UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH
School of Nursing and Midwifery

MIDWIFERY PRACTICE HANDBOOK

Placement Learning Information for

BSc Midwifery Pre-registration

MSc Midwifery Pre-registration

MSc Midwifery (Shortened)

Academic year 2026-2027

University of Plymouth
Faculty of Health
School of Nursing and Midwifery

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KEY CHANGES FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-27

Changes are important to communicate clearly and consistently, therefore please see the main sections (in brackets), where more information can be read:

- Important additions to the section on **Mandatory Training and Induction** requirements *(Section 1.3 and Appendix A)*.
- **Clarification of the Working Time Directive at pre-enrolment,** particularly in relation to students exceeding 48 hours of practice per week *(Sections 2.6, 7.5b and 7.5d)*.
- **Removal of the practice hours deficit criterion affecting eligibility for Options Placement requests.** *This has been replaced by a process of Personal Tutor vetting and sponsorship (Section 3.2).*
- **Options Placement applications will open on 30 September 2026 and close on 31 January 2027.** Due to system pressures and workload constraints, the application period will not reopen for final-year students, as has been the case in previous years *(Section 3.2)*.
- **New process for recording evidence of Extra-curricular Practice Hours for Midwifery** directly into your MORA *(Section 3.3)*
- **Clarification of requirements relating to risk assessment and reasonable adjustments** *(Section 7.2)*.

You are strongly encouraged to read this whole document and to use it as your first point of reference for any practice-related queries.

ALL STUDENTS PLEASE NOTE

This handbook provides you with an overview of practice learning and the associated assessment processes relevant to midwifery programmes. It should be read in conjunction with your programme handbook, other placement guidance and University regulations.

All the information in this handbook is correct at the time of posting and provides important guidance for you; please **refer to it in the first instance** if you have practice queries. Programmes are regularly reviewed and updated, and any changes will be communicated through alternative routes. As we endeavour to treat learners as individuals, the programme team and/or examination board may, may exercise their discretion and make exceptions to the processes outlined in this document.

The University of Plymouth takes all reasonable steps to deliver the educational services described in this handbook and associated documents. However, it cannot guarantee the provision of these these services will always be provided exactly as outlined. Should industrial action or circumstances beyond the University's control affect the delivery of educational services, the University will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption to learners. Placement opportunities may also be affected by service pressures, capacity changes, industrial action within health, social care or external educational services, or changes to government/Nursing and Midwifery Council requirements, which are outside the University's control. We will, however, endeavour to support you to continue and achieve your programme within the context of any such constraints.

Wishing you well in your practice placements this year.

Sharon Evans

Associate Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery (Practice Learning)

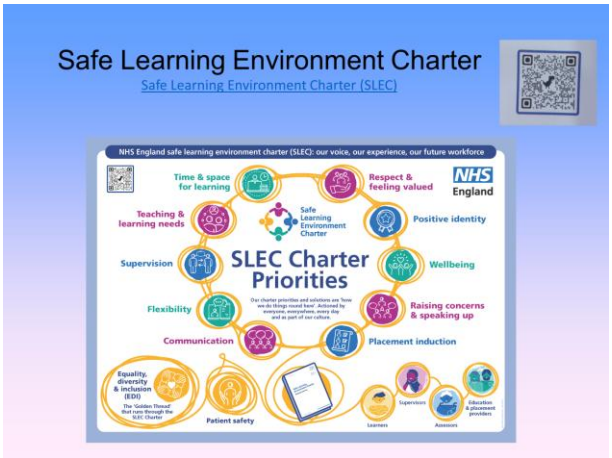
1. LEARNING IN CLINICAL PRACTICE

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) (2017) identified work-based learning as *"learning that is integral to a higher education programme and is usually achieved and demonstrated through engagement with a workplace environment, the assessment of reflective practice and the designation of appropriate learning outcomes".*

Therefore work-based learning is a fundamental component of all midwifery programmes. The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) requires students undertaking these programmes to complete 50% of their programme in practice learning. The time spent in practice will focus on developing skills, knowledge and competence/proficiency. Midwifery students will be assessed in practice against the NMC (2019) Standards of proficiency for midwives. Supervision and assessment in all programmes will adhere to the NMC (2023) Standards for student supervision and assessment.

The midwifery programmes are designed to enable students to practise safely, confidently and competently in a variety of hospital and community settings relevant to the childbearing continuum; some may be in non-maternity placements. These will normally be based in the same geographic locality although some experience of different maternity providers will also be required to meet NMC (2023) standard 3.6 Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes.

As the education provider, in collaboration with our placement providers, we will endeavour to promote the **Safe Learning Environment Charter (SLEC)** to promote the best possible learning experience for you. However, this also requires commitment from you.



To promote your Positive Identity, a range of optional resources are now available:

- You are encouraged to **upload your photo** (in uniform) to your MORA and the POW site, along with a short profile on the latter, enabling your placement area to be better prepared to welcome you.

- A **'Learner Preference Form'** is available on the programme DLE site. You can use this to provide further details to support you as an individual. It is your choice and responsibility to share this with staff supporting you in practice.
- **Pronoun badges** are available in clinical skills sessions which you can take into practice if you wish.
- **Namedrop** is freely available via https://namedrop.io/. You may wish to use this to help staff, peers and others to pronounce your name correctly. Simply sign up and add the recording to your email address, in online meetings, social media etc.

To facilitate communications, please **create an email signature** with your full name, cohort and programme. If your communication relates to a placement issue (for example, reporting an incident), please include full details in your email, including location. **Please ensure that emails are checked regularly when you are in practice and that all correspondence and interactions with placement, academic and administrative staff are courteous and professional.**

You may also find a new resource helpful for the different stages of your journey as a student midwife from first year through to planning your future career: NHS England Student Hub. Placement-specific information can be found in this section: Studying, placement support and resources (NHS England).

1.1 Student role and responsibilities

Students are required to develop self-managementn skills and autonomy from the outset of the programme; you are responsible for your personal and professional development. You will need to be proactive in identifying your role within the team. This will require a recognition of the need to work as part of a team, to listen and learn but also to question and challenge where appropriate. To help you understand your role it is important to identify relevant objectives that enable you to:

- Take responsibility for your own learning
- Recognise the 'transferability' of your skills and knowledge
- Appreciate how you contribute to safe and effective care

Please be familiar with the opportunities available in your placement prior to its commencement, so that you can plan your learning accordingly. You are responsible for checking your POW account for your placement allocations, contact details and information about the placement. Additional information is available to support you in preparing for practice on the placement section of POPPI, the Midwifery programmes DLE 'Placement Information' section and practice module DLE sites.

It is essential that you adhere to and are familiar with all local policies and procedures and always practise under the direct or indirect supervision of an appropriately registered health or social care professional, known as your Practice Supervisor.

Some activities, such as administration of medication via any route, will always require direct supervision from a registrant throughout your programme (note that students already on the NMC register as Adult Nurses will still require direct supervision for all medication preparation and administration in your student midwife role). Please familiarise yourself with any local policies which stipulate other such activities. General guidance on clinical practice supervision and other Policies, procedures and guidelines relating to placements can be found on POPPI.

Please note that you may be required to produce your DBS certificate for specific practice areas - please ensure that you retain your certificate throughout your programme.

Please see *section 7* for further detail about your responsibilities when in placement settings.

1.2 Professionalism in practice

While studying on the programme, you represent both the University and the midwifery profession, particularly during practice placements. Service users, families, carers and colleagues will view you as a member of the healthcare team, and your conduct, attitude, communication and skills can have a lasting impact. It is therefore essential that you adhere to programme, professional and placement policies, standards and guidelines, while consistently demonstrating compassionate, professional and safe practice in all interactions with public, professional colleagues and fellow students.

You are accountable for your adherence to the NMC Code while a student on the programme and in your future career. Please see additional useful links on professionalism from the NMC: Guidance and supporting information. Concerns about your professionalism will be addressed through your practice assessment and/or the UoP Fitness to Practise process. Professionalism includes areas such as attitudes, behaviours, engagement with the programme, and attendance.

During your programme, you will experience a range of settings in which care is provided to service-users within their own home/ seting. If you have any relevant phobias (such as animals/dogs/yypes of environments) or anticipate circumstances which may be triggering, please discuss these with your personal tutor in advance. It is important that you take ownership of maintaining professional behaviour and meeting your learning needs.

You are also reminded of the importance of confidentiality as you have privileged access to individuals and their personal circumstances. Please be mindful of the importance of not sharing confidential information in inappropriate locations (eg: cafes, public transport, social networking) or with individuals who do not have the right to know. This extends to discussing your views on placement areas, staff or fellow students.

You have a professional responsibility to raise any concerns about incidents, care or behaviour witnessed in practice. This must be highlighted at the time and you will be supported throughout the process. Please see *section 8.1* for further information.

1.3 Mandatory training and induction

The **University** provides annual preparation for practice sessions such as completing online/face-to-face mandatory training which are **compulsory;** these are considered as **theory hours** in your programme calculation. Please note that attendance at induction and annual updates will also be mandatory when you are future employees and registrants. Non-attendance at university or placement sessions – including clinical skills and mandatory sessions, will therefore be viewed as unprofessional and you may be subject to UoP Support to study or UoP Fitness to Practise processes. Please note that clinical skills sessions do not count as simulation/ practice hours. If you do not attend clinical skills sessions, you will not get the relevant Proficiencies signed off.

1.3.1 Programme specific training

Statutory and Mandatory Skills training is a prerequisite for professional practice, and you are required to undertake the activities listed in Appendix A and on the Midwifery programmes DLE. These sessions may form part of module delivery or may be found outside of modules within an introduction period or before practice.

Please note that **you will not be able to commence your practice placement until you have completed the mandatory requirements by the set deadline and may put your placement allocation at risk.** Additionally, if you had an earlier start in placement and your mandatory training is outstanding, you will be removed from the area. Any mandatory training which has not been completed by a deadline, is viewed as not meeting the professional values of the programme. If 2 sessions have not been attended, then you may be subject to UoP Support to study or UoP Fitness to Practise processes.

There are two types of mandatory training: Practical and eLearning.

- *Practical Mandatory Training*

The training listed in Appendix A as being Practical are face-to-face training sessions led by a qualified trainer at a campus location. Students will normally be able to book their own training sessions, by selecting them from a list of available dates and times on the DLE. This system is designed to give learners more control over their schedule and improve attendance. There may be different arrangements for allocating Neonatal Life Support (NLS) training/ updates as these are delivered by the midwifery team.

Communication will be sent by the SNAM Placements Team when dates are released, and you will be provided with a link to the date / time slots for booking. You:

- must not book onto a slot that conflicts with any scheduled lectures.
- can attend mandatory training on study days.
- should book your sessions as soon as possible to secure a preferred slot.
- will be given a deadline to book onto a slot by – if this deadline is missed, attendance at your preferred session cannot be guaranteed.

Once sessions have been confirmed, you will receive an email providing details about the session you're booked onto including timings and locations as applicable. You will be provided with pre-course information; please read this carefully including issues around consent, appropriate and professional dress and mobile phone management.

If you are unable to attend a face-to-face training session, you must inform snamplacements@plymouth.ac.uk as soon as possible so that your place can be offered to another student. These sessions are costly to deliver and require significant organisation; attendance is therefore a professional responsibility. All mandatory practical training must be completed before commencing your practice placement; failure to attend will therefore delay the start. If you have any questions, please contact snamplacements@plymouth.ac.uk.

- *eLearning Mandatory Training*

The eLearning activities listed in Appendix A are completed through the **NHSE elfh Hub**, which can be accessed via this link - https://portal.e-lfh.org.uk/.

On the start of your programme you will receive an email from the portal about how to log on and access the eLearning to be completed. For any issues or login queries please contact - NHSE elfh Support support@e-lfh.org.uk

Mandatory training completed via eLearning modules on the NHSE elfh Hub need to be logged on **POW** via the Curricular Events tab. You will be required to attach your eLearning certificate to the session as evidence of its completion. For eLearning that requires renewing, you will receive an email from POW to inform you when it is time to renew your training and log the date you completed again. For step by step guidance on using this section of POW please see the POW user guide on the POPPI webpages.

If you do not complete your training, your placement start date will be delayed. Any questions please contact snamplacements@plymouth.ac.uk.

The deadline for all eLearning mandatory training is 31st October 2026.

Funded MSc Shortened programme students: If you have completed the **exact same modules** with your employer within the **2 months** before starting the programme you must upload the certificate with date of completion as above; you do not then need to

repeat this training module. If the training is older and will expire before the following August you must repeat it on your University elfh account.

1.3.2 Placement Provider specific

Placement providers may also require you to complete their induction and mandatory training within a stipulated timeframe. Induction may take the form of an online package or require personal attendance; this will count as **practice hours which must be recorded on your timesheet** and authorised by a practice supervisor or the presenter of the session. You must inform the organiser if you are unable to attend. You may or not need to repeat trust inductions when you remain in the same provider, however, please ensure you undertake any updates they require.

Please note that some placement providers will have specific mandatory requirements such as training for digital patient record systems before you will be able to use these; it is essential that you attend/ complete at the earliest opportunity to avoid compromising your placement experience.

2. ALLOCATION TO PLACEMENT

2.1 Placement allocation processes

Midwifery students will normally spend the majority of the programme in a host trust in the same geographic 'locality'. However, to meet NMC requirements (Standard 3.6 in NMC, 2023) Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes. you will all experience one or more 'peer shadowing' days in another trust in the South West as part of the MID 607/706 module. You are strongly encouraged to additionally request an 'Options Placement' with a different maternity provider during the last four weeks of the programme. This may mean a change to another trust in the South West or you may wish to arrange an Options Placement in another trust nationally or an international placement. See *section 3.2* for further information.

Allocation is arranged, where possible, based on home or term-time post-code, however capacity in each trust is finite so this may not always be possible. Travel to placement can be expected up to a maximum of two hours one-way, as calculated by an online route planner for car journeys or taking into account the public transport network if you do not have access to a car. To facilitate appropriate allocations, please indicate on the 'Profile' tab on POW if:

- you have access to a vehicle for transport to placements
- there are any placement areas where you may have a conflict of interest (see also ***section 2.2***)

- you have previous caring experience

Allocation details will be released via Placements on the Web (POW). You will be advised of your host trust within a 6-8 week period prior to your first placement block to enable you to arrange travel, accomodation and dependent care. In addition this enables planning of placement assessment activities. Please note that this time-frame also normally applies to Options Placements – see *section 3.2.*

You should contact your practice area at least two weeks before the start of your placement to make any arrangements with your allocated Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessor. Contact may be made in person, by telephone, email or via a virtual meeting. Contact information is on POW when you click on your allocated placement.

2.2 Changes to placement allocations/ localities

There is limited flexibility to change a placement as the University is required to meet its contractual commitments with placement providers. Placement capacity is in high demand across the School of Nursing and Midwifery due to the requirement to increase student numbers to meet future workforce needs. Requests for placement changes should therefore only be made in exceptional circumstances and with consideration of these wider demands.

Important: If you have concerns about your initial placement allocation, do not contact the placement area directly. All requests for placement changes must follow the appropriate process. Emails sent directly to the SNAM Placements Team, Programme Leads, or the Associate Head of School for Practice Placements requesting a change of allocation will not receive a response. The process outlined below must be followed:

- If you have a particular concern about your placement allocation this must be raised as soon as you are aware that it may create an issue. You must discuss with your personal tutor who will complete a ***'Placement Alteration Request (PAR)'*** form if appropriate. This form remains open throughout the year.
- Requests will be considered against strict criteria in the context of individual and wider needs and will need authorisation by the placement host/s; changes cannot be guaranteed.
- If you experience a change of personal circumstances during the year which may impact on location of your placement, you must speak to your personal tutor who will discuss alternative options. If these are not achievable, your personal tutor will submit a request for consideration via the '*Placement Alteration Request (PAR)*' form which will be reviewed on an annual basis or more frequently if appropriate. As above, changes cannot be guaranteed and if student movement occurs in your trust it does not necessarily mean that there

is a vacancy. There may also be a waiting list which will be managed in a transparent way.

The full policy can be found on POPPI; please note that some of the information is specific to nursing: Policies, procedures and guidelines

2.3 Risk of bias in practice/ conflicts of interest

You **must not have a practice supervisor or assessor to whom you are related or with whom you are close friends** or is well-known to you or your family. If this occurs, you must inform the practice area and your academic assessor and a change in the individual supporting you must be arranged.

Due to geographical constraints you may, on occasion, be placed in a **community setting such as a GP surgery where you or your family receive care**. This potential conflict of interest must be discussed with your personal tutor and the placement host to determine whether it is appropriate to proceed or whether an alternative setting is available. It is essential that confidentiality and professional boundaries are maintained at all times if you remain in this placement. Minor adjustments such as reviewing a clinic list and identifying anyone where there may be a conflict of interest (including close friends) normally suffices.

Due to the nature of midwifery, it is likely that you will encounter previous or current service-users in your **personal life and social settings** such as schools. Professionalism and confidentiality are paramount.

You **must not simultaneously work bank shifts** (eg: with NHSP) in the same area where you are on placement. Please see *section 2.6* on 'Paid employment' for further guidance. If you are on placement in an area where you have **previously been employed** (eg: as a maternity support worker) it is essential that you are clear about your new status as a student midwife and are supervised appropriately.

Failure to disclose potential conflicts of interest or failure to maintain professional boundaries may lead to invoking of the UoP Fitness to Practise process and/or Trust investigation.

2.4 Travel and accommodation claims

It is your responsibility to manage your attendance in placement by making the necessary travel, accommodation and dependent care arrangements. Information is available on the following links: Travel and accommodation information for professional placements - University of Plymouth. Your placement area may also be

able to signpost you to other alternative accommodation. Information about localities and cost of travel can be found here: Travel and costs.

Most students are entitled to claim for a second accommodation when on placement. **Unfortunately international students are not eligible for travel or accommodation funding.** Funded MSc Shortened programme students will need to discuss with their employer whether they are eligible for funding support for travel and/or accommodation.

Campus-based students are only able to claim travel if your placement is further from your residence to university and the smallest distance of base to placement or university to placement must be cited. It is expected that you will stay at the address closest to your placement during practice periods. Students on the blended midwifery programmes can claim travel and car-parking costs for all placements as your home address is also your theory base.

The amounts currently payable for travel and accommodation via the NHS Learning Support Fund can be found on this link: LSF travel and accommodation. Please note that this funding source is external to the University and amounts may change**. The process for claiming funding changed in September 2026;** please read the NHS guidance carefully.

Any suspected fraudulent claims will be followed up through the UoP Fitness to Practise process.

2.5 Funding and support

You are encouraged to apply for funding available from the NHS via the NHS Learning Support Fund and NHS Bursary. Further information is also available on Student Finance Explained.

Students who find themselves in a financially difficult position may also find helpful information and advice on the following links: Funding for undergraduates - University of Plymouth, Scholarships, bursaries and funding - University of Plymouth. Useful information can also be found on the Midwifery programmes DLE 'Hardship resources' tile and central university site Supporting students with the cost of living - University of Plymouth. Please discuss other concerns with your personal tutor.

Please note that when applying for Student Finance, it is important that you do not mention that you are going into placements as this does not relate to the placements midwifery students undertake as part of your programme. You are advised to state that you are attending university for all 3 terms during the application process. If you have any queries regarding this please email School of Nursing and Midwifery Plymouth SNAMHHSPlymouth@plymouth.ac.uk

2.6 Paid employment

The University recognises that some students may undertake part-time employment to support their studies. If this applies to you, please consider how this may affect your ability to meet programme requirements. The pre-registration programmes are equally made up of practice hours and theory hours (classroom or online resources and directed study hours, including tutorials). These hours are essential to meet the learning outcomes of your programme, therefore paid employment that impinges upon this is likely to affect your learning and professional development. Because of the professional implications and long working hours we recommend that you do not undertake additional part-time employment whilst in practice placements.

If you choose to take up paid employment outside your programme hours you must be aware of the following issues:

- Students who work in the role of a support worker or with an existing professional registration must recognise that **this role is inherently different** to that of a student nurse/ nursing associate/ midwife while you are on this programme. Care must be taken to ensure that such work does not compromise your ability to appreciate the professional boundaries and integrity of either role.

- **You should not work in another role in any area where you are currently also placed as a student** (e.g.: bank shifts with NHSP)*. If your paid work is within the same trust, you should be in different departments and 'geographically' separate. This is because there may be a perceived 'blurring' of the role being undertaken which could put you, staff, patients and the public in a vulnerable position. This is particularly an issue for students who are already on the NMC register as a nurse or nursing associate.

  **Exceptionally, trusts may have their own arrangements. This may include the requirement for students on apprenticeship or part-time programmes to have a placement in their base.*

- **It is advisable that you do not undertake more than 15 hours of paid employment per week**. Please be aware of the 'working time directive' and avoid exceeding an average of 48 hours per week. Whilst you have already opted out through pre-enrolment declarations, if you intend to exceed **48 hours per week for longer than a fortnight** an assessment of the appropriateness of this decision in the context of your general circumstances, academic progress and the ability of the placement area to support this, is needed. This will comprise a discussion with your personal tutor and the practice area and completion of a Practice Placement Support Agreement which can be found as an appendix in the Guidance for supporting students with reasonable adjustments. This record will also need to be shared with the Programme Lead and the Faculty Compliance team fohcompliance@plymouth.ac.uk; your academic assessor will also need to be made aware if different from your personal tutor. The snamplacements@plymouth.ac.uk team should also be

included to avoid timesheet queries being raised. Please see *section 7.5d* for further information about this UK legislation.

- Any deviations from the above must be notified to your personal tutor to facilitate discussions about professional boundaries. Failure to disclose this potential conflict of interest may lead to invoking of the UoP Fitness to Practise process and/or Trust investigation.

In any form of paid employment, **the following activities will be considered serious and may require disciplinary action,** which may result in discontinuation from the programme:

- Students who have not attended planned sessions within the university because they have or are undertaking paid employment (this includes timetabled theory, tutorial sessions and practice placements).
- Students who work consecutive shifts (within the same 24-hour period) as this may lead to excessive tiredness, putting patients and themselves at risk; this includes working before or after a study day at the university.
- Students who alter their practice shifts to undertake paid work elsewhere.
- Students who are identified on the duty roster in their practice placement but who take sick leave or absence in order to work in paid employment.
- Students who are on sick leave as either a student or employee who undertake practice shifts in their other role in this period.

Breaches in the above will be followed up through the UoP Fitness to Practise process. Where students have concerns about their ability to complete the requirements of the programme due to financial constraints, this must be discussed with your personal tutor.

3. PLACEMENT CONFIGURATION

3.1 Midwifery placements

You will normally remain in the same trust throughout your programme unless you are choosing an 'Options Placement' at the end of your programme to gain additional experience of another maternity provider in line with NMC (2023) standard 3.6 in Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes. You will experience both acute (hospital) and community placements across all areas encountered by service users across the childbearing continuum. These will normally comprise:

- Antenatal clinics – hospital and community
- Day Assessment Unit
- Antenatal ward
- Labour ward/ delivery suite – hospital
- Birth centre (alongside or stand-alone) – if available
- Postnatal ward
- Postnatal clinics or hubs – if available
- Home

Wider experiences may comprise:

- Neonatal unit/ special care baby unit/ transitional care ward
- Gynaecology ward, clinics or surgery
- Ultrasonography
- Preparation for parenthood classes
- Support groups (eg: breastfeeding)
- Fertility clinics
- Children's centres
- Other community classes or groups

Our programmes prepare you for an evolving holistic and inter-professional role. We therefore encourage you to make best use of the range of opportunities available in your maternity unit and surrounding community. We particularly encourage you to take advantage of multi-professional and multi-disciplinary learning opportunities. The Darzi Report 2024 and Fit for the Future 2025 recommends an increased shift towards community and digital experiences, so you may find some of the ways in which midwives practise or the settings for that care change during your programme.

3.2 Options Placements

Midwifery students will normally spend the majority of the programme in a host trust in the same geographic 'locality'. However, to meet NMC requirements (Standard 3.6 in NMC, 2023) Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes you will all experience one or more **'Peer Shadowing' days** in another trust in the South West as part of the MID 607/706 module. You are encouraged to additionally request an 'Options Placement' with a different maternity provider **during the last four weeks in your final year**, although this is dependent on you having achieved your MORA summative holistic assessment and all your Practice Episode Records; you will continue to gain practice hours during this placement.

An Options Placement offers University of Plymouth students the chance to plan and organise a short period of learning in an area of special interest, cultural diversity, or in a setting where employment has been offered or is being considered. Opportunities may be available locally, nationally or internationally.

A **list of audited Options Placements** previously attended by students will be available on the programme DLE when applications open; this includes the agencies who organise international placements with whom we have already signed a 'broker' agreement. Please aim to request those external (national or international) placements already set up as this will speed up the process for all concerned; it is only in exceptional circumstances that you should request a new placement host. Students employed by trusts need to consult with employers before applying for the Options Placement.

Placements within the southwest footprint will normally already have the relevant documentation.

Options will include:

- same host
- other SW host
- national (out-of region)
- international

Opportunities for:

- ✓ specialist experience
- ✓ experience of another provider
- ✓ experience of other cultures and system workings
- ✓ pre-employment (all midwifery programmes final year students)

Please note that the term 'Options'applies to the opportunity for you to have a choice of location, not your attendance during this placement block; **the practice hours form part of your programme and full engagement and attendance is expected.** Failure to do so will be addressed as for any non-compliance with attendance and record-keeping, and you may be subject to UoP Support to study or Fitness to Practise processes.

Importantly, **you will not be able to undertake an Options Placement if you have not achieved your MORA practice assessment and all your Practice Episode Records (PERs) by the July Assessment Board**; the Board may, at their discretion, permit a short extension for completion of PERs prior to commencement of the Options Placement. You will still continue to accrue practice hours during your Options Placement, contributing to mandatory requirements to achieve your MID 607/607BL/706/706BL module and programme.

Important: Unless the Award Assessment Board deems you to be ineligible due to outstanding practice assessments or issues arise which will compromise the

placement, **if you have requested and had an Options Placement approved, you are committed to attending this placement and are unable to withdraw.**

Please note that **your requested placements cannot be guaranteed; they will depend on capacity, demands from other education providers and setting up of appropriate Workplace Agreements.** Confirmation of approval of your Options Placement is **normally 6-8 weeks prior** to the placement commencement. The earlier closure date of the survey is to enable documentation to be put in place and placement hosts to manage requests around other demands for placements in this period. We will seek to progress applications for international placements as quickly as possible due to the arrangements and costs incurred for students desiring these opportunities.

Some placement hosts are not supportive of Options Placements where you may have been offered employment due to potential conflicts of interest; this is at their discretion. If an Options Placement in your future area of employment is approved, it is essential that you **remain supernumerary and under appropriate levels of supervision** throughout this placement. Please remember that an Options Placement should not be utilised as a pre-employment induction period.

Options Placement applications in 2026-27 open from 30th September 2026 and close on 31st January 2027. The SNAM Placements team will generally inform you by the end of April whether you have been successfully allocated. Please remember that this process needs to be dealt through the SNAM placement team in collaboration with an identified member of the academic midwifery team – currently Margaret Fisher. **Any direct arrangements you have made with a placement area will not be upheld.**

Important: You must NOT contact local trusts or PVI hosts in the southwest footprint directly; you will be able to provide details of where you wish to go on the survey and this will be organised centrally by snamplacements@plymouth.ac.uk in collaboration with the midwifery team and prospective placement host. Any direct arrangements you have made with a local trust or PVI placement area will not be upheld. Failure to adhere to this request, may be addressed as for any non-compliance and you may be subject to UoP Support to study or Fitness to Practice processes. **You must, however, contact the host of any prospective placement external to the southwest (national or international)** before completing the survey. (Please see Options Placement guidance 26/27 for more information).

As you will be in the final year of your programme, you may wish to contact potential employers to advise them of the dates of your planned Options Placement as alternative arrangements may be possible (at their discretion) for interviews so that you do not miss out on job opportunities. This is your responsibility; the University will not be involved in any communications. **Please note:** the option period will not be reopened from January to March for final-year students this academic year due to system pressures and workload constraints.

Please follow the process identified in the *'Options Placement Guidance'* and *'Overseas Options Placement Handbook'* (if appropriate) on the Midwifery programmes DLE and adhere to the specified deadlines when submitting your application form; late applications will not be accepted. Information is also available on the Options Placements tab on POPPI. Consider carefully how this learning will fit into your professional journey and achievement of programme outcomes, including any commitments to outstanding theory assessments.

Note that if you are seeking a **national or international placement** this will need to be organised well ahead as it can take a while to perform risk assessments and set up the required workplace agreements; see the '*Overseas Options Placement Handbook'* on the Midwifery programmes DLE and Options Placements tab on POPPI. You are responsible for all costs, however may be able to reclaim some for accommodation, insurance and vaccination via LSF travel and accommodation – see Travel and accommodation information for professional placements - University of Plymouth. You may also want to refer to this RCM guidance: https://rcm.org.uk/medical-malpractice-insurance/ or RCN guidance if you are a member: Student electives overseas | Advice guides | Royal College of Nursing (rcn.org.uk). Please be aware that travel arrangements may be affected by unanticipated global circumstances.

You are required to plan your learning (this may be through discussion with your personal tutor) and have the placement overseen and reviewed by a practice supervisor in the setting, who must be a registrant in that country. All Options Placements will be formalised through a set of *'Additional Practice Learning Placement'* documentation confirming attendance, engagement and maintenance of professional values as well as goal-setting, reflection and practice supervisor comments at the end of the placement. This set of documentation is available on the Midwifery programmes DLE 'Placement Information' section and will also be sent to you in advance of your placement. You are required to upload this to the *'Records of complementary placement experiences'* sub-section in the 'Evidence' section of your MORA on completion of your Options Placement. **Please note: Your practice hours will not be approved if the Additional Practice Learning Placement documentation is not completed.**

If any concerns are raised about your competence or professionalism the UoP Fitness to Practise process will be invoked, you may be required to step out of your Options Placement and you will not be able to progress on your programme until this has been resolved. Your personal tutor and/or academic assessor will be involved in following up these concerns.

Eligibility criteria:

- ✓ You are in the correct year/ programme to be eligible (years 1 and 2 BSc/MSc midwifery students are excluded)

- ✓ Capacity – this will be confirmed by the SNAM Placements Team and at the discretion of the placement host
- ✓ Appropriate workplace agreements set up between the placement provider and University of Plymouth.
- ✓ Personal Tutor approval following a discussion with you, taking into account the suitability of the chosen option area for your stage of learning and confirming that you are on track to achieve the required learning outcomes for the relevant stage of your programme.
- ✓ If an apprentice or funded by the Trust (eg: MSc Midwifery Shortened programme) the agreement of employer.
- ✓ If an apprentice/ employed student, that the destination agrees to support you despite the funding constraints. Note that placements external to England (including UK) will not receive NHS placement tariff for non-apprentices either so may also decline due to lack of funding.
- ✓ All practice assessments and PERs have been achieved by the July Assessment Board (the Board may, at their discretion, permit a short extension for completion of PERs prior to commencement of the Options Placement).
- ✓ You have carefully considered the implications on your programme progression and achievement if more than one academic theory module is outstanding at the time of the Award Assessment Board. This should be discussed with your personal tutor.
- ✓ You have completed all documentation by the application deadline.

If you are not successful in your application or are no longer eligible to attend, or if you do not choose an Options Placement you will remain in your previous placement.

3.3 Extra-curricular Practice Hours for Midwifery

All students in SNAM are permitted to claim up to 37.5 practice hours annually involving extra-curricular activity to broaden opportunities for practice learning - see link to Policies, procedures and guidelines. While full attendance at allocated placements will meet NMC practice hour requirements, extra-curricular opportunities enable you to broaden your knowledge and experience beyond these. They may also be helpful for students who are unable to attend practice for any reason or need to make up practice hours. Please note that completion of approved extra-curricular hours is optional.

Processes for evidencing and authorising extra-curricular hours align with the NMC (2023) Standards for student supervision and assessment which require all practice learning to be directly or indirectly supervised by a registrant. Information about options, evidencing learning and supervision/ authorisation processes are in the

'Guidance 2026/27: Extra-curricular Practice Hours for Midwifery' which can be found in the Midwifery programmes DLE 'Practice Information' section.

Midwifery students may ONLY include interactive activities with peers, staff or service-users. These should ideally focus on interprofessional learning; if any independent learning takes place (eg: RCM i-learn) this **must** be followed up by a reflective discussion with the name and status/role of this peer or staff member clearly identified. Evidence of all activities **must** be shared with your personal tutor in the role of practice supervisor before the hours will be approved. The following principles will apply if you choose to undertake any of these optional activities:

- ⋆ Experiences must be meaningful and relevant to your programme learning outcomes and be mapped to the NMC (2019) Standards of proficiency for midwives.
- ⋆ You are strongly encouraged to use opportunities for inter-professional learning and **must** directly engage with other staff/ students/ service-users to meet these hours – either at the time or through reflective discussion.
- ⋆ You are **not** able to include any activities for which you receive payment (e.g. PALs, ambassadors) or have already claimed as placement hours on your timesheets.
- ⋆ You must provide evidence of your learning from all activities in the ***'Evidence of Extra Curricular Learning***' section in your MORA and invite your personal tutor to review this in the role of Practice Supervisor before claiming extra-curricular practice hours on POW.
- ⋆ **You must not duplicate** extra-curricular activity hours by also recording these on your timesheets; both count towards practice hours and this double claim could be considered as fraudulent.

Supervision of Extra-curricular Practice Hours:

- To adhere to the NMC (2023) Standards for student supervision and assessment **a registrant** (NMC, HCPC (Health and Care Professions Council), GMC (General Medical Council) or equivalent) **must oversee your activities in the role of Practice Supervisor.**
- This supervision may be **direct or indirect** (e.g.: a registrant may be present when you are undertaking an activity, or you may discuss this with your personal tutor or other registrant after completing the activity) - see Supporting information on indirect supervision.
- You must **select your personal tutor in the role of Practice Supervisor** to review your evidence in your MORA and approve the hours on POW. However, if a registrant is present during an activity, you must additionally include their work email address within the evidence section so that your personal tutor can seek corroboration if required. On occasions, the supervising registrant will instead review the evidence and authorise the extra-curricular practice hours; this needs to be negotiated between you.

Recording of Extra-curricular Practice Hours:

- All Extra-curricular Practice Hours you wish to include for the current academic year must be completed and recorded on POW and approved by your personal tutor **by a minimum of one week before the practice re-submission date in August 2027.**
- **You are not permitted to add hours retrospectively in a new academic year.**
- Some Extra-curricular Practice Hours may also contribute to 'Fieldwork' hours in MID 607/706 (year 2 and 3 students); these must be recorded as above and on the module mapping document.

Please note that opportunities to undertake activities **linked to your placement area,** such as in-house training sessions or e-learning set by the practice placement, are not considered to be extra-curricular activities but form part of your normal practice hours. You will therefore record these on your electronic timesheets and have them authorised by your practice supervisor or the facilitator of the session in the usual way.

Please note that simulated practice learning hours are not permitted in midwifery programmes.

4. PLACEMENT SUPPORT AND ASSESSMENT

4.1 Supernumerary status and supervision

Whilst you are in your student role you will be supernumerary when in the placement setting. Supernumerary means that whilst you are a learner you

> *"are not counted as part of the staffing required for safe and effective care in that setting"* (p5, NMC 2023 Standards for student supervision and assessment)

but you will be expected to participate in all aspects of care and work as a team member.

If you believe your supernumerary status is not being upheld, for example if registered or support staff are being redeployed because you are present in the ward or department and are being counted in the staffing numbers, you should raise this immediately with the placement setting manager and contact your academic assessor. Please follow the *'Guidance for managing the support and supervision of learners in health and social care settings'* on POPPI Policies, procedures and guidelines if there is a risk that supernumerary status and appropriate levels of supervision could be compromised, such as in times of low staffing or unexpected staff sickness.

It is recognised that there are occasional times in practice where the support and supernumerary status of students may potentially be compromised by an unexpected clinical or staffing situation or industrial action. It is important that you report this to an appropriate person such as the ward or department manager so that action can be taken; please see *'Guidance for managing the support and supervision of learners'* on Policies, procedures and guidelines. If this occurs during a **night or weekend shift you should not attend placement** for that particular shift and inform the ward manager to enable the shift to be rearranged. Please keep your academic assessor informed; additional support can be provided by the midwifery link lecturer or wider PDT.

Supervision: You will work with a variety of registered and non-registered health and social care professionals, under the supervision of a registered practice supervisor, on a day-to-day basis. It is very important that you know at the start of a shift who your designated practice supervisor is; please clarify this before undertaking any care. If there is a change of shift and therefore staffing whilst you are in practice it is essential that you ask who will be taking over as your practice supervisor for the remainder of the shift. Supervision may be direct or indirect**,** depending on the stage of your programme/ your experience/ the type of placement. You will be assessed in each placement by a designated practice assessor who will be an NMC registered midwife, guided by your MORA. This support aligns with the NMC (2023, p5 and 7) Standards for student supervision and assessment. Please note that the NMC has developed a useful NMC SSSA supporting information hub with further information about the roles below.

4.2 Practice supervisors

Practice supervisors come from a range of backgrounds and include NMC registered nurses, midwives, nursing associates and other registered health and social care professionals (Standards for student supervision and assessment p7). Supervisor roles and responsibilities include:

- Being a role model
- Supporting learning within their scope of practice
- Providing appropriate supervision and feedback
- Having relevant knowledge and experience of the clinical area
- Contributing to assessment by providing feedback
- Confidently sharing observations and feedback with practice and academic assessors
- Raising any concerns appropriately, using the relevant protocols.

The NMC requires students to work with a range of practice supervisors. This provides exposure to different professional role models and enables you and your practice

assessor to obtain a range of feedback on your progress to inform their assessment decisions as they should not work directly with you on a regular basis. It is therefore important that practice supervisors provide documented evidence of your performance in practice. The *'Practice Supervisor Feedback'* section of your MORA must be completed; printable proformas are also available in your MORA for this purpose. **It is essential that a wide range of documented evidence is collated throughout your placement.** You are also encouraged to ask practice supervisors to complete the 'Communications' section in your ePAD if they wish to provide direct feedback to your practice assessor or academic assessor.

4.3 Practice assessor

The NMC (2023) Standards for student supervision and assessment require that

> *"midwifery students are assigned to **practice** and academic **assessors** who are NMC registered midwives"* (6.4, p9).

You will have a designated practice assessor allocated to you in each placement; in midwifery, this allocation is normally annually. Standard 7.10 of the NMC (2023) Standards for student supervision and assessment stipulate that:

> *"**practice assessors are not simultaneously the practice supervisor** and academic assessor for the same student".*

They may therefore only undertake a brief episode of observing you in practice if they feel this is necessary to support practice assessment - **not for full shifts.**

Your practice assessor will need to be given access to your MORA so that they can monitor your progress throughout your placement and assess your level of competence at the end. They will undertake the Initial Meeting, Practice Assessor Reviews 1 and 2 and the Summative Holistic Assessment, drawing on the other elements of the MORA as evidence and confirming that the Proficiencies have been completed. Practice assessor roles and responsibilities include:

- Conducting regular reviews and the summative assessment to confirm achievement of proficiency and programme outcomes for practice learning
- Seeking relevant feedback and evidence to ensure that an objective, evidence-based assessment has been made
- Maintaining and developing current knowledge and expertise relevant for the Proficiencies and programme outcomes being assessed
- Being able to link with academic assessors to review student progression
- Having knowledge of the student programme and assessment process
- Can be a practice supervisor for other students.

You should meet or communicate regularly with your practice assessor to review your progress, receive feedback and guidance and support communication between the

placement setting and your academic assessor. You are encouraged to signpost your practice assessor to the 'Communications' section of your MORA if they wish to contact you, practice supervisors or academic assessors about your progress so that an audit trail is created and collaborative actions can be taken to support you.

4.4 Academic assessor

The NMC (2023) Standards for student supervision and assessment require that

> *"midwifery students are assigned to practice and **academic assessors** who are NMC registered midwives"* (6.4, p9). The academic assessor is responsible for *"collating and confirming student achievement of proficiencies and programme outcomes in the academic environment for each part of the programme"* and *"working in partnership with a nominated practice assessor to evaluate and recommend the student for progression"* (9.1, p12).

To meet NMC requirements you will be allocated a different academic assessor for each part of the programme (6.1, p9). However, you may be allocated a previous academic assessor in a later stage of the programme provided this is not in consecutive years/ parts of the programme. The model for allocations to personal tutor and academic assessor in SNAM will follow this pattern where feasible:

- you will have the same personal tutor throughout your programme
- in years 1 and 3 your personal tutor and academic assessor will be the same member of university staff
- your academic assessor will change in year 2.

Please note that this allocation pattern may not always be possible due to staff changes, role changes or if you are a returning student.

Although there are not the same expectations of students meeting with academic assessors as there are for meeting with personal tutors (following the UoP Personal Tutoring Policy); please liaise with your academic assessor if you require support in the practice element of your programme.

4.5 Ongoing support, communication and escalation

Your first point of contact for academic and pastoral issues is normally your **personal tutor** (or module leader/ teacher for specific module queries). Your **academic assessor** is normally your first point of contact for any issues relating to practice. It is important that you approach the relevant person in the first instance, however please be aware that they will share information when this is deemed necessary to provide you with the best support. Guidance on the roles and responsibilities of personal tutors, academic assessors, PDT academic leads and programme leads, together with a communication and escalation flowchart for academic, personal and practice-related

issues can be found in *Appendix B.* Your personal tutor will be listed on POW and the names of your personal tutor and academic assessor will be available on your MORA.

Overarching support for placements is provided by the Associate Head of School (AHOS - Practice Learning) alongside the Placement Development Team comprising academic and placement staff; contact details can be found here: PDT. Please note that there is a specific section for 'Midwifery' on this page, indicating the **link lecturers** for each trust; these are normally your first point of contact rather than the practice and academic PDT leads who focus mainly on nursing and nursing associate students – they are, however, also available to support you if required.

As a team we endeavour to:

- Provide practice supervisors and assessors with the educational information that is required during the placement
- Create a link between the practice placement and university
- Provide feedback to the practice placement area - sharing good practice, identifying concerns and addressing any issues in partnership
- Support students as required, in collaboration with your assessors and the practice area
- Promote a safe learning environment in collaboration with practice partners

To facilitate effective placement management, **please monitor your emails regularly** for individual communications or Midwifery programmes DLE messages and please check that these are not going into the junk/spam folder. If you require consideration of a change of placement area due to personal circumstances please discuss with your personal tutor; do not contact the placement area directly or send emails to the placements team or AHOS (see also *section 2.2**).***

5. THE MORA AND PRACTICE ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

The national **Midwifery Ongoing Record of Achievement (**MORA**)** was developed by a group of experienced academic and clinical midwives in the Midwifery Practice Assessment Collaboration (MPAC) to align with the NMC Standards of proficiency for midwives (2019) which are underpinned by extensive literature including the Lancet series on Midwifery. This practice assessment document has been approved by the NMC for use in all HEIs delivering midwifery programmes in England and Northern Ireland. The version used by the University of Plymouth has been converted to an electronic portfolio on the ARC platform, and is accessed via POPPI (students) or directly via this link: MORA.

The MORA adopts evidence-based approaches, including the Practice Assessment Toolkit developed from the National 'Grading of Practice in Pre-registration Midwifery' project - University of Plymouth and the wealth of national and international literature on the topic of practice assessment.

There are a number of elements of assessment in practice which you will be required to successfully complete to pass practice and move onto the next part of the programme. Detailed requirements are explained via a userguide and videos on the MORA link and specific guidance is provided in each section of the electronic document; please read this carefully, especially the sections on Practice Episode Records and Proficiencies. Further resources are on your practice module DLE sites. A summary is provided below with each section indicating if these elements are **mandatory,** required or *optional*; a checklist in *Appendix C* provides further detail. The difference between **mandatory** and required is that you will not be penalised if the required elements are not completed in full as most rely on staff fulfilling their responsibilities.

It is essential that you invite your practice assessor to your MORA by signing your **'Learning Contract'** as soon as you have been notified of their name, selecting it from the list provided. This will enable your practice assessor to have direct access to your MORA at any point in the year without requiring a further invitation and provide them with the correct 'permissions' to edit relevant sections and undertake your assessments.

Practice will be assessed as **pass/ refer in years one and two and graded in year three**. The only difference between the requirements of BSc and MSc are the level descriptors against which students are assessed in the MORA. 0-credit modules for practice in the earlier years of the MSc programmes are due to university regulations about academic level and do not reflect the importance of practice and its assessment – this is crucial to becoming a registered midwife. The grade in the final year of the programme, which contributes to degree classification, provides evidence of the value of practice.

5.1 Initial Meeting (required)

Following your 'Orientation' to the placement by (normally) your practice supervisor, you and your practice assessor should complete the 'Initial Meeting' within the first two weeks of your first placement. You should complete the 'Learning Plan' before or after this meeting and review this regularly throughout the year, amending the 'RAG rating' to demonstrate your ongoing self-assessed level of competence and adding more objectives as appropriate. You are encouraged to plan your dates for 'Practice Assessor Reviews 1 and 2' during this meeting; you can use the 'Assessment Planner' to record these.

5.2 Practice Episode Records (mandatory)

'Practice Episode Records' (**PERs)** are mandatory records which demonstrate that you have achieved standard 3.5 of the NMC (2023) Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes. Further information can be found in Number of births to be achieved by student midwives - The Nursing and Midwifery Council (nmc.org.uk).Your MORA indicates how many episodes are required for each aspect of the childbearing continuum and neonatal assessments; the minimum number identified for each section **must** be completed for you to have fulfilled NMC and programme requirements**. Please read the guidance carefully to ensure you understand which 'cases' fit in each section and whether they can be duplicated across other sections.**

Changes to the Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes made by the NMC in 2023 resulted in some changes to requirements for PERs which are now embedded; 'Historic' sections reflect the previous standards and must remain in the MORA until all students who enrolled during that period have completed their programme (this allows for returning students); newer students will, however, not be able to upload any content to these sections. The NMC requires students to:

> *"Support and care for no less than 40 women in labour and facilitate the birth. Where 40 births cannot be reached owing to the lack of available women giving birth, it may be reduced to a minimum of 30, provided that the student is given the opportunity to assist with caring for an additional 20 vaginal births not personally facilitated." [standard 3.5.2, NMC 2023* Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes *]*

Please aim to achieve the recommended 20 *'Vaginal births not personally facilitated'* as these would be required if a reduction to 30 personally facilitated births becomes necessary; vaginal births in the *'Births witnessed'* section would also count (this is now also a 'Historic' section). It is important that you gain as many opportunities as possible to extend your experience and confidence in caring for labouring and birthing women. **Please note, however, that we are continuing to aim for the full 40 *'Births personally facilitated'*, and it would only be in exceptional circumstances that an adjustment would be made.**

You must invite your practice supervisors to verify each entry once you have completed the relevant clinical details. **Please do not include any identifying information in this section such as names of service-users or local titles of ward areas or community teams to maintain confidentiality.**

A minimum of **two 'Breastfeeding assessment tools'** must be completed each year and uploaded to this section. You are required to complete these on paper versions of the templates which can be found in the 'Proformas to print' of your MORA as you will need to record the details while you are with the mother and baby.

The **'Practice Episode Records'** are completed across the full programme and all must be achieved as part of your final MID 607/607BL/706/706BL Advancing Midwifery Practice module. You do not have to complete them by the July Assessment

Board in your final year but will be required to remain in practice until they are achieved; this will then be verified at a re-sit Board. However, please be aware that non-completion by the July Board will mean that you cannot attend an Options Placement and it may also have an impact on your eligibility to attend graduation.

5.3 Proficiencies (mandatory)

Domain 6 of the NMC (2019) Standards of proficiency for registered nurses comprises the '**Proficiencies'** you are required to achieve in practice throughout the programme. It is mandatory that you achieve all of the Proficiencies in the MORA each year. Most remain the same across the programme although the expected level moves from direct supervision → indirect supervision → competence under minimal supervision. You will, however, find that a few additional Proficiencies require assessment in practice in years 2 and 3 following theoretical and clinical skills preparation during university sessions (examples include suturing, cannulation, IV administration and NIPE). Some Proficiencies may be suitable for verification by registrants other than midwives, eg: when in neonatal or gynaecology placements.

It is mandatory to include **at least one form of evidence for each Proficiency,** mapping to other sections in your MORA. You can use the same form of evidence across multiple Proficiencies if appropriate. Please provide a short summary about how the evidence links to that specific Proficiency; don't just list the PERs numbers. You need to invite your practice supervisor/s to verify achievement of your Proficiencies; please signpost them as appropriate in the free text field. All Proficiencies for that academic year must have been verified by a registrant and include at least one form of evidence from you by the **'Summative Holistic Assessment'** point and practice submission deadline which precedes the July Assessment Board.

5.4 Supervisor Feedback (mandatory)

Your practice assessor cannot determine achievement without evidence from practice supervisors. It is therefore mandatory to have **at least one set of 'Supervisor Feedback' per section** (antenatal, intrapartum, postnatal, neonatal, promoting excellence); three are required at the summative assessment point. Your practice assessor will need a wider range of comments from a number of different practice supervisors across the full year to facilitate a robust assessment; this triangulation of evidence is required by the NMC (2023) Standards for student supervision and assessment. You are therefore encouraged to seek feedback from all practice supervisors with whom you work for any extended period. Supervisors will be required to provide formative assessment against the 'Holistic performance descriptors' and 'Professional values' expected at that level/ stage of the programme.

If you are only working one shift with a practice supervisor you may wish to ask them to complete a 'Staff feedback' form which can be found in the 'Proformas to print' section of your MORA; it is useful to have some paper copies of these templates available. It is also good practice to ask other registrants or non-registered staff with whom you work to complete these forms which you can upload to the 'Feedback from others' section in '*Evidence to support the achievement of proficiencies'*. You or staff supporting you may also wish to use the *'Record of meetings/ periodic observation'* section to record other discussions or simulations; these can also be mapped as evidence to the '**Proficiencies**'.

5.5 Service-user feedback (mandatory)

It is mandatory that you submit **at least one 'Service-user feedback'** form each year; you must upload this to the 'Feedback from others' section in '*Evidence to support the achievement of proficiencies'*. You are encouraged to seek additional feedback from a wider range of service-users if possible. These forms must not breach confidentiality so no names of service-users or their family are permitted but **all forms must be signed by the supervising midwife or other registrant.**

5.6 Reflections (required)

Although these are not mandatory, you are required to complete three reflections each year. It is recommended that these cover the antenatal, intrapartum and postnatal/ neonatal periods, however this is flexible. You must use a structured model – either the NMC reflective accounts template you will be using for revalidation throughout your future career, one of the models in the handout in the 'Proformas to print' or an alternative from the literature. You must reference your reflections which should be 500 - 1000 words in length and ideally mapped to the NMC Code. **Confidentiality must be maintained throughout.** These reflections must be uploaded to the relevant section in the *'Evidence to support the achievement of proficiencies'.*

5.7 Additional evidence (*optional*)

Apart from the mandatory and required elements, you are encouraged to consider uploading additional evidence to the *'Evidence to support the achievement of proficiencies'* section of your MORA, providing justification as appropriate. You may also upload *'Feedback from others'* or optional *'Workpacks/ logs'* to this section. *'Records of complementary placement experiences'* such as experience of another maternity provider on your Peer Shadowing Day/s or neonatal and gynaecology placements, shadowing of other health professionals and similar opportunities could be uploaded here. You must upload your set of *'Additional Practice Learning Placement'* documentation confirming attendance, engagement and maintenance of

professional values as well as goal-setting, reflection and practice supervisor comments at the end of the Options Placement to this section if you have attended an external host (see *Section 3.2*).

You might also want to document discussions or simulations of obstetric emergencies (for example) in the *'Record of meetings/ periodic observation'* section. This can also be used by your practice supervisors, practice assessor or academic assessor to record other meetings with you; they could alternatively be documented in the 'Communications' field as below.

You are encouraged to use the 'Communications' field in the *'Evidence to support the achievement of proficiencies'* section to send emails via your MORA to staff involved in your practice progress when appropriate; this will form an audit trail of your progress and any actions taken to address issues raised. You will often be copied into MORA 'Communications' sent beteween your practice assessor and academic assessor; these demonstrate the partnership approach to supporting your practice progress.

5.8 Practice Assessor Reviews 1 and 2 (required)

You and your practice assessor are required to complete the section for 'Practice Assessor Reviews 1 and 2' at appropriate formative points during the year. These require you to demonstrate reflective and self-assessment skills prior to your practice assessor drawing on the evidence in your MORA and further discussions with you to ascertain your current level of knowledge, skills and professionalism. You should both review your 'Learning plan', progress in '**PERs**' and '**Proficiencies**' at this point as well as '**Supervisor Feedback'** and any other feedback and evidence. Your practice assessor will then formatively assess you against the 'Holistic performance descriptors' and 'Professional values' required at your stage of the programme. This will give you a benchmark and provide you with guidance on what you still need to do to prepare for your summative assessment.

5.9 Summative Holistic Assessment (mandatory)

The mandatory **'Summative Holistic Assessment'** is the final meeting required during your practice assessment journey each year. As with previous meetings, you need to ensure that all required evidence is available and you have completed your reflective element of the assessment. You will then meet with your practice assessor to discuss your MORA as a whole, focussing particularly on the mandatory elements:

- ✓ **'Proficiencies'** – all must have been verified by a practice supervisor/ registrant and comprise at least one form of evidence recorded by you and justifying selection
- ✓ **'Breastfeeding assessment tool'** – a minimum of two uploaded to the PERs

- ✓ **'Supervisor Feedback'** – a minimum of one completed proforma in each section; however several from a range of staff are recommended
- ✓ **'Service-user feedback'** – a minimum of one uploaded to the *'Evidence to support the achievement of proficiencies'* section; must be signed by the supervising registrant but must be otherwise anonymous
- ✓ **'Practice Episode Records'** – must be completed by the end of the programme; ongoing progress until that point

Drawing on this mandatory evidence and any additional material you have presented, your practice assessor will award you an overall descriptor against the 'Holistic performance descriptors' at that level/ stage of the programme. If you are in your final year of the programme they will also give you a numerical grade from that band which will contribute to your degree classification. Prior to this, your practice will be assessed as pass/ refer.

Your academic assessor is also required to contribute to the Summative Holistic Assessment. Normally, they will be invited to attend the meeting with you and your practice assessor, but this is not mandatory and will be at the discretion of the individual academic staff member. Your academic assessor will only be able to complete their section once you and then your practice assessor have completed and submitted your own sections. Together with your practice assessor, they will be required to recommend you for progression based on your practice achievement. Your academic assessor will additionally confirm that all academic assessments have been achieved pending verification by the relevant Award Assessment Board.

If for any reason you have valid extenuating circumstances for non-submission, it is essential that you discuss this with your practice assessor and academic assessor and submit your application in a timely way; you will otherwise risk being referred at this summative point and will only have one further attempt at practice (see *section 6.1*).

Figure 1 provides a schematic overview of the process and components of practice assessment as you progress through your placement.

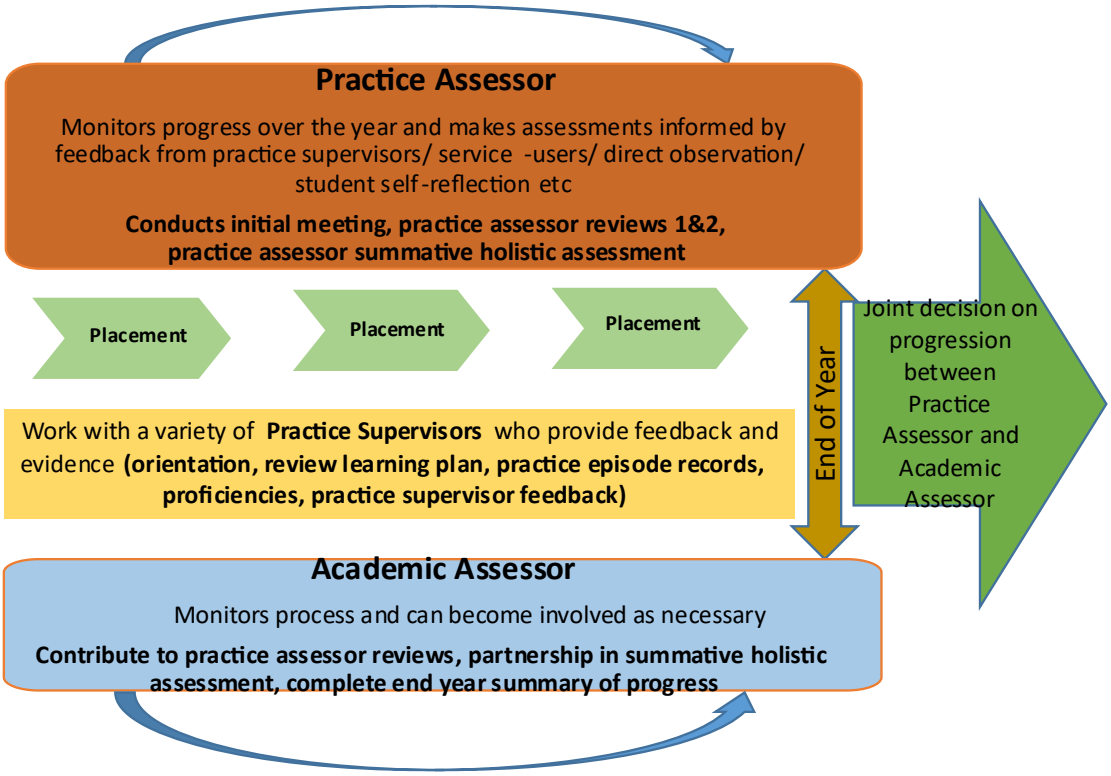


Figure 1: Schematic overview of the practice assessment components and process

6. NON-ACHIEVEMENT

You **must pass practice** before you can progress to the next part/ stage of the programme. By the end of the programme, the **minimum number of practice hours required** must also have been achieved: 2,496 for three-year programmes and 1,664 for the MSc Midwifery (Shortened) programme; these are linked to MID 607/607BL/706/706BL.

There are two ways that you may be referred and not pass your practice: either through non-achievement of **any of the mandatory elements** or due to poor record keeping (for example, not completing your practice documentation in time for the assessment deadline). Please refer to your MORA and *section 5* in this handbook for guidance on achieving practice requirements. If you have any queries or concerns about your progress you must talk to your practice and academic assessors.

6.1 Referral in practice

The following outlines the usual procedures for a referral in practice. The Award Assessment Board may make exceptions in some circumstances.

- Any **referral** in practice will require a **'Progression Plan'** to be completed which will be agreed between the student, practice assessor and academic assessor in a tripartite approach.
- PERs will be ongoing.
- If you are referred in practice in your final year you will be **unable to undertake an Options Placement** and will need to remain in the same maternity placement setting for the retrieval period.
- If you are **referred in practice** OR **did not submit and do not have valid** extenuating circumstances you will be required to undertake a **retrieval period** over the summer (normally at least 4 weeks); the re-sit date will be provided by the Board. You will normally continue in the same placement; additional sections will be provided in the MORA documentation to reflect your re-assessment. Referral in the retrieval period will be counted as failure at a second attempt and following the exam board will usually result in removal from the programme.

A UoP Fitness to Practise meeting is normally not required in addition to practice referral unless there are serious concerns about your fitness to practise. **However, this process will be initiated if concerns are raised about your practice or professionalism following achievement in practice assessments** and you will not be able to progress on the programme until its conclusion**.**

6.2 Non-submission of practice with valid extenuating circumstances

University Regulations require students to have the opportunity to submit all assessments except exams/ presentations as **late submissions within 5 working days, if there are valid extenuating circumstances.** Practice also aligns with this requirement. The first MORA submission date includes time for late submissions and review by your academic assessor. Extenuating circumstances **must** still be applied for if this applies to you, and you should first have discussed this with your personal tutor and/or academic assessor as well as, of course, your practice assessor. Please note that in the case of a re-sit/submission date late submissions are normally not offered.

- If you **did not submit practice and have valid** extenuating circumstances you will be required to undertake a **retrieval period** over the summer (normally at least 4 weeks); the re-sit date will be provided by the Board. You will normally continue in the same placement and with the same MORA documentation. This will be viewed as a first attempt.
- If you still have **valid** extenuating circumstances at the re-sit date you will normally be in a **Repeat with Attendance (RWA)** at first attempt as you cannot progress beyond the September re-sit Board unless you are in your final year. You will be required to undertake all practice placements aligned to your new cohort and complete a new set of MORA documentation, however previous records could also be taken into account at your 'Summative Holistic Assessment'.
- If you have **valid** extenuating circumstances **and interrupt** from the programme at any point without submitting practice you will normally be able to continue with the same set of MORA documentation on your return.
- In all cases PERs will be ongoing.

6.3 Repeat with attendance (RWA)

- If you are in a Repeat with Attendance (RWA) year **due to having more than 60 credits outstanding at the July Assessment Board, including practice**, you will be required to undertake all practice placements aligned to your new cohort and complete a new set of MORA documentation. Practice will be undertaken at first attempt if valid extenuating circumstances were submitted for this assessment (see *section 6.2*).
- Students in a Repeat with Attendance (RWA) year due to **practice referral** will be required to undertake all practice placements aligned to your new cohort and complete a full set of MORA documentation for that year at second and final attempt.
- In all cases PERs will be ongoing.

6.4 Maintaining competency placement

Students who have achieved practice but are in a Repeat with Attendance (RWA) year due to **academic referral** will require a **'Maintaining competency placement'.** This period is intended to demonstrate that the required level of practice proficiency is being maintained in line with the student's stage of their programme. A set of reduced documentation will be provided in your MORA to reflect this placement which will normally be of 8 weeks' duration. PERs will be ongoing. If your practice assessor has concerns about your practice or the assessments are not achieved you will be subject to UoP Fitness to Practise as the module will already have been through an Assessment Board.

7. PLACEMENT WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

7.1 Learner responsibilities

You are required to demonstrate that you are of 'good health and good character' before and during the programme to ensure you will be able to practise safely and effectively within your profession. To achieve this:

- You must complete the **self-declaration** on POW at the start of each academic year.
- You must ensure that all information held by the university regarding your personal details is kept up-to-date, including your driving status.
- Discuss any personal or health issues with your personal tutor so that appropriate support and signposting can be provided. It may be necessary to gain your consent to refer you to Occupational Health or to implement reasonable adjustments (see *section 7.2*).
- If you feel that your placement allocation may create a conflict of interest (see *section 2.3*) you must discuss the situation with your personal tutor so that alternative arrangements can be considered; they will need to complete the '*Placement Alteration Request (PAR)*' form. You likewise need to discuss with your personal tutor if your personal circumstances mean that you are finding your placement challenging. Please note that changes cannot be guaranteed (see *section 2.2*).
- You need to be prepared for the practice placement, making sure you and your practice assessor can log onto your MORA.
- Be aware of your professional conduct and ensure you are working in accordance with the NMC Code.
- Familiarise yourself with policies and comply with all rules and regulations laid down by the placement organisation and university.

- Not all placement providers are the same; you need to take responsibility for finding out about working practices of your placement provider. Information will be found on POW via the link to your allocated placement; you will also find out more about local policies when you are in practice.
- Keep up-to-date with your practice documentation, which will assist your practice supervisors and practice assessor in their roles supporting your learning in practice. Please ensure that all meetings which provide a formative opportunity to review your practice progress are undertaken at appropriate points to give you time to address any development requirements prior to the Summative Holistic Assessment.
- Attend all placements allocated, for all shifts, notifying the placement and snamhhsplymouth@plymouth.ac.uk if you are unable to attend for any reason and documenting this accurately on your timesheet.
- Maintain timesheets accurately and submit them regularly; this includes recording all absences and the reason for this.
- Follow the *'Placement Incidents and Concerns Policy'* on Policies, procedures and guidelines regarding raising concerns in practice. **It is essential that this is done as soon as concerns are identified;** you must not wait until the end of the placement. Please ensure that the placement staff know of your concerns at an early stage so that they can be addressed. You will be supported by the relevant university staff (eg: academic assessor, personal tutor, midwifery link lecturer, academic and/or practice PDT lead, AHOS Practice Learning). As a student, you need to follow the NMC Code and therefore have a duty of care to the public for raising any safety or quality concerns. It may also be needed for your own or others' protection and/or learning. Please also see *section 8.1.*
- Please complete the **placement evaluation** following each placement – the link will appear on POW a fortnight before the end of your placement. This is important to help maintain the quality of placements. Evaluations will be aligned to the Safe Learning Environment Charter (SLEC), enabling practice partners and university staff to more accurately identify areas where improvements may be needed. The questions asked and links to the SLEC can be seen in *Appendix D*.

7.2 Risk assessments and reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments:

The Faculty of Health aims to promote a climate where diversity and difference are valued and where attitudes to learning and placement experiences are flexible. There is no requirement to compromise professional standards; rather it is the methods by which those standards are to be assessed or performed that may require reasonable adjustment.

The ability to support reasonable adjustments may vary in different placements and any associated challenges will be discussed in partnership between you, your personal tutor and placement staff. It is the student's responsibility to disclose a disability, and your permission is required to share this with your placement hosts. You are not obliged to disclose a disability unless it could cause risk, however you are encouraged to do so. Following disclosure, it is the responsibility of the university and placement host to make appropriate reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled students are not disadvantaged before, during or after placement. Some students will be happy to suggest their own reasonable adjustments based on prior experience. Some reasonable adjustments may be useful for a range of disabilities/ impairments, for example, flexibility over start time may be helpful for a student who has mental health difficulties or chronic fatigue syndrome.

The UoP Reasonable adjustments policy provides an overview of the University's responsibilities, including for those with specific learning disabilities, long or short-term needs including neurodiversity. You will also find useful information on the Disability Services and the student hub. It is appropriate for the record in the Guidance for supporting students with reasonable adjustments to be completed for short-term adjustments which may include temporary personal circumstances; this is normally completed by the personal tutor, a practice representative and the student. For students with a permanent need for reasonable adjustments it is important that a Practice Placement Support Agreement is completed and reviewed at each placement change; this can be found as an appendix in the above guidance document. A Support for Study meeting may also be required.

Your MORA has a section 'About me' which it is optional. However, you are encouraged to complete the field on 'Reasonable adjustments' if you have any specific requirements arising from Occupational Health or DAS reports; please ensure you discuss these with your personal tutor.

Risk assessments:

Some students may require risk assessments as a result of pre-existing underlying conditions or changes in physical or mental health during their programme. In some circumstances, it may also be necessary to complete a University risk assessment undertaken by a **UoP trained risk assessor** in collaboration with you and your personal tutor if the condition could potentially affect, or be affected by, both academic and practice contexts (or academic only). This ensures alignment with reasonable adjustment processes and supports safe participation in all learning environments.

Risk assessments are normally undertaken following an Occupational Health review, with reasonable adjustments implemented where possible in line with their recommendations. With the student's consent, the University risk assessment will be shared with practice partners to inform a **local, practice specific risk assessment,** tailored to the environment and context of care. This assists you to deliver safe care, receive appropriate support and maintain compliance with practice learning

governance. Confirmation of a placement-based risk assessment being in place must be logged with the Faculty Compliance team fohcompliance@plymouth.ac.uk; it is the **student's responsibility to send this confirmatory communication** and to ask that the placement host additionally sends their local practice risk assessment to the Compliance team.

In the case of pregnancy, adoption or becoming a new parent your **personal tutor** will be responsible for undertaking the University risk assessment aligned with the Student Pregnancy, Adoption or Becoming a Parent policy.

7.3 Infection prevention

All students are required to follow local policies regarding infection prevention – this includes screening, testing, uniforms or other clothing, personal protective equipment (PPE) and isolation. It is essential that you disclose situations where you have had suspected or confirmed contact with an infection for which you do not have immunity (natural or vaccination). This is a professional responsibility as it may have an impact on service-users or colleagues as well as your own wellbeing.

Although it is not a mandatory requirement, you are encouraged to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and flu as front-line workers with professional responsibilities to the public for protection against harm and prevention of infection in all settings; pregnant women and neonates are particularly vulnerable groups. Other vaccinations will also be required or recommended for your programme – a list can be found in the Programme Handbook. Please discuss any concerns with your personal tutor.

You will be screened by Occupational Health for risk factors prior to joining the programme. If it is determined that you are in a personally higher risk category you will be advised on any recommended specific actions or precautions. Please record Covid-19 vaccination/ boosters on the 'Vaccination' tab on POW.

7.4 Uniform

All new starters are issued their uniform through the University of Plymouth; this process usually starts during induction week and uniforms are normally received prior to your first placement. When in practice, you must follow the local uniform/ dress policy. Please also see the Faculty Uniform Policy which includes the requirement to ensure infection control such as washing uniforms at 60'C: Policies, procedures and guidelines. If you are permitted to wear your own clothes this must be smart casual, with no excessive exposure which may cause embarrassment or offence to those in your care, their families or staff.

Midwifery students will wear coloured epaulettes as follows:

Programme	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
BSc (Hons) Midwifery Pre-registration (campus/ blended)	Red	Yellow	Grey
MSc Midwifery Pre-registration (campus/ blended)	Red	Yellow	Grey
MSc Midwifery (Shortened) – campus/ blended	Lilac	Grey	

7.5 Attendance in placement

Regular and punctual attendance at practice placements is a requirement of both the University of Plymouth and the NMC, and is an essential programme requirement. You are encouraged to provide your contact details to each placement area so they can contact you if they are concerned about your wellbeing and you do not arrive for a shift without prior notification. If you need to request an authorised absence due to personal circumstances, this must be agreed with your personal tutor – where possible, this should be in advance of the absence.

All attendance and absences from placements must be recorded on your timesheet; your practice supervisors will authorise attendance and your personal tutor will be able to verify any authorised absences (see *section 7.5c*). **Attendance and timesheet completion** is required for **all allocated placements in your programme,** including Options Placements.

You are expected to work practice hours according to your programme: 30 hours per week/ 60 hours per fortnight for campus-based students and 20.3 hours per week/ 40.6 hours per fortnight for blended programme students, following the shift patterns of your placement (see *section 7.5b*). Try to keep up with your practice hours and aim to achieve approximately 800 per year. Note that the impact of accruing extensive numbers of outstanding hours may impact on completing your programme, attendance at graduation and commencement of future employment. Please make good use of the theory day allocated each practice week to primarily focus on updating your MORA. Please note that if you are on the **blended programme** your choice of dates to undertake your theory is flexible (apart from timetabled days), but **the same expectations are applicable to you as for the campus-based students regarding shift patterns and attendance in placements.**

If you are concerned that the shift patterns you are being given exceed the 'working time directive' or do not provide you with the appropriate gap between shifts, please speak to the manager of the area in the first instance; liaise with your personal tutor and academic assessor if further support is required.

If you are a **final year student** you must continue to work these practice hours until your results have been released by the July Award Assessment Board. **After that point**, if you have completed the NMC minimum requirements of 2,496 hours (three-year programmes) or 1,664 hours (shortened programme) you may reduce the hours worked during the remainder of your allocated practice placement, through negotiation with your personal tutor/academic assessor and placement staff. A minimum of one shift per week must be worked; no early stepping off the programme is permitted. Please note that this flexibility **may not be available to funded students on the shortened programe** as you continue to be paid full time and so should be in placement full time unless taking authorised leave after discussion with your employer.

If you are required to continue working outstanding practice hours or complete remaining Practice Episode Records beyond the normal length of your programme, **you must continue until all NMC requirements (practice hours and Practice Episode Records) have been confirmed by your personal tutor or programme administration** when viewing POW and MORA. Achievement of these hours/ PERs will subsequently be verified by Chair's Action or the re-sit Board but you are not expected to remain in placement until that meeting takes place. You do, however, remain on the programme until you have received formal notification that all programme and NMC requirements have been achieved, after which this information will be uploaded by the admin team to the NMC.

7.5a Timesheet completion:

The NMC requests information from the University that each learner has met the required number of practice hours as a component of being eligible to apply for registration. This information is also required by NHS England for payment of the tariff which provides the host with finances to support practice education. **It is your professional responsibility for you to activate and complete timesheets for each placement**.

All practice hours and absences must be recorded on the electronic timesheet system (TMS); a user-guide and videos can be found on this link: POW or the 'Placement support' link on the main MORA website. Please also refer to the TMS policy. Any suspected fraudulent claims will be followed up through the UoP Fitness to Practise process.

- **Timesheets must NOT be pre-populated;** you must only complete them after you have worked your shift and this must accurately reflect start and finish times and any breaks taken.
- Meal breaks whilst on practice are not included as part of your practice hours and cannot be included as hours on your attendance records; short breaks can be counted. It is essential that you take breaks during the shift to ensure safe practice and your wellbeing.

- You cannot claim for travel time.
- Timesheets must be completed on a monthly basis and within one working week of the month end.
- All non-submissions will be followed up routinely by the programme team.
- **Please note that if you are more than 4 weeks in arrears you may be removed from placement.**
- All timesheets must be submitted within 2 weeks following completion of each allocated placement block.
- **Timesheets for your next placement will not be released until you have submitted all previous timesheets**. Repeat 'offenders' may also be subject to a UoP Fitness to Practise investigation.
- **Extra-curricular Practice Hours** must be submitted on POW and approved by your personal tutor by a week before the practice submission date for the September re-sit Board or they will be lost; you cannot claim these in a retrospective academic year. A reminder that you **must complete the evidence on MORA** and invite your personal tutor to review this prior to requesting authorisation of these hours (see *section 3.3*).
- You will not be able to come out of practice in your final year until it has been confirmed that all practice hours and PERs meet NMC requirements – see *section 7.5.*

7.5b Shift work:

Healthcare professionals provide management and care to patients around the clock, therefore it is important to the programme and future employers that you also experience a full range of shift patterns. You are expected to attend for the shifts as scheduled by your placement; staff need to take into account service needs, presence of other learners in the area and appropriate allocation of practice supervisors – you must not alter these without prior discussion. Approaches to off-duty requests will vary; some wards/ departments have a prescribed process including restrictions to the number of requests. You are normally expected to follow these same processes.

In exceptional circumstances you may be able to negotiate some adjustments to shift patterns, for example start and finish times (as a short-term coping strategy), through discussion with the placement area and your personal tutor. Appendix 2, 3 and 4 of the Guidance for supporting students with reasonable adjustments on POPPI should be completed to formalise this arrangement for 'Temporary personal circumstances'. Referral to other services such as Occupational Health may also be required (see *section 7.2).* Please note that if you are on the **blended programme** your choice of dates to undertake your theory is flexible (apart from timetabled days), but **the same expectations are applicable to you as for the campus-based students regarding shift patterns and attendance in placements.**

Weekend shifts and night duty are part of the 24-hour care provision; you are expected to work some of these shifts to experience the full range of patient care and service organisation. **There are no specific requirements regarding numbers of night or weekend shifts**, however if you find you are being allocated an excessive number please speak to the manager in your placement setting or your academic assessor. **Please note that you cannot claim practice hours when you are allocated an 'on call' shift unless you are actually called out.**

Bank holiday hours are included within the overall programme hours. Students are permitted to attend placement on most bank holidays, as these usually only extend the weekend by one day. However, during the extended university closure periods **(Christmas/New Year and the Easter weekend**), it is **not appropriate** for you to be on placement due to the limited availability of academic staff and professional services support. Students are still expected to complete the required 20.3 hours (blended programme) or 30 hours (campus programme) when not on annual leave. You may either be in practice on the bank holiday (if your placement area operates 24/7) or take the day off if you prefer; however, if you choose to take the bank holiday off, you will need to make up the hours on another day to ensure you meet programme requirements. If your placement area does not operate on bank holidays or weekends, you will need to either work longer shifts on the days you are in practice or make up the time at a later date. You are not normally expected to work more than the hours required by your programme (i.e., the equivalent of 30 or 20.3 hours per week for campus-based and blended programmes respectively) – this can be calculated over a month or placement block.

If making up time, you must first discuss this with your personal tutor and practice supervisor/ assessor. Whilst you have already opted out of the 'working time directive' through pre-enrolment declarations, a further **assessment** is required if you intend to exceed **48 hours per week for longer than a fortnight,** completing the reasonable adjustments documentation to formalise this. This will be through a discussion with your personal tutor and the practice area. You will need to email your personal tutor, programme lead and the faculty compliance team fohcompliance@plymouth.ac.uk with the documentation to confirm the agreement. The SNAM placement team should also be included to avoid timesheet queries being raised. It is essential that **safety to practise** is paramount for your own wellbeing and the safety of service-users and colleagues; excessive hours worked will be followed up by your personal tutor to ensure that this is being adhered to and any concerns regarding professionalism will be addressed via the UoP Fitness to Practise process. Please see *section 7.5d* for further information about this UK legislation.

7.5c Absence from clinical placements:

The University has a policy for UoP Engagement and attendance monitoring. The Faculty of Health requires negotiated and unforeseen learner absences from the

programme due to certified or uncertified sickness or a change in personal circumstances to be closely monitored. This is to ensure compliance with the attendance requirements of the NMC and the need to demonstrate responsible financial management of public funds.

All sickness or other absences must be notified to your personal tutor, academic assessor, placement area and snamhhsplymouth@plymouth.ac.uk at the earliest opportunity. **Your notification to the placement must be by telephone, not email** as the latter may not be read in time. **All absences must be recorded on your timesheet.** It is important that you avoid accumulating absences where possible, as this may affect programme progression/completion and attendance at graduation; please discuss a plan for making these up with your personal tutor.

Absences from practice will only be authorised for illness or similar circumstances. Absence will not be authorised for activities such as an assessment deadline; it is expected that as an independent learner, you will plan your time effectively. Failure to comply with these processes or repeated non-attendance may lead to Study and Wellbeing Review and/or invoking of the UoP Fitness to Practise process.

7.5d Holiday placements and additional shifts:

No students are permitted in placement during the Christmas to New Year break or extended Easter weekend when the University is closed. You are not permitted in placement after 4pm on the Friday preceding the Christmas break or the day before the extended Easter weekend. In some programmes the Friday before the Christmas break is designated as a theory day so you should not be in placement at all.

Annual leave should be taken when scheduled in your programme. Any exceptional requests for swaps with timetabled annual leave must be discussed with your personal tutor and the *'Change of annual leave'* form (available from your personal tutor or snamplacements@plymouth.ac.uk) completed in collaboration with your practice supervisor/assessor/placement manager. Please note that **HDS weeks are not annual leave**; these form part of your programme theory hours meeting NMC requirements.

Any additional hours worked during placements or annual leave must be agreed with the practice placement teams and your personal tutor. You should adhere to the 'working time directive' and not exceed an average of 48 hours per week (including programmed theory hours). Whilst you have already opted out of the 'working time directive' through pre-enrolment declarations, a further **assessment** is required if you intend to exceed **48 hours per week for longer than a fortnight,** completing the reasonable adjustments documentation to formalise this. This will be through a discussion with your personal tutor and the practice area. You will need to email your personal tutor, programme lead and the faculty compliance team

fohcompliance@plymouth.ac.uk with the documentation to confirm the agreement. The SNaM placement team should also be included to avoid timesheet queries being raised. **Please note that this directive stipulates that breaks should be taken.** It is also essential that **safety to practice** is paramount for your own wellbeing and the safety of service-users and colleagues; excessive hours worked will be followed up by your personal tutor to ensure that this is being adhered to and any concerns regarding professionalism will be addressed via the UoP Fitness to Practise process.

Please see the following links for useful information about the 'working time directive' which still applies in UK legislation:

- https://www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours
- https://www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours/weekly-maximum-working-hours-and-opting-out
- https://www.acas.org.uk/working-time-rules
- https://www.acas.org.uk/working-time-rules/employees-who-are-on-call-or-sleep-in
- https://www.acas.org.uk/rest-breaks

7.6 Returning to practice following a period of interruption or absence

There are many reasons why learners may need to interrupt their studies, including financial, personal, or other individual circumstances. Following an interruption, you may be able to return to the programme at the start of the next academic year or at the point where you left, subject to programme and placement capacity. Please note that a return to the same placement locality cannot be guaranteed. Arrangements will be made for you to undertake any outstanding practice placements or assessments, and/or to maintain your skills. This will be organised on an individual basis with the placement allocation team, programme lead and your personal tutor; an academic assessor will be appointed, if required. Please see your programme handbook for further information and *sections 6.2 and 6.3* regarding MORA requirements.

8. PRACTICE CONCERNS

8.1 Raising concerns in practice

As learners, you bring a fresh perspective to placement environments and may identify issues or concerns that others overlook. Good communication, honesty, and partnership working are essential to ensuring safe and effective care. Raising concerns is a professional responsibility for all aspiring health professionals. If you witness or experience anything in practice that concerns you, you must report it promptly and not wait until the placement has ended. This is a key principle of the Safe Learning Environment Charter (SLEC). If you are concerned about a person's actions,

omissions, or behaviour, you have a **professional duty to discuss this immediately** with your practice supervisor, practice assessor, a senior member of the placement team, academic assessor, or personal tutor. Early reporting helps ensure concerns are addressed quickly and escalated appropriately where necessary. Please refer to the Placements and Incidents in Practice Policy for further guidance.

A culture must exist that encourages you to recognise that any risks to service-users come first. It may also be needed for your own or others' protection and/or learning. **This must be done immediately** so that your concerns can be addressed without delay. If required, they will then be escalated to the appropriate personnel (see *Appendix B*). **If there is a risk of your practice assessment being compromised due to raising concerns, alternative arrangements will be made to support you to progress.**

If your practice supervisor/ assessor, academic assessor/ personal tutor or midwifery link lecturer is not available or you do not feel comfortable sharing with any of these individuals, you should contact another member of the midwifery academic team, snamplacements@plymouth.ac.uk or the PDT academic or practice lead. Other ways of raising concerns include the Purple Flag system which is increasingly used in some of our local Trusts, contacting the Freedom to speak up guardian in your placement or using the University of Plymouth Speak Up Tool. Further information about speaking up in the NHS is here: NHSE policy on freedom to speak up.

Conversely, if you feel you have seen excellent practice and your colleagues need applauding then please tell them; this makes a difference to those working hard under pressure. An opportunity is provided each year to nominate individual staff or placement settings for a **SNAM certificate of recognition**; the Nursing Times Awards also provide an external opportunity to do so. Please remember to complete the evaluation following each placement (see *Appendix D*) – the link will appear on POW a fortnight before the end of your placement. This is important to help maintain the quality of placements. You are also encouraged to complete The National Education and Training Survey (NETS) when this opens in the autumn.

It is recognised that there are occasional times in practice where the support and supernumerary status of students may potentially be compromised by an unexpected clinical or staffing situation or industrial action. It is important that you report this to an appropriate person such as the ward or department manager or community team leader so that action can be taken; please see *'Guidance for managing the support and supervision of learners'* in Policies, procedures and guidelines. If this occurs during a **night or weekend shift you should not attend placement** for that particular shift and inform the ward manager or team leader to enable the shift to be rearranged. Please keep your academic assessor informed; additional support can be provided by the midwifery link lecturer and wider PDT (see also *section 4.1*).

8.2 Fitness to practise procedure

Higher Education Institutions have a responsibility to ensure that health and social care learners are fit to practise and adhere to regulatory requirements of the NMC. The NMC (2023) Code provides information about the standards of behaviour expected of learners. You will also find information on POPPI Policies, procedures and guidelines and in your module and programme handbook on the Midwifery programmes DLE as well as this Practice Handbook. It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the requirements.

Some learners will undergo the UoP Fitness to Practise process during their time on the programme. There are many reasons why this may happen, such as occupational health or personal circumstances – it is not always because concerns have been raised or problems encountered. Be mindful that this process is a supportive one and can be a valuable source of learning, as it allows the team to discuss openly any concerns you may have or that have arisen in practice, address them, formulate an action plan and normally support you to remain or return to practice. Conditions may be placed on your return which must be adhered to.

9. EMPLOYMENT LAW

A student who is on placement may not be considered as an employee and does not have the same rights, pursuant to employment legislation, as if they were to be treated as an employee. Therefore, in so far as an employee might have the right to request flexible working in order to deal with post-pregnancy issues, for example, that right does not apply to persons who are on placement.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council advise that flexibility can only be achieved if it is available at a local level. We will, as a faculty, always do our best to be flexible and accommodate students' requests, however due to the limits placed on us by the placement process this may not always be possible.

The Faculty of Health abides by Section 22 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 recognising that is unlawful for the "responsible body" of an educational establishment to discriminate on grounds of sex. Furthermore, we cannot, and indeed do not, discriminate in the terms on which it offers to admit a student, or by refusing or deliberately omitting to accept an application, or the terms upon which a student, once admitted, is given access to facilities.

10. Appendix A: Mandatory Training

Subject	Level	Expiry date of training from date of completion	Notes
Basic Life Support (BLS) / Paediatric Life Support (PLS)		1 year	**Practical**
Resuscitation	Level 1	1 year	eLearning
Resuscitation Adults	Level 2	1 year	eLearning
Resuscitation Paediatric	Level 2	1 year	eLearning
Newborn Life Support (NLS)		1 year	**Practical** (Only Midwifery; Child Nursing TBC)
Resuscitation Newborn	Level 2	1 year	eLearning (Only Midwifery; Child Nursing TBC)
Moving and Handling		2 years	**Practical**
Moving and Handling	Level 1	3 years	eLearning
	Level 2	2 years	eLearning
Conflict Resolution	N/A	3 years	eLearning
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights	N/A	3 years	eLearning
Fire Safety	N/A	2 years	eLearning
Health, Safety and Welfare	N/A	3 years	eLearning
Infection Prevention and Control	Level 1	3 years	eLearning
	Level 2	1 year	eLearning
Information Governance and Data Security	N/A	1 year	eLearning
Preventing Radicalisation	Basic Awareness	3 years	eLearning
	Prevent Awareness	3 years	eLearning
Safeguarding Adults	Level 1	3 years	eLearning
	Level 2	3 years	eLearning
Safeguarding Children	Level 1	3 years	eLearning
	Level 2	3 years	eLearning
Mental Capacity Act as Part of The Human Rights Act	N/A	3 years	eLearning
The Oliver McGowan Training	Part 1	3 years	eLearning
Blood Transfusion (Blood)	N/A	1 year	eLearning (Final year students only, but not Mental Health – separate list on DLE)
Anaphylaxis		1 year	eLearning (Only Midwifery)
Harassment and Sexual Misconduct – Personal Relationships		To be completed once	eLearning: Personal relationships training - students. Further information, see: Condition E6

11. Appendix B: Support and escalation - Roles and responsibilities of SNAM staff

The roles and responsibilities of Personal Tutor, Academic Assessor, PDT Academic Lead and Programme Lead are described below, to assist students in referring to the appropriate staff for support, and staff to be clear on their responsibilities. Roles may be interlinked at times. Communication between role holders is key to ensure appropriate support; **information about students will therefore be shared when required. Escalation flowcharts** are also included.

PERSONAL TUTOR: Follow UoP Personal Tutor Policy https://tinyurl.com/4bzbt4tc

Key responsibility is to provide general pastoral and academic support, signposting/ involving others as appropriate. Specific responsibilities therefore include:

- **Tutorials** as set out in PT policy.
- **Focus on signposting** e.g.: Student Wellbeing Services, Learning and Development, Schwartz Rounds, PNA/PMA.
- **Check S4 for alerts from DAS and POW** for recommended adjustments (keep AA informed as appropriate).
- **Referral** - OH, DAS as required.
- **Discussion with colleagues regarding reasonable adjustments** (e.g.: OH recommendations; where a placement may be temporarily inappropriate such as hospice when recently bereaved; completion of '*Placement Alteration Request (PAR)'* form, if relevant) - keep AA informed as appropriate.
- **Monitor absences/ attendance and mandatory training records** (notify AA if issues re placement).
- **Study and Wellbeing meetings** - initiate/ contribute to these in collaboration with Programme Lead/ deputy.
- **Non-practice-related FtP** – responsible for initiating FtP process in line with policy. May need to take active/investigatory role as well as supporting student (AA usually not involved). An ICAT is not required for these students.
- **Practice-related concern/ incident/FtP** - support student eg: statement-writing, attendance at meetings (AA will normally initiate investigation and submit the https://forms.office.com/e/IncidentReportingForm to create an Incidents and Concerns Action Tracker - ICAT).

- **Vetting of suitability for Long Arm/ Indirect Supervision (LAS) placements and Assessed Simulation Practice Placements (ASPP)** to ensure no personal circumstances would preclude this allocation, following notification from the SNAM Placements, PVI team or Simulation Lead (may also need to refer to ePAD or liaise with AA).
- **Options Placement** – responsible for discussing suitability of the desired Options Placement with the student as familiar with personal circumstances and academic progress, and will be the named contact (may need to consult AA if further information required about practice progress). Responsible for completing the academic section of the *'Additional Practice Learning Placement'* documentation and escalating as appropriate if concerns are raised by practice.
- **Additional hours** (make-up time) discussion as required - considering any other personal or academic issues impacting on timing/ workload. Responsible for completing the academic section of the '*Additional Practice Learning Placement'* documentation (nursing) and escalating as appropriate if concerns are raised by practice.
- **Oversight of *'Self-directed Practice Learning Hours'*** (nursing; *'Extra-curricular Practice Hours'* in midwifery) to ensure SSSA compliance and within prescribed limits, normally fulfilling the Practice Supervisor role by reviewing the evidence and authorising practice hours; this role must be distinct from AA role – even if the same person).

NB: where a personal tutor is unavailable for a period of more than 6 weeks, students will be assigned to a new personal tutor on a temporary basis and will normally revert to their original tutor on their return.

ACADEMIC ASSESSOR: Follow NMC (2023) SSSA https//tinyurl.com/ymdctfv3

SSSA Supporting Information hub - The Nursing and Midwifery Council (nmc.org.uk)

Key responsibility is to monitor student performance and progress in practice, *"working in partnership with the nominated practice assessor to evaluate and recommend the student for progression for each part of the programme" (9.4)*. Specific responsibilities therefore include:

- **Monitor ePAD/ MORA** – minimum review once during each placement/ practice block.
- **Communicate with PA at least once per placement** to ensure student is making necessary progress and more frequently if issues arise; communications (whatever the format) must be recorded in the 'Communication' section of the ePAD/MORA to enable an audit trail.

- **First point of contact for any performance issues in practice placements**, whether assessed or not. Essential to maintain communication with the Practice Assessor and document in the ePAD/MORA.
- **Raise or follow up any issues/ concerns arising in practice** and liaise with the PT if student support needed.
- **For practice-related incident/concern/FtP,** the AA is normally responsible for initiating an investigation and submitting the https://forms.office.com/e/IncidentReportingForm to create an Incidents and Concerns Action Tracker - **ICAT**. AA does information/ evidence gathering related to practice; may need to liaise with practice staff and/or PDT lead (practice and/or academic). Involve Programme Lead/ deputy if FtP required (this is not the role of the PDT lead).
- **Review ePAD/ MORA at practice submission points and sign off OAR/ AA summary,** confirming achievement in practice – includes reviewing reflections set by the programme and that evidence of Self-directed Practice Learning/ Extra-curricular practice hours has been overseen by a registrant to comply with SSSA requirements (note that the PT is responsible for reviewing the evidence itself and approving practice hours; the Practice Supervisor and AA roles must be distinct).
- **Support PA in decisions about progress if any concerns** – remembering that PA has the final decision on student achievement/non-achievement. Should attend any assessment points where concerns have been raised and referral is possible to support the student, assist the PA in making decisions and ensure due process is followed. If not attending, ensure that clear communications and record-keeping support this process. The placement Practice Education Team may also be involved.
- **Advise/confirm retrievals**
- The NMC also stipulates that the AA is responsible for *"collating and confirming student achievement of proficiencies and programme outcomes in the academic environment for each part of the programme" (9.1)*. **A statement has been added to the final AA sign-off in the ePAD/MORA** to reflect that this is subject to ratification by the relevant assessment Board; no further action by the AA is therefore needed.

NB: where an academic assessor is unavailable for a period of less than 3 weeks, students will be supported by their personal tutor and/or PDT Lead; the personal tutor cannot undertake this role if they were the academic assessor in the previous year. Students will be assigned to a new academic assessor if the original academic assessor is unavailable for more than 3 weeks during the placement period or if the personal tutor and PDT Lead have been the academic assessor in the previous year. The Placement Allocation Team will need to be informed of this.

PDT ACADEMIC LEAD: https://tinyurl.com/5yws32dw

Key responsibility is to develop placements and maintain the quality of the practice learning environment and student experience - working in collaboration with the Practice PDT lead/ education team/ link lecturer to address any issues (eg: supernumerary status/ embedding PS and PA role/ staffing concerns). Responsibilities in supporting colleagues in their roles therefore include:

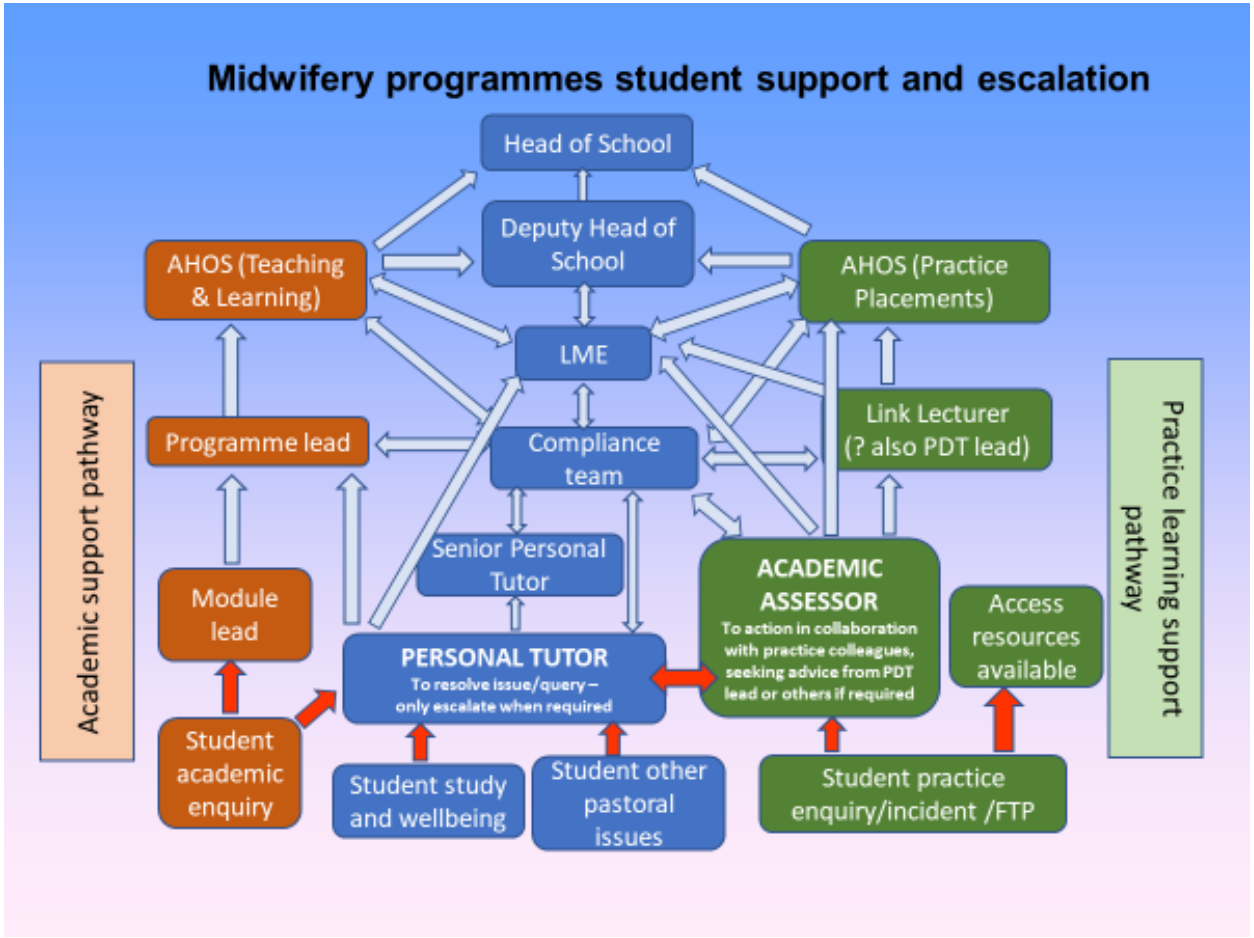
- **Source of support and advice for AAs** in fulfilling their role as required (eg: signposting to the 'Student concerns/incidents' form or FtP process); not responsible for following up with individual students – this is the role of the AA.
- **Follow up placement-related issues when concerns** are raised by any party about the learning environment/ staff or adherence to SSSA (AA responsible for individual student follow-up; may also involve PT), initiating the https://forms.office.com/e/IncidentReportingForm and/or contributing to the Incidents and Concerns Tracker (ICAT) as appropriate.
- **Where link lecturers are allocated** (eg: Midwifery/ Child/ Mental Health/ site-specific), they may take initial actions but to involve PDT leads as appropriate (not programme leads). The PDT Academic Lead needs a helicopter view of the placement setting eg: if recurrent issues in the same area.
- **Provide guidance**, where required, about appropriateness of a specific placement setting for a student/s.

PROGRAMME LEAD: https://tinyurl.com/2p8627jy

Key responsibility is to develop, operate and review academic programmes of study. Responsibilities in supporting colleagues in their roles therefore include:

- **Follow up academic issues** which need escalation.
- **Support PTs in their role** in conjunction with Senior PT.
- **FtP** (practice or non-practice-related) – support/ lead process, as required.
- **Contribute to student support and review meetings** as appropriate and assist in the management of academic offences.
- **Ensure that reasonable adjustments for students with extenuating circumstances and disability** are managed and reviewed appropriately (academic environment).

ESCALATION FLOW-CHART: MIDWIFERY



12. Appendix C: Checklist for MORA

Mandatory = will not achieve stage of programme if not complete

Required = necessary for optimal placement experience/ student development

Optional = at the individual's discretion

Section	Mandatory, required or optional	Timing	Responsibility	Comments
About me	Optional	Recommended in first year of programme	Student	You are encouraged to complete this section if you have Occupational Health or DAS recommendations. Other sections relate to previous experience and learning styles.
Learning contract	Mandatory	Within first 2 weeks of first placement each year or when a new PA allocated	Student and PA	Essential for enabling PA access
Orientation	Required	Within first 2 weeks of a new placement	Student and PS	Online or paper proformas available
Initial meeting	Required	Within first 2 weeks of first placement each year	Student and PA	If a change in PA, record discussion in 'Record of meetings' section
Assessment planner	Required	During initial meeting and reviewed as needed	Student and PA	Important to plan meetings in a timely way
Learning plan	Required	Pre-placement, mid and end of each placement	Student (with input from PS/ PA/ ?AA)	Student-led document
Practice Episode Records	Mandatory	Throughout programme	Student complete; PS verify	Minimum 2 breastfeeding tools completed by practice submission deadline each year All numbers must be achieved by end of programme

Proficiencies	Mandatory	Complete by practice submission deadline each year	Student document evidence; PS verify	Student map evidence to other sections in MORA. Additional proficiencies in years 2 and 3.
Supervisor feedback	Mandatory	Ongoing throughout placement	PS	PA cannot determine achievement without evidence from PSs (at least 3 per section required)
Practice Assessor reviews 1&2	Required	Appropriate points in year	Student and PA	Formative discussions to ensure progress made and identify any concerns
Record of meetings/ periodic observation	Optional	As required	Anyone	Opportunity to record additional interactions
Evidence to support the achievement of proficiencies	Mandatory	Complete by practice submission deadline each year	Student upload contributions from self or others	Minimum 1 anonymised feedback from women/ families each year, signed by midwife/ registrant
	Mandatory	Must be uploaded to MORA prior to involvement in intravenous administration in practice in year 2 or 3.		Certificate of completion of full IV Therapy Passport module and assessment: https://learninghub.nhs.uk/Catalogue/IV-Therapy-Passport
	Mandatory	Complete by practice submission final year		Completed IV Therapy Passport Record of Achievement and Declaration of Practice and Transferable Skills
	Required	Ongoing throughout year		3X reflections each year
	Optional	Ongoing throughout year		Other evidence demonstrating ongoing development/ achievement
Summative Holistic Assessment	Mandatory	Complete by practice submission deadline each year	Student, PA mandatory discussion. AA must complete documents (attendance negotiable)	Meeting to be arranged in good time before summative assessment deadline

13. Appendix D: Placement Evaluation Questions linked to SLEC

Student Placement Evaluation

Dear Student

Evaluation of the practice learning environment is a valuable resource for the provider and develops your own professional practice. Completing this evaluation form is an important learning opportunity for you as the skill of providing constructive feedback is one that you will need to develop as a registered professional.

We would like you to be as honest and constructive in your feedback as possible. Your feedback is valued and reviewed to identify issues that need addressing or examples of good practice as part of developing high quality education experiences. Failure to complete an evaluation may mean that the placement host is no longer able to support other learners.

The evaluation will be available to the practice areas, Trusts and University upon completion. We do not inform placement providers of the name of the person(s) who completed the evaluations.

If you want to discuss this in more detail please contact your Programme Team, Personal Tutor or a member of the Practice Development Team in a timely manner.

PLEASE NOTE - the phrase '**named support'** is a general title used in this evaluation to cover the following terms - Practice Assessor, Practice Supervisor, Clinical Educator, Practice Placement Educator, Practice Teacher, FLA Practice Assessor.

Please answer each question. Once you have submitted the form you will be unable to change your responses. You may be contacted by an Academic Placement Lead to discuss your feedback further if you have raised an issue of particular concern.

The questions are linked to the SLEC Charter Priorities in the Safe Learning Environment Charter (SLEC) to promote the best possible learning experience for you. 'Trigger' questions are escalated to the AHoS for follow-up with placement hosts.

	Question	**Answer choices**	**SLEC Priority** (admin info only)
1	I was informed of my practice placement at least 4 weeks in advance	Yes / No*	Communication
2	I received enough clear and helpful information to feel prepared for my placement—whether from my university, placement documents, emails, or websites	Yes / No*	Placement induction
3	I received a local induction from my placement provider before or during my placement	Yes / No* / Previously attended one	Placement induction ***trigger question**
4	I was informed of who my named support was before or on starting my placement	Yes / No*	Communication
5	I was able to meet with my named support or another designated person to set my learning plan / objectives in a time frame that suited my learning needs	Yes / No*	Teaching & learning needs
6	My named support was familiar with my module / assessment documentation	Yes / No*	Teaching & learning needs ***trigger question**
7	Placement staff understood my role within the team whilst on placement	Yes / No*	Positive Identity
8	I felt enabled to make the most of learning opportunities	Yes / No*	Teaching & learning needs Flexibility
9	Where possible, the placement staff accommodated any reasonable adjustments or additional needs I had.	Yes / No* / N/A	Flexibility ***trigger question**
10	Opportunities were made for me to meet with my named support at the beginning, middle and summative or end point of the placement	Yes / No*	Supervision

11	My supernumerary status was upheld (as I was not counted as part of the staffing required for safe and effective care in that setting	Yes / No*	Supervision ***trigger question**
12	I felt the team were open to ideas and suggestions that may improve the service they provide	Yes / No*	Positive identity
13	I received constructive and timely feedback from placement staff whilst I was on placement	Yes / No*	Time & space for learning
14	The team I worked with in the placement developed my confidence and proficiency as a health care professional	Yes / No*	Supervision
15	I felt welcomed as part of the team whilst on placement	Yes / No*	Positive Identity
16	I was treated with respect and inclusivity whilst I was on placement	Yes / No*	Respect & feeling valued ***trigger question**
17	The team treated each other with respect and inclusivity whilst I was on placement	Yes / No*	Respect & feeling valued ***trigger question**
18	The team treated the patients/carers/service users with respect and inclusivity whilst I was on placement	Yes / No*	Respect & feeling valued ***trigger question**
19	I was aware of who to contact at the University if I needed to raise a concern, in line with the University Placement Incidents and Concerns Policy	Yes / No*	Raising concerns & speaking up
20	I was aware of who to contact in the practice area / placement provider if I needed to raise a concern, in line with the University Placement Incidents and Concerns Policy	Yes / No*	Raising concerns & speaking up
21	Overall I have felt well supported by the University whilst on placement	Yes / No*	Wellbeing

22	Overall I have felt well supported by the placement area to achieve my assessed learning outcomes in this placement	Yes / No*	Time & space for learning
23	I would recommend this placement experience to another student	Yes / No*	Positive identity ***trigger question**
24	Any comments that you wish to say about your placement	Comment box	
25	I would like to speak to someone in further detail	Tick box	

**where this answer is selected please have a comment box to appear under the question with a heading which says "If you answered 'No,' please tell us why—your feedback helps us improve future placements."*