

Levels of Supervision and Practice for Midwifery Students

This document is primarily structured using terminology within the Midwifery Ongoing Record of Achievement for the three-year undergraduate programme but the narrative also provides application of the guidance to the two-year postgraduate programme for Registered Nurses.

The levels of supervision/support required for each of the three programme years (years 1, 2 and 3) and the conditions of practice for the achievement of the standards of proficiency are discussed below. This is followed by a discussion of the criteria to assess whether the student is '**Progressing**' in the standards of proficiency and performance outcomes at each level of practice, and the criteria to assess whether the standards of proficiency and performance outcomes at each level of practice have been '**Achieved**'.

Descriptors for each standard of proficiency have been developed to take into account the stage of development of the student midwife within each module of the programme, the level of supervision/support required, the level of practice and the conditions of expected competent practice. Performance outcomes have thus been developed to demonstrate the developmental interpretation of the standards of proficiency to reflect the progression the student midwife needs to make during the three years of practice. Each standard of proficiency generally comprises several performance outcomes. A '**Pass**' must be achieved in each performance outcome to pass the standard of proficiency.

Achievement of skills and linked proficiencies

[Achievement of skills and linked proficiencies](#). The skills and proficiencies can be verified as achieved in a range of placements as part of a continuous assessment process and should not be viewed as separate elements but reflect the continuum of care, provided in partnership with women and their families. The [NMC standards](#) state that students in practice or work placed learning must be supernumerary, which means that they are supported to learn without being counted as part of the staffing required for safe and effective care in that setting. However, during each year of the programme, students are expected to engage at varying levels appropriate to their developing knowledge and understanding.

Year 1: Participation

During the first-year students will be expected to work closely with midwives and other health and social care practitioners and take part in the activities that are

undertaken under direct supervision and direction. The expectations of professional behaviour and academic knowledge and skill are specific to year 1 and are documented in the assessment tab.

Year 2: Contribution

In the second year, students are expected to contribute to providing care for women, their babies, and their families. This means they work in partnership with midwives and other health and social care practitioners, under close supervision and direction, appropriate to their knowledge and skills. The expectations of professional behaviour and academic knowledge and skill are specific to year 2 and are documented in the assessment tab.

Year 3: Demonstrate Proficiency

During the final year students are expected to provide care for women, their babies, and their families in partnership with midwives and other health and social care practitioners, with appropriate supervision and direction as their knowledge and skill increases. The expectations of professional behaviour and academic knowledge and skill are specific to year 3 and are documented in the assessment tab.

It is not normally a requirement that all skills are achieved during each year of the programme, however, **students must achieve all of the skills and linked proficiencies at the required level in Year 3. Please follow the programme specific guidelines located in the AEI Programme specific section of the eMORA.**

Students completing the two-year postgraduate programme for Registered Nurses (MSc midwifery programme) are required to Contribute at the end of the first year of their programme and Demonstrate Proficiency at the end of the second year. At all times the registered nurses on this programme are treated as all other student midwives including direct supervision during medicines administration.

The levels of supervision/support required for each year of practice and the conditions of expected proficient practice for each year are summarised in the following table.

Conditions of Practice for the Achievement of the Standards of Proficiency

Year of Study	Level of Supervision/ Support	Level of Practice	Proficiency achieved	Proficiency NOT achieved
Year 1: Participation	Direct to close supervision	Observes, participates, assists in	Performs with few prompts Can explain the rationale underpinning practice	Requires detailed and explicit instructions Cannot explain the rationale underpinning practice
Year 2: Contribution	Close to minimal supervision	Active participation. Planning most activities and leading some	Performance is smooth and complete. Does not require prompting. Can explain the rationale underpinning practice and discuss pertinent research.	Performance lacks completeness. Requires to be prompted Cannot explain the rationale underpinning practice
Year 3: Demonstrate Proficiency	Minimal to indirect supervision	Active participation. Planning all activities and leading most	Does not require prompting. Is organised and efficient. Critiques evidence-based practice and its implementation.	Requires prompting. Unable to organise care. Does not consider evidence-based practice.

The levels of supervision, practice, and conditions of competent practice

Year 1: Participation - Able to participate under direct supervision and direction.

What this means in practice:

Initially, the student will be observing how clinical activities are carried out. As a result of this, the student should be encouraged to participate when they are ready and the practice supervisor is also in agreement. As the student's ability and confidence develops, they can assist but not lead the activity. The student is still under direct to close supervision. By the end of year one, the student should be demonstrating the ability to carry out practised activities with confidence and be expected to plan and lead certain practised activities with few prompts. Some basic care activities may be carried out with close to minimal supervision once the practice

supervisor is sure of the student's ability through direct observation. Also, it is vital that the practice supervisor checks the student's understanding through careful questioning. The specific performance outcomes identified for each module should guide supervisors as to which activities these could be in the relevant clinical area.

Year 2: Contribution - Able to contribute with decreasing supervision and direction.

What this means in practice:

The level of supervision/support provided follows on from that which is required at the end of year one. As the student gains confidence, they should be able to carry out a wider range of care activities under minimal supervision. However, decisions concerning the degree of supervision should be based on a reasonable amount of prior direct observation of practice. The practice supervisor should also be confident that the student knows when to seek assistance from a midwife. Again, the student's knowledge and understanding should be assessed through question and answer as it is vital that they know how to undertake care as well as know why that care is necessary.

Year 3: Demonstrate Proficiency - Able to demonstrate proficiency with appropriate supervision.

What this means in practice:

The level of supervision provided follows on from that which is required at the end of year two. Increasingly, the student should be able to use their initiative to recognise and meet the needs of clients. Supervision is indirect which means that although the practice supervisor is not observing the student directly, they are still aware of the activities of the student. At this stage, the practice supervisor should use questioning not only to test the student's knowledge and understanding of care activities, but also to ascertain how they would recognise changes in client needs. The supervisor should also question the student on how they would plan, prioritise, and manage care and the rationale behind their decision-making.

By the end of year three, the student should be able to demonstrate all the proficiencies to the standard of a newly qualified practitioner. At the start of years two and three in the 3-year programme students are challenged to achieve a higher level of performance than previously required. Students may therefore take a little longer to progress on to the required level and may also require more support when doing so.

Criteria to assess whether the student is '**Progressing**' in the standards of proficiency

In year 1 there is progression if the student is:

- Observing as well as participating and assisting in care, as appropriate
- Performing activities with less prompting
- Beginning to be able to explain the rationale underpinning practice

In year 2 there is progression if the student is:

- Beginning to participate actively in care, as appropriate
- Beginning to plan most activities, and leading some
- Performing activities with few prompts
- Explaining the rationale underpinning practice
- Beginning to discuss research pertinent to practice

In year 3 there is progression if the student is:

- Participating actively in care
- Planning most activities and leading many of them
- Performing activities without prompting
- Beginning to organise care and demonstrating a degree of efficiency
- Beginning to critique evidence-based practice
- Beginning to implement evidence-based practice

Criteria to assess whether the student has 'Achieved' the standards of proficiency

In year 1 the student has achieved if they have:

- Participated and assisted in care, as appropriate
- Performed activities with few prompts, where appropriate
- Been able to explain the rationale underpinning practice, where appropriate
- Been able to provide the additional piece of evidence

In year 2 the student has achieved if they have:

- Participated actively in care, as appropriate
- Planned most activities, and led some
- Performed activities smoothly and completely, with no prompts, where appropriate
- Been able to explain the rationale underpinning practice, where appropriate
- Been able to discuss research pertinent to practice, where appropriate
- Been able to provide the additional piece of evidence

In year 3 the student has achieved if they have:

- Participated actively in care
- Planned all activities and led most
- Performed activities without prompting
- Been able to organise care and demonstrated efficiency when managing their workload
- Been able to critique evidence-based practice
- Been able to implement evidence-based practice
- Been able to provide the additional piece of evidence

N.B. Link Lecturers can be contacted at anytime to provide advice and support to both students, Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors during any part of the learning and assessment process.