Guidance for students and practice educators: Practice placement assessment process

Practice educators and students have access to paper-based, and electronic copies of the practice placement assessment forms. These can be used throughout the placement as a basis for discussion between to help students with self-reflection on their own performance.

The purpose of the assessment process is to:

- To generate feedback for students about their performance;
- To identify strengths and weaknesses in the student’s professional practice and modify learning accordingly;
- To provide a basis for discussion in relation to the student’s performance;
- To provide a documented record of students’ level of competence in relation to their stage of education.

Assessment of learning on practice placements may be by direct observation, discussion, written evidence, feedback from colleagues, service users, carers, and the student’s own self-evaluation.

Midway review (formative assessment)

The midway review takes the form of a discussion between the practice educator, and the student highlighting areas of progress across the specific University learning outcomes for each placement. It guides the actions to be taken by the practice educator, and student during the remainder of the placement. Areas requiring further development and priorities to be addressed in the second half of the placement should be highlighted, agreed and documented in the “development plan” section of the Assessment Form.

Normally, grades for specific criteria are not given at the mid-way review. Written feedback only should be documented on the Assessment Form. The purpose of these comments is to provide feedback to students so that they can gain an appreciation of their strengths and weaknesses, giving them the opportunity to modify and/or further develop specific aspects of their performance before completing the placement.

It is expected that students will prepare for the midway review by completing the “student’s comments” section. This self-assessment process contributes towards the development of students’ professional judgement by encouraging them to reflect on their practice, and identify evidence of meeting goals identified in their Learning Agreement.

Midway review comments must be signed, and dated by both practice educator and student.

Final evaluation (summative assessment)
The final evaluation should be completed at least one day before the end of the practice placement and discussed with the student. This provides the student with the opportunity to review the report before signing it and returning it to the practice educator.

Practice educators must refer to the University Grade Descriptors when completing the final evaluation. Detailed grade descriptors, A*-G are available in each of the practice placement assessment forms. In making a judgement, it is important to bear in mind the extent to which the placement has given the opportunity to demonstrate the criterion being considered, and what can be realistically expected from students in relation to their stage of the programme.

Mark a cross on each horizontal line to indicate the student’s level of performance for each of the criteria.

Where a particular criterion is not applicable to the practice setting, or where the student has not been assessed on a particular criterion, then N/A should be inserted in the grid. We ask that practice educators document the reason(s) for lack of opportunity in the “practice educator’s comments” section.

Students must pass all University learning outcomes for each practice placement. All of the criteria for each learning outcome must be passed to achieve an overall pass grade for practice placement.

Practice educators must provide written comments in the “final evaluation” section along with a suggested development plan for future practice. This must be signed and dated by the practice educator.

Students must prepare for the final evaluation, by completing the “student’s comments”. Comments must be signed and dated by the student.

Compiling the assessment form
The following list of points is intended to assist practice educators in the compilation of the assessment forms.

Feedback should be:

1. **Individualised and relevant**, demonstrating attention to the particular development needs of the student, rather than comparing with or generalising to other students.

2. **Goal-directed**, providing assistance and increased understanding of what is expected or required, with a focus on the needs of the clients and relationship to the learning goals of the student. At the mid-way appraisal learning objectives may need modification or new ones developed. It is helpful to summarise the key points in the practice educators’ comments section in the form of a development/action plan.
3. **Behaviour-focused**, rather than personality focused. Feedback that refers to what the student does, allows scope for change.

4. **Respectful**, demonstrating mindfulness of acceptable boundaries, respecting confidentiality and using language that is non-judgemental.

5. **Balanced**, comment on strengths and what the student did well with areas of weakness or that require further growth. Written feedback should be constructive and structured so that students are clear about specific aspects of their performance requiring further development and/or improvement.

6. **Collaborative**, inviting student involvement and agreement in identifying strengths and weaknesses, in seeking solutions, reaching conclusions and formulating plans for future action, facilitating self-evaluation.

7. **Change focused (non-evaluative)**, exploring specific strategies to maintain strengths and improve weaknesses and facilitating a problem-solving approach that highlights the consequences both positive and negative of particular behaviours or actions. Encourage improvement with practical and specific suggestions and evidence required from the student to demonstrate further achievement.

8. **Factual (not generalised)**, providing evidence-based examples based on observed performance that highlight actual strengths and weaknesses of modifiable behaviours that have been observed. Provide specific suggestions for improvements to what students are doing, or occasions where positive behaviour was demonstrated, and discussing outcomes of each behaviour.

9. **Aligned** to the university grade descriptors. Check for congruence between written comments and the actual grade(s) awarded.