



## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) - Answers for those practitioners supporting, supervising and assessing Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions students on practice learning experiences during COVID-19**

Healthcare students across Scotland recommenced pre- and post-registration programmes at the start of the new academic term in September 2020. With this came the reinstatement of practice learning experiences for nursing, midwifery and allied health professions students (see Appendix 1 for details of all allied health professions). Since recommencement of practice learning experiences, several questions have arisen from practitioners supporting students during a time when COVID-19 continues to be prevalent in practice learning environments. This set of frequently asked questions and answers is designed to address some of the commonly asked questions. As well as national guidance that is available and signposted within this document, please also refer to any local guidance applicable to your practice learning environment.

<b>Supporting practice learning experiences during COVID-19</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Why have practice learning experiences continued across Scotland for NMAHP students given we are in a second wave of COVID-19?</b></p> <p>Practice learning experiences (PLEs) are a vital part of pre- and post-registration NMAHP programmes. For some Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions (NMAHP) students this can constitute 50% of their programme. During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic opportunities for PLEs were reduced and, in some case, stopped altogether so, a significant number of students across Scotland have a deficit in practice hours. Without PLEs students will be unable to complete their programmes and graduate, therefore leaving a shortfall in our future registered workforce, your future colleagues, which could have an impact on the delivery of safe, effective person-centred care in the coming years.</p>

2. **I am anxious about taking a student during this period of COVID-19 what should I do?**

Feeling anxious about supporting, supervising and assessing a student is not necessarily confined to this period of the COVID-19 pandemic, although the current situation does generally make us more cautious both in our personal, and professional, lives. Our professional codes clearly outline our role in supporting students' learning in the practice setting. The NMC (2020, p.10) code indicates that nurses and midwives should ***“share...skills, knowledge and experience for the benefit of...students' learning to help them develop their professional competence and confidence”***, while the HCPC (2016 p.6) standards of conduct, performance and ethics directs allied health professionals to ***“...work in partnership with colleagues [students], sharing your skills, knowledge and experience where appropriate, for the benefit of service users and carers”***.

The NMC and the four Chief Nursing Officers from across the United Kingdom issued a joint letter on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020 thanking nurses and midwives for continuing to support students in practice and underlined the commitment to carry on supporting students to successfully complete their programmes on time. If you have not read this letter it is available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/news/news-and-updates/joint-letter-second-wave-covid/>.

A joint statement issued by the AHP Directors Scotland Group, Universities and NHS Education for Scotland in July 2020 stated, ***“the vital role practice educators in Health, Social Care and other sectors play in creating the future workforce is both recognised and highly valued, and your ideas and support in providing student PrBL moving forward with adjustments to structure, delivery of services and working practices are greatly appreciated.”*** A copy of this statement can be accessed at: <http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/media/CLT/ResourceUploads/4099791/8c4993da-b48c-47af-931f-630fcbaf6a83.pdf> . This sentiment was reinforced in October 2020 when HCPC released a statement setting out broad expectations regarding registrants' participation in the supervision of students on HCPC approved programmes. The full statement can be accessed at: <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/about-us/corporate-governance/policies/statements/hcpc-statement-on-student-supervision/> . Guidance is also available which includes meeting HCPC standards in a challenging environment and advice for those providing

	<p>effective supervision or delegating work, Access at: <a href="https://www.hcpc-uk.org/covid-19/advice/applying-our-standards/supervision-and-delegation/">https://www.hcpc-uk.org/covid-19/advice/applying-our-standards/supervision-and-delegation/</a></p> <p>If you have any concerns about supporting, supervising or assessing students during this COVID-19 period there is a national network of allied health professions practice education leads (PELs), nursing and midwifery practice education facilitators (PEFs), care home education facilitators (CHEFs) as well as university lecturers who can support you in your role as practice supervisor, practice assessor or AHP practice educator. Details of contacts can be accessed locally.</p>
3	<p><b>I have heard that it is only final year students that are having practice learning experiences this year. Is this true?</b></p>
	<p><b>No.</b> All students in all years will require practice learning experiences over this current academic year 2020-21 but, should availability of practice learning experiences reduce further due to the impact of COVID-19, priority will be given to final year students. A letter issued to Directors of medicine, nursing, dentistry and pharmacy by Scottish Government on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020 formally instructed that the placement of final year students, and those for whom lack of placement may result in delay in qualification, be prioritised by Boards during 2020-21 to ensure timely graduation, registration and a consistent workforce pipeline. The full letter can be accessed at <a href="https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/dl/DL(2020)31.pdf">https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/dl/DL(2020)31.pdf</a></p> <p>The aim is to provide practice learning experiences for all students in all years and that is where your help is required. If you currently do not support students in practice but are keen to do so, then just contact your local AHP PEL, nursing and midwifery PEF or CHEF or local university representative.</p>
4	<p><b>What if I am worried about the student's wellbeing while they are in placement what support is available for them?</b></p>
	<p>If students are experiencing any issues during their practice learning experience, they should be encouraged to discuss these with you or the manager in the areas. They should be encouraged to also keep in touch with their university lecturers who are there to advocate on their behalf when required. Students mental wellbeing is a priority, and the National Wellbeing Hub is there for students to access: <a href="https://www.promis.scot/">https://www.promis.scot/</a></p>

	Universities will also have specialist counselling and mental health services available and, if required, students should be encouraged to seek this support when needed.
5	<p><b>We don't have enough space in our practice learning environment to support a student and maintain physical distancing and I am working mostly from home. How can I support a student?</b></p> <p>This is a relevant concern and requires your team to work more flexibly and may result in changes to usual working practices or shift patterns to support the observance of social distancing measures.</p> <p>Some modifications to consider could be the introduction of a rota that details when staff and students can access the practice learning environment, therefore limiting numbers at any one time. Agile working is not unique to the COVID-19 pandemic and there will be times when you are at your base and at other times, visiting or even working remotely with patients.</p> <p>It is important that students experience authentic working practices and are supported to learn what this means. Students may carry out some directed practice learning activities, accompany you on home visits or link in from their home to take part in, or undertake under your (remote) supervision any virtual consultations you are conducting from home.</p> <p>To learn more about how you can enable students to use digital platforms to engage with patients, other practitioners, or you as their practice educator or supervisor see the national guidance around virtual placements for nursing, midwifery and allied health professions students available at <a href="https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/i0njv2ns/vitual-placement-guidance.pdf">https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/i0njv2ns/vitual-placement-guidance.pdf</a> or contact your local AHP PEL, nursing and midwifery PEF or CHEF or local university representative for more information. They may be able to share some innovative approaches to help you.</p>
6	<p><b>Is there IT equipment available should students need this to participate in digital/virtual practice learning experiences?</b></p> <p>Students may be able to use their own devices, borrow a device from their University or the placement provider. NHS Health Boards and other placement providers will have specific guidance about the use of equipment for virtual consultations in line with local IT governance</p>

	<p>guidelines. NHS Education for Scotland have provided funding for IT equipment to support the recovery of NMAHP student placements. In the first instance to aid AHP placement recovery this is to support AHP student practice learning experiences. However, as AHP placement issues resolve, those resources ultimately will become an NMAHP resource available to support NMAHP students.</p>
<p><b>Student status during COVID-19 practice learning experiences</b></p>	
7	<p><b>Last year some healthcare students were deployed to practice learning experiences under student specific job descriptions and contracts. Is this happening again?</b></p> <p><b>No.</b> In Scotland, healthcare students will continue to undertake practice learning experiences in line with their programme requirements. Students' practice learning experiences will continue as planned and their supernumerary status as learners is being retained. Students will not be deployed under contract at the present time but, are being offered the opportunity of joining their local Bank and working some hours out with their programmed hours of study and placement. See question 5 for further detail.</p>
8	<p><b>I heard that nursing and midwifery students in England are being deployed under student specific job descriptions and contracts. Why is this not happening in Scotland?</b></p> <p><b>The position in Scotland is to safeguard all healthcare students' status, as a learner during practice learning experiences.</b></p> <p>While the NMC has reintroduced <i>Current emergency and recovery standards (14.01.21.)</i>: <a href="https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards-for-education-and-training/emergency-education-standards/">https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards-for-education-and-training/emergency-education-standards/</a>, the standards are not mandatory and the decision of whether to implement the emergency and recovery standards rests with universities, and senior health and care leaders in the four countries of the UK.</p> <p><b>In Scotland, following key stakeholder engagement, the NMC emergency and recovery standards in relation to student deployment will not currently be introduced as detailed in the Chief Nursing Officers letter on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021 available <a href="#">here</a>, it states:</b></p> <p><i>"Given that the progress of the COVID-19 pandemic in Scotland is not currently at the same stage as in England although we are very mindful</i></p>

	<p><i>of the increasing pressure on our NHS and staff, we are concerned not to disrupt healthcare students' programmes and learning through authorising full-time student deployment at this time. The timely graduation of this year's cohort is essential for the maintenance of the health and social care workforce, across the regulated professions. We wish students to retain their supernumerary status and their position in the clinical area as learners, as our priority."</i></p> <p>The only aspect of the NMC emergency and recovery standards being implemented in Scotland at this time is in relation to the additional flexibility around the Standards for student supervision and assessment where, exceptionally, the same person may fulfil the role of practice supervisor and practice assessor.</p>
9	<p><b>I have a nursing student who has commented that they do not feel their 'supernumerary' status is being recognised in our practice area. How should I manage this situation?</b></p> <p>Thank the student for raising the issue and have a discussion so you can understand it from the student's perspective. You may find the vignettes in Appendix 2 a useful tool to use to clarify the issue. Providing an explanation or taking limited action may be enough to resolve the situation. If not then both you and the student may wish to seek support from the PEF or CHEF or student's academic assessor.</p>
10	<p><b>Why are healthcare students being offered the opportunity of joining their local Bank and working hours out with their programmed hours of study and placement?</b></p> <p>On the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021 the Deputy Director of the Health Workforce Directorate in Scotland wrote to all healthcare students studying at university and college, to highlight an opportunity for them to apply to join the bank of healthcare workers at their local NHS Board. Many healthcare students already work on the bank and opening this opportunity to all healthcare students provides a mechanism for NHS Boards to draw on a healthcare support worker workforce should this be required due to the impact of COVID-19. It also offers the students the opportunity, should they so wish, to support the NHS at this crucial time without compromising their student status and practice learning experiences thus enabling them to progress with their course and graduate on time. The guidance is clear within the letter, that students should only consider taking up this option if they feel they are able to work, and it will not impact detrimentally upon their course of study or</p>

	<p>their personal circumstances. Students are also reminded that any Bank work must align to the employment guidance of their University/College course (there may be a maximum number of hours over and above their practice learning experience hours they can work).</p> <p>The letter from the Deputy Director of Health Workforce which provides further information and answers some FAQs on this topic is available at: <a href="https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/rapid-action-placement-oversight-group-rapog/">https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/rapid-action-placement-oversight-group-rapog/</a></p>
11	<p><b>If students take up this opportunity to work as health care support workers on the Bank can they work in the same area they are on for their practice learning experience?</b></p> <p><b>No.</b> In the letter to students from the Deputy Director of Health Workforce it states that any employment a student decides to undertake should not be in an area (for example ward or clinic) in which they are currently undertaking placement.</p> <p>The letter from the Deputy Director of Health Workforce which provides further information and answers some FAQs on this topic is available at: <a href="https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/rapid-action-placement-oversight-group-rapog/">https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/rapid-action-placement-oversight-group-rapog/</a></p>
12	<p><b>Are healthcare students still classed as “key workers”?</b></p> <p><b>YES.</b> Scottish Government has confirmed that healthcare students will continue to retain key worker status whilst undertaking practice placements and can access necessary documentation to substantiate this through their university. DL (2021) 02 published on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021 confirms this in point 28. The DL can be accessed at <a href="https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/dl/DL(2021)02.pdf">https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/dl/DL(2021)02.pdf</a></p>
<b>Practice learning experience - cancellation</b>	
13	<p><b>I work in a practice learning environment where we have an ongoing outbreak of COVID-19 and a student is due to start in a few days' time, should I cancel this student's placement?</b></p> <p><b>No.</b> Like you, any student you are supporting, supervising and assessing will have completed a COVID-19 Occupational Risk Assessment in line with the current Scottish Government 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on individual risk assessment for the workplace guidelines.' Students will</p>

have completed the COVID-age calculator tool, in order to calculate their COVID-age and identify their own level of vulnerability. You can be assured that only those students that fall into a COVID-age risk category compatible with the practice learning experience you are offering will be allocated to your area of practice. Should you wish to know more about the students', the education institutions' and practice providers role in this process then the risk assessment process for students titled, 'Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions Students' Return to Supernumerary Practice Learning Experiences – applying the COVID-19 Occupational Risk Assessment Guidance' is available at:

<https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/rapid-action-placement-oversight-group-rapog/>

Students' exposure to COVID-19 positive environments not only provides a unique learning experience but enables you to *“act as a role model of professional behaviour for students...to aspire to”* (NMC 2020, p.19) in terms of knowledge and skills such as triaging, infection control precautions, compassionate care, end of life care and psychological support. Remember students are keen to continue their development as health and care professionals. They also want to understand more about the role they can play supporting the health, social care and other services during this difficult time.

Please note the Scottish position, outlined here, in relation to any proposed cancellation of placements. A rapid action placement oversight group (RAPOG) has been established in Scotland which has published a placement principles paper stating that: *“Students already on practice learning experiences during a surge should not be removed from the practice learning experience (unless their COVID-19 risk assessment or occupational health assessments indicates otherwise). Nor should practice learning experiences be cancelled at a local level without following either the:*

- *Established AHP practice-based learning cancellation guidance, OR*
- *Established local N&M capacity reduction guidance and processes.”*

For further information on RAPOG and access to the placement principles paper please access <https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/rapid-action-placement-oversight-group-rapog/>



	<p>The 'Managing AHP Placement (Practice-based Learning) Cancellations: Guidance' is available at:  <a href="http://neskmwidgetlibraryprd.azurewebsites.net/media/WidgetFiles/1016786/Cancellation%20Guidance2020.pdf">http://neskmwidgetlibraryprd.azurewebsites.net/media/WidgetFiles/1016786/Cancellation%20Guidance2020.pdf</a></p> <p>The national governance process for changes to nursing and midwifery student capacity can be accessed at the NES COVID-19 supervision and assessment (nursing and midwifery) website at:  <a href="https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/covid-19-supervision-and-assessment-nursing-and-midwifery/">https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/covid-19-supervision-and-assessment-nursing-and-midwifery/</a></p>
14	<p><b>A student was due to start in my practice learning environment but unfortunately for reasons in line with the placement cancellation guidance I have had to cancel the placement at short notice. The student has already paid in advance for the accommodation booked for the duration of the placement. What advice can I give the student regarding reimbursement of expenses?</b></p> <p>Direct the student to discuss the issue with their university/college lecturer as they may be able to seek reimbursement via SAAS if they are an undergraduate student or through the university student hardship funds.</p> <p>The Scottish Government letter issued a letter on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020 titled 'NMAHPs students – changes to placement expenses' and this provides guidance on placement expenses for Scottish domiciled students on placement in the rest of the UK and information on additional travel costs incurred due to COVID-19 restrictions. A copy of which is available at: <a href="https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/rapid-action-placement-oversight-group-rapog/">https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/rapid-action-placement-oversight-group-rapog/</a></p>
15	<p><b>What happens if a student's nominated practice supervisor, practice assessor or practice educator is moved to another practice area because of COVID-19 and workforce needs?</b></p> <p>The practice supervisors, assessors or educators should seek advice from their local PEF, CHEF or AHP PEL or University link.</p> <p>In these circumstances it may be possible for the student to remain in the same placement and be supported by the remaining practice supervisors, assessor or educators within the team. Or alternatively, it may be deemed possible for the student to move with the practice</p>

	<p>supervisor, assessor or educator to their new area of work. <b>It is important that each student scenario is considered and assessed on an individual basis.</b></p> <p>If a move with the practice supervisor, assessor or educator is considered possible, the placement managers in both practice areas would need to confer to ensure workforce requirements would allow any move to take place.</p> <p>The practice supervisors, assessors or educators should seek advice from their local PEF, CHEF or AHP PEL to ensure the area has been audited in line with NMC or HCPC regulatory requirements, is deemed appropriate for placements and is appropriate for the students learning outcomes to be achieved.</p> <p>If a move is supported by all parties, the University should be contacted to ensure all parties are aware and university systems updated.</p>
<p><b>Students and travel while on practice learning experiences</b></p>	
16	<p><b>The student allocated to my practice learning environment lives outside the local authority area. Is he/she allowed to travel across local authority areas in order to attend placement?</b></p> <p><b>Yes</b>, like you, students are classed as key workers and can travel for ‘work’ (i.e., practice learning experiences) and education purposes. This includes travel across restricted boundaries in order to continue an allocated placement. They, like your other colleagues who commute across local authority areas to their workplace, will be required to follow the guidance on travelling safely available at <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-travel-and-transport/#travellingsafely">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-travel-and-transport/#travellingsafely</a>.</p> <p>A letter issued by the Scottish Government on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021, available at <a href="https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/dl/DL(2021)02.pdf">https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/dl/DL(2021)02.pdf</a> states: <i>‘students on placement are classed as key workers and can travel between local authority areas and tiers for work (i.e. practice learning experience) purposes.’</i></p>
17	<p><b>The student allocated to my practice learning environment has accommodation in the immediate area but is travelling home on days</b></p>

	<p><b>off and his/her home is out with the local authority area – is this allowed?</b></p> <p><b>Yes, in certain circumstances.</b> Students, like you, should follow Scottish Government guidance on travelling safely available at: <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-travel-and-transport/#travellingsafely">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-travel-and-transport/#travellingsafely</a> However, there are exceptions for travel and there may be essential reasons why the student is travelling home on days off. A letter issued by the Scottish Government on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021, available at: <a href="https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/dl/DL(2021)02.pdf">https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/dl/DL(2021)02.pdf</a> states:</p> <p><i>“The current guidelines on exceptions for travel from home (mainland Scotland and certain islands) confirms that students may:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>travel for childcare or parental support services</i></li> <li>• <i>travel to provide care, assistance, support to or respite for a vulnerable person.”</i></li> </ul> <p>A full list of exceptions can be accessed at: <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-travel-and-transport/#exceptions">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-travel-and-transport/#exceptions</a></p>
<p>18</p>	<p><b>I work in a community setting. The student who arrives next week will be in the car with me when undertaking community visits. What action should I take?</b></p> <p>Follow the guidance ‘Car sharing for healthcare professionals including trainees/students’ available in the National Infection Prevention and Control Manual available at: <a href="http://www.nipcm.hps.scot.nhs.uk/scottish-covid-19-infection-prevention-and-control-addendum-for-acute-settings/#a2712">http://www.nipcm.hps.scot.nhs.uk/scottish-covid-19-infection-prevention-and-control-addendum-for-acute-settings/#a2712</a> (see section 5.11.1). This guidance recognises that there are occasions where car sharing is unavoidable such as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthcare staff who carry out community visits</li> <li>• Healthcare staff who are commuting with students as part of supported learning/mentorship</li> <li>• Healthcare staff living in areas where public transport is limited, and car sharing is the only means of commuting to and from the workplace.</li> </ul> <p>Please read this guidance as it outlines the steps you require to take when car sharing with a student or other work colleague.</p>

<b>Students and testing while on practice learning experiences</b>	
19	<p><b>Do all healthcare students have access to COVID-19 testing?</b></p> <p><b>No. Healthcare students are in the same position as staff. Currently asymptomatic testing is not available for all healthcare staff</b>, but you may be aware that the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport announced in December 2020 an expansion to testing which has been taking place for some healthcare workers since July 2020. Twice-weekly routine LFD testing is currently being rolled out to all staff currently in a patient-facing role within NHS Scotland hospitals, the Scottish Ambulance Service and in COVID-19 Assessment Centres, Community and District Nurses and all COVID-19 Vaccinators and this includes all students on clinical placement in these areas. The Director letter issued by the Scottish Government on 09/12/2020 detailing this expansion can be found at: <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-healthcare-worker-testing/#history">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-healthcare-worker-testing/#history</a></p> <p>Testing of staff is offered on a voluntary basis and the same principle applies for students. However, the Scottish Government strongly encourage all eligible staff and students to undertake the testing.</p>
20	<p><b>Do students require a negative test result before coming to placement?</b></p> <p><b>No, this is not normally expected.</b> It is expected that students on placements where asymptomatic testing is currently available will be provided with their LFD tests and information on how to access training materials on their first shift. This is to ensure tests are conducted correctly and to provide an overview of how to capture results.</p> <p>It is important to remember that healthcare students are to have the same opportunities as other healthcare workers in terms of testing. They will be offered testing on the first day of commencement of their practice learning experience, if they are in areas where PCR or LFT is currently available to staff.</p> <p>Frequently asked questions which details all the information you and a student need to know about asymptomatic testing of patient-facing staff can be found at: <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-healthcare-worker-testing/#history">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-healthcare-worker-testing/#history</a></p>
21	<p><b>Some of the staff I work with have expressed a concern that students coming to our practice learning environment have jobs in another healthcare environments e.g. as a healthcare support worker in</b></p>

	<p><b>another Health Board or care home and may therefore present an increased risk in terms of the spread of COVID-19. What can I do to reassure them?</b></p> <p>You can reassure colleagues that students present no more a risk than working alongside other healthcare colleagues. Many healthcare colleagues have second jobs in other healthcare environments, especially at present with so many service changes and ongoing staffing challenges within all healthcare settings so the situation of working in a secondary healthcare setting is not unique to students.</p> <p>Every individual working in a healthcare setting has a personal and professional responsibility to ensure that they understand the appropriate infection control guidance and that they implement this in their day-to-day practice. Students, like other healthcare practitioners, work in line with a professional code of conduct (HCPC 2016, NMC 2020). Since April 2020, all staff/residents working or living in a care home environment have had access to weekly COVID-19 testing and since then the Scottish Government have been supporting the roll out of asymptomatic testing to a wider range of frontline staff. For more information access: <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-healthcare-worker-testing/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-healthcare-worker-testing/</a> Therefore, if students or other healthcare colleagues have a secondary job within such areas, this testing only enhances the existing layers of protection that are currently in place.</p> <p>Measures to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 to be followed by all healthcare professionals can be found at: <a href="https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19/guidance-for-use-in-healthcare-settings/#title-container">https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19/guidance-for-use-in-healthcare-settings/#title-container</a> . The National Infection Prevention and Control Manual can be accessed at: <a href="http://www.nipcm.hps.scot.nhs.uk/">http://www.nipcm.hps.scot.nhs.uk/</a></p>
22	<p><b>One of the patients has expressed a concern about a student accompanying me on a home visit after reading about COVID-19 outbreaks in university halls of residence and the media reports about some students lack of adherence to social distancing rules. How should I manage this situation?</b></p> <p>This scenario is not unique to the COVID-19 pandemic but may be increased by such media reports. Individuals can refuse entry of any health or care professional to their home, but this situation may arise</p>

more often as individuals are feeling more anxious about the potential spread of COVID-19 at this time. Reassurance is key. It may be useful to inform the patient that healthcare students are bound by professional codes of conduct as are you. It may also be helpful to discuss this potential issue with your student at the beginning of each shift and, if you feel it is appropriate, contact can be made beforehand with the individuals you and the student intend to visit to alert them to the student's presence. This would allow the individual to discuss how they feel about a student visiting and give you the opportunity to reassure them about the infection control measures that both you and the student will adhere to when conducting home visits. Therefore, allowing them to make an informed choice.

Up to date guidance in relation to COVID-19 infection control guidance can be found at <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19/>

## Healthcare students and vaccination while on practice learning experiences

### 23 Are students getting access to the COVID-19 vaccination?

**Yes.** A letter issued by the Scottish Government on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021, available at [https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/dl/DL\(2021\)02.pdf](https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/dl/DL(2021)02.pdf) confirms that students on practice learning experiences can access the COVID-19 vaccination within the Health Board where they are working. Students are part of Priority Group 2 as they are operating in frontline settings and have patient contact, so alongside frontline health and care workers will have access to vaccination.

Health Boards have already been advised of this in the document 'Guidance for NHS Boards on vaccination for bank, agency and locum staff (used in NHS, social care, care homes) and health and social care students on placement' published on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021. The guidance confirms that:

- For students coming on placement from universities or colleges into direct patient facing roles across the Health and Social Care environment– health boards should give the booking details to their education links and cascade via communications ahead of the students' placements
- For students who receive their 1<sup>st</sup> dose in one health board and then perhaps rotate to another board area by the time their 2<sup>nd</sup>

	<p>dose is due – there is a role for the new board to vaccinate, but also a role for the individual themselves to contact the new board staff vaccine team in advance to say they are approaching the 12<sup>th</sup> week.</p> <p>A copy of this full guidance can be accessed at:  <a href="https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/rapid-action-placement-oversight-group-rapog/">https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/rapid-action-placement-oversight-group-rapog/</a></p>
24	<p><b>Are healthcare students able to participate in vaccination programmes?</b></p> <p><b>Yes, where it contributes to their agreed programme learning outcomes.</b> As with any practice learning environment areas where vaccination programmes are taking place must have a current educational audit in place alongside, appropriately prepared practice educators, practice supervisors and assessors in line with NMC and HCPC regulatory standards. The university and practice placement providers must also be assured that the necessary provision for student induction, risk assessments and student support, supervision and assessment are in place.</p> <p>Like the situation, as currently happens, where some students have the opportunity to participate in flu vaccination programmes exposure to COVID-19 vaccination programmes could allow student to gain relevant practice learning experiences related to aspects of their learning outcomes.</p> <p><b>N.B.</b> while some students do participate in flu vaccination programmes students do not administer the vaccination itself. The flu vaccine is often supplied and administered through a Patient Group Direction (PGD). Legislation (The Human Medicines Regulations, 2012) which does not allow students to administer drugs that are prescribed as part of a PGD. PGD medications can only be administered by a qualified healthcare professional and cannot be delegated.</p>
25	<p><b>I am unclear about the student’s role in COVID-19 vaccination administration. What should I do?</b></p> <p>If you are unclear as to the position within your area of practice in relation to students and their role in COVID-19 vaccination administration, then contact your local PEF or CHEF or local AHP or</p>

nursing and midwifery university link representative for more information. While the two national vaccine protocols have the facility to enable other registered and non-registered professionals to administer the vaccination, students would need to receive the right education and training under the relevant national protocol before undertaking such a role.

Two national protocols for the two COVID-19 vaccines currently being administered have been published and copies are available at:

<https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/rapid-action-placement-oversight-group-rapog/> Both protocols are clear about the underlying preparation required to undertake COVID-19 vaccine administration.

Within both the 'Protocol for the supply and administration of AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine (ChAdOx1-S [Recombinant])' and the 'Protocol for the supply and administration of COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine BNT162b2 Pfizer/BioNTech', the Scottish Government is clear that service providers are responsible for the designation and authorisation of persons in the administration of both vaccines and that an individual who is administering the vaccine must:

1. Demonstrate appropriate knowledge and skills to work under the National Protocol for the supply/administration of the COVID-19 vaccine.
2. Have met the requirements of the NES Proficiency document - COVID-19 vaccine administration for registered staff or the NES Proficiency document –COVID-19 vaccine administration - Healthcare support workers as appropriate <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/37676/immunisation/covid-19-vaccines>

There is no separate/specific proficiency document for students, therefore, at this time, a specific healthcare student education resource is not available. **As healthcare students are classified as non-registered staff within the vaccine protocol, they must meet the requirements of the NES Proficiency document –COVID-19 vaccine administration - Healthcare support workers in order to administer vaccinations.**

HCPC have indicated that *'Each of the UK four nations will determine whether or not students can be involved with the administration of the*



	<p>COVID-19 vaccine’. For up to date information visit: <a href="https://www.hcpc-uk.org/covid-19/vaccinations-what-you-need-to-know/">https://www.hcpc-uk.org/covid-19/vaccinations-what-you-need-to-know/</a></p> <p>The NMC FAQs on vaccination at: <a href="https://www.nmc.org.uk/news/coronavirus/vaccines/">https://www.nmc.org.uk/news/coronavirus/vaccines/</a> highlights that <i>‘Students would need to receive the right education and training under the relevant national protocol and be supervised to administer either of these vaccines in line with our standards of student supervision and assessment.’</i></p> <p>The NMC response in relation to the consultation on widening the criteria for those who could administer COVID-19 vaccinations stated that if it is expected that nursing and midwifery students <i>“will be involved in administration of vaccines, this must be in the context of this activity being a planned part of their programme of education with the key objective being that this contributes to their agreed learning outcomes. As such, students would be need to retain their supernumerary status and should receive appropriate supervision when administering vaccines.”</i> They also reiterated that <i>“Students are supernumerary throughout their practice learning experiences and would be taught and able to practice the administration of parental medications only under supervision. As much as the vaccination programme provides a learning opportunity for students, they would need to be supervised to administer either of these vaccines in line with our standards of student supervision and assessment.”</i> The NMC response can be accessed at <a href="https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/nmc-response-to-the-consultation-on-changes-to-the-human-medicine-regulations-170920-003.pdf">https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/nmc-response-to-the-consultation-on-changes-to-the-human-medicine-regulations-170920-003.pdf</a></p> <p><b>N.B. Please note that the clinical supervisor required in the vaccine protocol is not the same as a practice supervisor as required by the NMC SSSA.</b></p>
<p><b>Resources to support supervision and assessment of students during COVID-19</b></p>	
	<p>NES RAPOG <a href="https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/rapid-action-placement-oversight-group-rapog/">https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/rapid-action-placement-oversight-group-rapog/</a></p>

**Council of Deans for Health:** <https://councilofdeans.org.uk/covid-19/covid-19-frequently-asked-questions-healthcare-students/>

**HCPC Covid-19 advice:** <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/covid-19/advice/>  
Guidance includes **meeting HCPC standards in a challenging environment and advice for those providing effective supervision or delegating work:** <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/covid-19/advice/applying-our-standards/supervision-and-delegation/>

**AHP practice education community:**  
<http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/ahppe.aspx>

**Nursing and Midwifery Council Coronavirus (Covid-19): Information and advice:** <https://www.nmc.org.uk/news/coronavirus/frequently-asked-questions/>

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

**Royal College of Nursing frequently asked questions:**  
<https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-help/rcn-advice/covid-19>

**Royal College of Midwives frequently asked questions:**  
<https://www.rcm.org.uk/coronavirus-qa/>

## Appendix 1

### List of all professions within Allied Health Professions

- Art therapists
- Dance Movement Psychotherapists
- Dietitians
- Drama therapists
- Diagnostic radiographers
- Occupational Therapists
- Orthoptists
- Orthotists
- Paramedics
- Podiatrists
- Prosthetists
- Physiotherapists
- Music Therapists
- Therapeutic radiographers
- Speech and Language Therapists

## Appendix 2

### **Supernumerary Vignettes**

*Over the last year, practice learning experiences for pre-registration nurses and midwives have involved working with teams during the pandemic in paid placements and then returning to supernumerary status in September 2020. Students have continued to provide overall positive feedback on their practice learning experiences throughout the last year, but in listening to the student voice, there are some concerns that not all feel they are supernumerary. These “vignettes” are drawn from student experiences and presented from the view of the student but may also be useful to provide context and understanding of supernumerary status to practice assessors and practice supervisors.*

*Please always remember that the students can provide constructive feedback by using the QMPLE system and this feedback can be used in practice to promote good practice and identify improvements.*

### **Student Vignette 1 – Care Home**

You are halfway through a 12-hour shift in a care home when the registered nurse you are working alongside has been sent home unwell. The nurse in charge who is looking after the unit upstairs has said she is very pleased with your progress and thinks you capable of taking charge of the unit, which has ten residents, by yourself. There is a health care support worker in the unit next door.

**Do you think the above vignette is an example of a student being supernumerary?**

No it is not. As a student being supernumerary means you should not be counted in the staffing numbers required to deliver safe care.

**What should you do?**

Immediately raise your concern with your practice supervisor or practice assessor or the senior member of the care home team.

This quote enables context to be added to your concern. The NMC states that ‘students must be considered ‘supernumerary’, meaning that they are not counted as part of the staffing required for safe and effective care in that

setting.’ It is your responsibility to raise any concerns immediately if you think you are not being classed a supernumerary.

<https://www.nmc.org.uk/supporting-information-on-standards-for-student-supervision-and-assessment/student-empowerment/what-to-expect/supernumerary-protected-learning-time/>

**Can you identify how this early conversation has added additional context to your concern?**

By having this conversation and raising your concern early you enable the staff to make arrangements to ensure you are able to receive the supervision you require.

### **Student Vignette 2 – Indirect Supervision**

You are on placement in a rural area with the local community team. You met with your practice supervisor at the beginning of the week to arrange and discuss the visits you would undertake independently throughout the week. You have completed these visits with no issues but are concerned as your practice supervisor has not been physically present although you have been meeting via Teams on a daily basis after your visits have been completed.

**Do you think the above vignette is an example of being supernumerary?**

Yes it is. This is an example of indirect supervision.

**What should you do?**

You should discuss your concerns with your practice supervisor when you next meet. The NMC standards for supervision state ‘Practice supervision can be either direct or indirect, or the practice supervisor can support independent learning as appropriate. The level of practice supervision for a student might change depending on their increasing proficiency in an area.’

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

**Can you identify how this early conversation has added additional context to your concern?**

It is important to understand how you are being supervised and supported. If you feel you require more direct supervision then you should discuss this with your practice supervisor in the first instance.

### **Student Vignette 3 – Medication Round**

You and your practice supervisor have identified medication administration as a learning objective during your preliminary meeting. You have not had many opportunities to administer medication as part of the medication round in your programme so far. This is the second time you have been asked to leave a medication round to answer a patient buzzer during this shift.

#### **Do you think the above vignette is an example of being supernumerary?**

Yes it is. You had a leave a one learning experience to participate in another (which was based on patient need) therefore your supernumerary status has been maintained. Given medication administration was a learning need objective identified at your preliminary meeting further learning opportunities may need to be identified.

#### **What should you do?**

Immediately raise your concern with your practice supervisor or practice assessor or a senior member of the clinical team.

This NMC quote allows context to be added to your concern. There are specific proficiencies that need to be achieved during your practice placements. It is important you are supported to meet these. The NMC state 'Learning experiences should enable students to meet their learning outcomes, achieve competence and work towards becoming independent, reflective and professional practitioners within their chosen field or area of practice.'

<https://www.nmc.org.uk/supporting-information-on-standards-for-student-supervision-and-assessment/student-empowerment/what-to-expect/a-safe-and-effective-learning-experience/>

#### **Can you identify how this early conversation has added additional context to your concern?**

Creating the opportunity to discuss these challenges with your supervisor can enable appropriate steps to be taken.

### **Student Vignette 4 – Working with HCSW**

You start your placement on a busy ward. Your practice supervisor meets you at the start of your first shift and organises for you to work alongside a healthcare support worker who is delivering fundamental care to patients. You do not feel this is an appropriate learning experience and wonder why you are not spending the full shift with your practice supervisor.

#### **Do you think the above vignette is an example of being supernumerary?**

Yes it is. Working alongside other team members gives variety to your learning experiences, provides the opportunity to understand their roles and those members can also contribute to your progress through feedback to your named practice supervisor.

#### **What should you do?**

You should discuss your concerns with your practice supervisor during your shift. Your practice supervisor should be able to identify for you the potential learning objectives working alongside other key members of the team can provide. The NMC state 'The practice supervisor ensures the learning they provide, organise, or delegate is tailored to enable the student to meet their learning outcomes and learn 'independently' where appropriate.'

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

#### **Can you identify how this early conversation has added additional context to your concern?**

It enables you to understand the learning opportunities available and work in partnership with your practice supervisor to identify and plan a programme of learning that meets your learning requirements which may include working alongside colleagues from across the multi-disciplinary team.

