to have been delivered by the students/service areas. All these elements were explored and synthesised in the data.

Data collection was done in 3 stages. Table One provides an overview of the stages of the scoping exercise.

Table One: Overview of stages of the scoping exercise

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<tr>
<td>• Scoping of pre-September 2007 mentorship programmes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Review and analysis of the post-September 2007 curriculum / programme documentation within each HEI (n=6)</td>
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<td>• Individual interview with mentorship programme leader within each HEI</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 2: Interviews to develop deeper understanding of the</strong></td>
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Stage 1 involved documentary analysis/scoping exercise of the 6 mentorship preparation curriculum/programme documentation determined:

- **Course configuration**: the balance between teaching and learning methods; the focus, timing, phasing and length of indicative content topics; the use and nature of work-based learning opportunities; quality processes at HEI level.
- **Content analysis**: to identify the range and type of knowledge delivered to prepare the students for their mentoring role; facilitate the acquisition of knowledge to inform the skills for practice and to meet learning outcomes; the support mechanisms in place within service provider areas to support the mentor.
- **Practice assessment**: to identify the tools used to capture work-based learning; criteria developed for portfolio developed; marking criteria and process for portfolios.

These data were constantly compared across the sites, with the literature and current research in this area, in order to meet the aims of the scoping exercise study. For example, constant comparative analysis involves comparing a code or category with every other code or category to ensure that they are mutually exclusive and that there is saturation from the data i.e. no further data collection will reveal any further information or add further understanding to the code or category.
The assessment programme: to identify the balance of academic and practical abilities; portfolios; the preparation and support of assessors of portfolios.

The Research Team used a collaborative approach to design, test and refine the mapping tool (Appendix I) used within the phase of the project.

As part of this documentary analysis, it was anticipated that HEIs would provide copies of student evaluations – however there were no cohorts of students who had completed the programme available at the time of data collection.

The aim of the second stage was to gain a detailed stakeholder perspective about expectations and experiences of the programme during the implementation phase of the national framework. At the initial point of contact, Heads of School were asked to identify a key contact within each HEI. The key contact (i.e. the mentorship programme leader) was asked to take part in an individual interview, and arranged a focus group, comprising of personnel involved in course delivery (e.g. HEI lecturers and PEFs) (n=8-10 participants per HEI). The number and spread of lecturers and PEFs involved in each focus group was dependent on staff availability.

It had been anticipated that a sample of student mentors and their supervising mentors would have been involved in another focus group - however there were no cohorts of students who had completed the programme available at the time of data collection.

Findings from stage 1 (documentary analysis) was used to inform the development of the interview schedule (Appendix 2).

Qualitative data were transcribed and analysed using the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Transcripts and field notes were coded and similar concepts compared. Emergent concepts from one setting (and from the variety of sources) will influence the data collection and
purposive sampling in the next setting. Thus data collection and analysis run concurrently and capitalise on the cumulative and iterative nature of the propositions. NIVIVO (a software package for qualitative data analysis) was used to code and categorise qualitative data.

6. Findings
This scoping exercise explored the aims of the study from staff (i.e. senior lecturers, lecturers, a mentor and PEFs) perspectives involved in developing and implementing the mentorship programmes within their own local areas. Stage 1 provided our initial baseline information from which we structured a semi-structured question set (Appendix 2) for subsequent focus group interviews in stage 2 of the project. When data were transcribed and coded there were a number of key themes and categories which emerged. Throughout this section, the key themes and categories will be discussed and will address a number of issues as this occurs, which will include:

- A combined curriculum documentary analysis mapped to national core curriculum framework for mentorship preparation
- A baseline of previous and current practice in the delivery of the national core curriculum framework for mentorship preparation
- Expectations and experiences of the programme
- The teaching strategies in place to support mentors in practice to enable their development
- Evolving expectations and experiences of the use of work-based assessment
- Factors which influence the decisions of the assessor of the work-based assessment

From these findings, the research team have noted a number of key messages, identified potential developments for mentorship preparation and practice within Scotland, and recommended potential measurable performance indicators for an evaluation study. These are detailed in subsequent sections.

Eight Key Categories emerged from data collection and analysis:
a. The mentor’s role
b. Values, principles and philosophy of the programme
c. Support and assessment of students
d. Programme structure
e. Updating and triennial review
f. Mentor accountability
g. The image of mentorship
h. Strategic and operational levels of mentorship preparation

A discussion within each of these categories will be provided, utilising data from the mapping tool, and verbatim quotes from interviews.

a. The mentor’s role
The mentor’s role was viewed as an essential part of nursing and midwifery. There was real sense that the role of the mentor and its image had been greatly enhanced, both in its understanding and its operational direction within each HEI and their practice partners. The Core Curriculum Framework had been particularly useful for HEI and service partners to ‘... make sense of and operationalise NMC standards …’ (Programme Leader).

Overall, there was a focus on the learning and teaching approaches available to mentors using the units within the Core Curriculum Framework:

“I see mentorship as a facilitation of the student’s learning and unit 1 of the framework has useful suggestions for content and approach to learning and teaching on our programme.” (Programme Leader)

The Core Curriculum Framework stressed that the mentor had to make the most of opportunities available within each environment, and assess the student’s learning needs and performance in a reliable and valid manner.

“...there is an emphasis in our programme on the learning opportunities available ....the mentor has to facilitate the student’s learning within those opportunities.” PEF
“... when the mentor uses a learning opportunity, he/she must be able to assess the student. The framework [i.e. Core Curriculum Framework] emphasises the need for the mentor to work with the student ....and give constructive feedback. This will then inform the mentor’s rationale for assessing, or in other words, why he/she has passed or failed the student. There is a real emphasis on that now.” Programme Leader

The was a feeling from participants that previous (i.e. pre-September 2007) programmes implicitly covered topics areas such as those mentioned in the previous paragraph, but the Core Curriculum Framework had helped to emphasise, and explicitly discuss key aspects of the mentor role that were expected through NMC standards. For example, a PEF stated that by the end of the programme, “…mentors should become confident in making assessment decisions.”

b. Values, principles and philosophy of the programme

The values, principles and philosophy of the programmes across Scotland are very closely aligned. All participants agreed that programmes had been developed with the aim of creating a mentor who could support and assess students within any practice environment, and who had the knowledge, skills and understanding required from the NMC Standards to Support Assessment and Learning in Practice (2008). Using the mapping tool (Appendix 1) to map values, principles and philosophy of the Core Curriculum Framework to each programme document, the research team demonstrated that every programme in Scotland was very similar. These similarities were noted:

- in the learning, teaching and assessment approach of the programme;
- the content of the programme in relation to learning, professional relationships and accountability, and assessment;
- the use of scenario-base examples; and,
- the emphasis on the value of partnership working with service partners.
Participants all expected that by completing the programme, mentors would have completed a programme which should be transferable and readily accepted by other HEIs and service providers:

“...it should be transferable...” Mentor

“...we would look at whether the mentor had completed another programme and we would accept that.” HEI lecturer

c. Support and assessment of students
One of the key themes throughout the exercise was the extent to which the support and assessment of the mentor was a strong feature of all of the programmes within Scotland.

In general, the participants rated the content of the framework highly. Again, the explicitness and operational features of the framework provided all participants with direction in relation to curriculum development of the mentorship programme:

“The framework has 3 units which helped us to structure our curriculum .... Although we used slightly different learning outcomes, we still mapped the learning outcomes and content of our programme to the framework [i.e.. Core Curriculum Framework] ...I think we recognised the expertise that was used in the framework’s development.” (Programme Leader)

The approach taken to the development of the Core Curriculum Framework was also commented upon:

“The partnership approach to the development of the framework was commendable – I hope that this is used for other developments within the NHS and other service partners and HEIs.” (PEF)
“The framework was great in providing some real case study examples that we could use within classes .... These added to the discussion during the programme and were really valued by student mentors.” (Programme Leader)

During data analysis, there was an overwhelming emphasis on the assessment of students by mentors. As mentioned earlier, there was an appreciation that there was a need to make the assessment process transparent, reliable and valid. All participants stated that assessment was the linchpin of any mentorship programme and the framework had facilitated programme leaders, lecturers and PEFs to include these essential aspects in all programmes across Scotland:

“Reliable assessment, and how to do it, is much more explicit in these new programmes.....” (PEF)

“I very rarely get asked ‘how do I teach a skill?’..... it is all about the focus on the clinical assessment process and its documentation.” Programme Leader

d. Programme structure
All of the programmes offered face-to-face delivery of the programme even in remote and rural areas.

“…we liked the flexible and fixed elements of the framework...” HEI lecturer

“The first learning outcome within the framework is very academic and they [student mentors] had difficulty seeing the practical side.....” HEI lecturer. This can be difficult especially for those returning to study after a period of absence.

A mentor valued the face-to-face input on the programme:
“The face-to-face sessions are really important to mentors...... not all have IT [information technology] skills.” Mentor
Perhaps following from the partnership approach to framework development, HEIs and service partners had developed a local partnership approach for curriculum development and delivery of the programmes:

“We developed a partnership arrangement with NHS XXX ..... and involved PEFs to teach.” HEI lecturer

“We [i.e. PEFs] help the supervising mentor make judgement upon the student mentor’s ability to meet the NMC standards, while the HEI lecturers moderate this process. .....it is really a partnership.” PEF

The assessment for all the programmes within Scotland used a portfolio structure – however, the nature, content and ultimate assessment of this portfolio was an area of concern for mentorship programme teams, and there was an appreciation that there were some teething problems especially in relation to whether academic accreditation pathways were available/chosen by the student or not.

One lecturer noted,

“How do you get evidence for your portfolio? This was a huge source of anxiety for students…..it was not the weight it was the quality of the evidence that counts!” HEI lecturer

e.  Updating and triennial review

In some areas there is a commitment to face-to-face updating while in other areas there was a view that updating needed to be more flexibly arranged.

“It is important that supervising mentors are also prepared to sign off at triennial review. When students apply we ask for support from the manager and the need for contact days ..... and there is a supervising mentor in place.”

PEF

This arrangement was appreciated by all participants and all had put in place mechanism to ensure managerial and supervisory support was available to
student mentors before each programme was commenced. This was clearly articulated by the framework using the responsibilities of each partner which the framework articulated.

f. Mentor accountability
All of the interviews stated that compared to ‘old’ programmes, there was much greater emphasis on the accountability of the role.

“It raises the profile of accountability….it was there before but is more pronounced.” Lecturer

The framework had included accountability within its units which was utilised by all participants during programme development.

“The accountability section of the framework [i.e. Core Curriculum Framework] made us think about how we could develop this aspect of the programme.” Lecturer

Some programme developers had used the suggested scenarios within the Core Curriculum Framework to emphasise the accountability associated with the mentor role:

“We used and adapted some of the scenarios within the framework [i.e. Core Curriculum Framework] …we aim to use these to help mentors understand the accountability within the role. Some student mentors just don’t realise…but after using the scenario exercise it was really enlightening for us and the student mentors.” PEF

g. The image of mentorship
The focus group interviews revealed that they felt that the image, and subsequently the related ‘buy-in’ at strategic and operational levels of HEI and service partners, had helped to forge the way to enrolling student mentors onto the programme, but also to value a mentor’s contribution to the workforce development locally and within Scotland as a whole.
“Mentorship is held in higher regard than ever before.” PEF

There was also a developing notion that mentorship preparation was much more strategically controlled:

“… the random approach to mentorship preparation is gone. We have a point of contact and it is tied into the mentor database. We can train mentors particularly within areas of need i.e. where we need mentors.” PEF

Overall the image of mentorship was perceived to have increased and become part of, and much appreciated, role of nurses and midwives. One PEF expressed that the mentorship programme was about becoming “… prepared for the job they [mentors] are doing…. mentorship becomes part of your work.” While another PEF stated that “…nurses and midwives were wanting to become mentors as it was a highly respected role and had standards around it from NMC. The framework helped staff from HEI and service to understand the direction of mentorship and the need to prepare the mentorship workforce to the nationally agreed framework.”

h. Strategic and operational levels of mentorship preparation

There was clear evidence that in order for mentorship preparation to be effective, all levels of nurses and midwives had to be involved within the process of developing and implementing the mentorship programme.

“The framework helped us focus on achieving the standards [NMC] …it might have happened anyway but the framework probably encouraged us to be thinking and implementing the standards much more.” PEF

“There was great buy-in from practice …. probably because of the standards [NMC] and the NES framework helped to emphasise this.” PEF

6. Limitations of the study
The study has several limitations:

1. Only one mentor who had been prepared by a pre-September 2007 programme contributed to the data collection phase. There were no mentors from post-September programmes available at the time of data collection. The views of student mentors and supervising mentors would have been useful in understanding how these programmes had contributed to their development as a mentor (or not). This may have added depth to understanding about how the Core Curriculum Framework could be improved.

2. Data were collected before any of the mentor preparation programmes were completed. The participants did not have the whole programme to reflect upon and therefore their conclusions could be premature or could have changed by the end of the first running of their programme.

3. All participants were volunteers and were of a small number. This means that there could be potential bias in responses and there should be caution in regards to the generalisability of the findings.
7. Summary and key messages from the findings

In summary the findings indicate that the National Approach to Mentor Preparation for Nurses and Midwives (Core Curriculum Framework) (NES 2007) was accepted and adopted over the 6 HEIs and their service partners. The work was seen as invaluable to providing a programme and work-based learning that was consistent and transparent – the main advantage of the work seemed to be in the nationally recognised transferability of the programme within Scotland. In other words, the movement of an individual mentor from one area to another meant that HEIs/service partners were willing to recognise this learning and place the mentor on their database. There was a general feeling that the Core Curriculum Framework had provided additional confidence in learning completed within other HEIs/work-based portfolios where the HEI had used the Core Curriculum Framework as a basis for their programme development.

The framework had flexibility to respond to the diverse and changing context of learning by developing innovative and appropriate approaches to, and choices in, learning, assessment and supporting students. This is demonstrated in the concepts that were very similar across the programmes such as: mentors were developed as facilitators of learning; mentors were developed in such a way that they learned about guiding and supporting the learner using a variety of learning, teaching and assessment approaches applicable to the work-based environment; the discussion and use of the mentor, and their professional judgement, in ongoing learning opportunities within the clinical environment and robust assessment of the student; and there was an emphasis on the development of a collaborative support and assessment process between the student and the mentor.

A recurrent theme within the data was that of increased emphasis on mentor accountability and the image of mentorship within the nursing and midwifery professions. All focus groups commented on these themes as the major differences between pre-September 2007 mentorship programmes to that we have now (i.e. NMC approved programmes post-September 2007).
There were also concepts in which there were differences in emphasis or usage of the framework within mentorship programmes, which was often as a result of the need to respond to the local needs of the area. For example, concepts such as the usage of the framework’s learning outcomes; the ‘prescribed’ versus ‘unprescribed’ nature of the portfolio of evidence; the accredited and non-accredited pathways through the programme; the criteria used for allocation as a supervising mentor (i.e. those involved in supervising student mentors); and the extent to which the flexible and fixed elements of the framework was used.
7. Recommendations and Further Research

This report on the baseline/scoping exercise would encourage further development and research on the future of mentorship preparation and practice in Scotland. The collegial nature of decision-making and development of the national approach to such preparation suggests that there is strong ‘buy-in’ to the concept of transferability of learning, and overall programme philosophy.

Future development of mentorship preparation and practice in Scotland: the findings suggest that staff from HEI and their practice partners, would value future developments, such as:

- Sharing good practice on learning, teaching and assessment approaches to mentorship preparation (e.g. conference, online repository)
- Sharing good practice on learning, teaching and assessment approaches to mentors’ annual updating and triennial review
- Continue with a national network for mentorship to encourage this collegial nature of working especially among programme leaders
- Set a date for framework review in light of experience from implementation of mentorship programmes and any further evaluation study findings
- Consider and develop a national template for portfolio structure, available electronically or hard-copy

Measurable performance indicators for an evaluation study:

- The impact of the framework on the standard of support and assessment for pre-registration nursing and midwifery students
  - Pre-registration students who have experienced mentorship before (pre-September 2007 programmes) and after (post-September 2007 programmes) the framework’s implementation
  - Mentors’ perceptions and experiences on how well they felt the mentorship programme prepared them for mentorship practice
- The number of mentors completing the programme annually and completing triennial review across Scotland
  - The impact the framework has had (or not) on the image of mentorship, and the understanding of the role, within the nursing and midwifery professions
  - Perceptions of mentorship preparation and the role of the mentor at strategic and operational levels of the HEIs, the NHS and other service partners
  - Extent to which the mentorship role has been integrated into the KSF outline Personal Development Plans, Clinical Education Career Pathways and performance review for practice-based staff in Scotland
  - Perceived influence the framework has had on AHP professions considering/implementing similar support and assessment systems for pre-registration students
  - The extent of transferability of mentorship preparation
    - Experiences of mentors who have transferred
    - Case study approach to compare a sample of portfolios of evidence between institutions
References


15. Bibliography


Appendix I: Mentorship Programme mapping exercise

Date of completion: 
Reviewer(s): 
HEI Institution: 
Service Partners: 
Name of programme:

1. Philosophy: Map the core curriculum philosophy to the programme philosophy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Curriculum Philosophy</th>
<th>Programme philosophy (define and give comment)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor has an integral and accountable role in the development of competence of student nurses and midwives as they progress towards registration with NMC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor has a pivotal role in protecting the public by ensuring that students are fit for practice through planning an supporting of learning experiences and through robust assessment processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor is someone who has completed a NMC approved programme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor is a facilitator of learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship involves elements of communication, collaboration, guidance, participation, problem solving, supporting and challenging, and decision making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National approach to mentorship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Does the programme demonstrate evidence of the core values/principles of the core curriculum framework?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Curriculum core values/principles</th>
<th>Programme philosophy (give examples and give comment)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentors should continually seek to engage in best practice within the context of their work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each learning experience and the context which that learning occurs is of paramount importance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning should be embedded in the principle of equality; valuing and capitalising on the individual diversity of mentors and learners and the richness if their knowledge and experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective facilitation of learning will be based on professional judgement grounded in, and informed by, the integration of theory and practice and supported by evidence and research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning is continuous life-long process for both learners and mentors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Learning Outcomes:
   a. Has the programme explicitly used the learning outcomes within the core curriculum framework i.e. are the programme outcomes the same as the core curriculum framework?
   b. If not, is there a mapping exercise within the programme documentation?
   c. If not, is there evidence that the programme LO reflect the core curriculum LO? Describe in the box below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Describe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop, implement and critically evaluate effective strategies to support and enhance learning using best evidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critically examine opportunities for learning within the multi-professional practice environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess the performance and progress of learners in the practice environment and contribute to the assessment of learners from other professions and disciplines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect on the implications of individual responsibility and accountability of the mentorship role when making decisions on proficiency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop effective working relationships based on mutual trust and respect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Specific requirements: Does the programme reflect the requirements of the programme on a national basis?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core curriculum requirement</th>
<th>Give comments on programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notional learner effort 10 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 days protected learning time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum 2-days face to face contact and what is the nature of this face to face contact?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration of NMC mentor outcomes through a national portfolio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of the programme within 3-months or pro-rata</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporation of the practice requirements to equip mentors to achieve sign-off status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision by a sign-off mentor/practice teacher on 3 occasions to demonstrate competence in relation to sign-off</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Is the content arranged into the same 3-content sections as the core curriculum framework i.e. learning; professional relationships and accountability; assessment?
   a. If not, is there a mapping exercise within the programme documentation?
   b. If not, is there evidence that the programme content reflects the core curriculum content? Describe in the box below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core curriculum framework outline content</th>
<th>Map/describe programme content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Apply theories and principles of TLA to support effective learning in the practice setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Utilise best evidence to devise strategies which actively influence the creation of a quality, challenging and supportive learning environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Demonstrate the application of a range of knowledge, skills and appropriate attitudes to organise, mange and evaluate an individual’s learning experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Professional relationships and accountability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Explore issues of accountability for fitness for practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Critically appraise how professional relationships inform and underpin effective mentoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Apply the principles and stages of the assessment process to the effective assessment of learners in practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Provide constructive feedback to facilitate the enhancement of learner performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Manage the assessment process in challenging situations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Critically examine mentor accountability in relation to assessing learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Does the programme document describe how the scenario-based reflective exercises will be used (if at all?)?

7. List the responsibilities of the service providers, as defined within the programme document.
   
   a. Are there any additional responsibilities mentioned within the programme document which are not defined within the core curriculum framework (p.40-42)?

   b. Are there any responsibilities not addressed within the programme document which are defined within the core curriculum framework (p.40-42)?

8. As a result of carrying out this mapping exercise, are there any questions that need to be raised within the mentorship focus group?

9. Any additional comments?
Appendix 2: Interview questions

Programme Philosophy

1. Could you outline the philosophy of your mentorship programme?
2. How does your philosophy compare to that of the core curriculum framework? You may prompt the participants, for example, in terms of:
   a. Mentor accountability
   b. Development of student competence/fitness to practice towards registration
   c. Mentor’s role is pivotal in b – this could be examples such as development of the mentor’s communication and collaboration with student and HEI staff, guidance, problem solving, supporting, challenging, decision making
   d. Robust assessment by mentors

Core Curriculum Framework

3. How much did you use this framework to construct or build your programme?
4. What do you think the advantages were to you in having this core curriculum framework already constructed and agreed across Scotland?
5. How do you think this will influence the transferability of the mentorship training across Scotland? Will it be consistently recognised outside Scotland?

Principles of Learning

6. How is your programme delivered? Online, face-to-face, tutorials, etc
7. Do students come together at any points during the programme? How does this facilitate sharing experience, knowledge and skills?
8. How is reflection incorporated into the student mentor’s learning?
9. How do you encourage life-long learning in relation to mentorship?

Learning Outcomes

10. Has the programme explicitly used the learning outcomes form the core curriculum framework?
   a. If, not, was the CCF mapped to the LO for the programme?
   b. If not, why did you choose not to use the LO verbatim from the CCF?

NMC requirements

11. How is the 10 days of notional effort and the 5 days protected learning time explained within your programme?
12. The CCF state that 2-days face-to-face contact is advised – is this the case? Why?
13. Tell me about the student mentor’s portfolio
General questions

1. Have you used any scenario based reflective exercises from the CCF?
2. Did you use the template of responsibilities?