Top Tips For Students:

Your journey through Practice Assessment

University of Plymouth Faculty of Health
Introduction to the resource:

Dear Student

We hope that this resource will provide some food for thought as well as being an aide memoir to your experience of practice assessment. You are invited to use the student guidelines for your own purposes, and share the staff section (seen on the reverse of this resource) with the person assessing your practice.

This multi-professional guide has been developed from research undertaken over a period of five years in the Centre for Excellence in Professional Placement Learning (Cepl) at the University of Plymouth. It has been informed by students and staff from social work and a range of health professions as well as evidence from the literature. Direct quotes from participants have been used to reinforce some key points.

The generic term ‘practice assessor’ has been used for the person who is responsible for assessing your progress and achievement in a placement setting. Depending on the programme you are following, this person may work closely with you, monitor your progress more remotely or only assess a ‘snapshot’ of your practice.

It is recognised that professional/programme requirements will vary, and not all the points may be relevant to your particular situation. However, it is likely that the majority of suggestions made will be applicable to most professions.

We wish you success in your journey!

The Cepl ‘Assessment of Practice’ team

Further information may be found in:

Open Access chapter at: https://www.novapublishers.com/catalog/product_info.php?products_id=22965

http://uplace.org.uk:8080/dspace/handle/10293/905

Before you go into practice:

“Mentors need to be on the ball before you get to them”
(Midwifery Student)

Forewarned is forearmed!

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<tr>
<th>Guidelines</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make sure you understand your assessment documentation, the programme requirements and expectations – don’t be afraid to ask questions if you are unsure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Try to see examples of the assessment methods used/arrange for rehearsals as appropriate</td>
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<td>Review the feedback you have received in earlier placements and build on this in developing your learning objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>If you have a choice in your placement ensure it will meet your learning objectives and assessment requirements</td>
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<td>Check out your placement – location, expectations, available learning opportunities, people to contact, dress code, transport etc</td>
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<td>Try to talk to previous or current students in this placement</td>
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<td>Check that the placement is expecting you and that a designated practice assessor has been assigned to you as required by your programme</td>
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<td>Visit or telephone the placement and introduce yourself to your practice assessor if possible</td>
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<td>Check that the placement has the relevant current information about your programme and assessment</td>
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<td>Make sure you know who to contact for support if you have problems – both in the placement and University</td>
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<td>Try to plan around competing demands e.g.: practice and academic deadlines, personal commitments</td>
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### Early in your placement:

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<td><strong>Develop a learning contract</strong> in consultation with your practice assessor, based on your previous experience, the assessment requirements and the opportunities available in the placement</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Set meeting dates with your practice assessor</strong> for regular feedback including a midpoint check on your progress and any summative assessments required</td>
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### Throughout the placement:

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<td>Look out for and make best use of wider learning opportunities</td>
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<td>Ask relevant questions and challenge practice appropriately to aid your learning</td>
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<td>Be aware that your practice assessor has other demands on their time, and be flexible in your requests - remember that service-user needs take priority</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Obtain regular verbal and written feedback</strong> from a variety of sources e.g.: service-users, other staff</td>
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<td>Find out how you are doing and how you can improve – asking individuals to be specific in their feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarify any questions you may have about your assessment criteria and documentation</td>
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<td>Keep all your practice documentation up to date including portfolios, timesheets etc – <strong>don’t leave it all until the last minute!</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate any anxieties early and professionally to the appropriate person e.g.: practice assessor, supervisor, personal tutor or other academic</td>
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<td>Ask for support if you don’t seem to be getting on with your practice assessor</td>
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### Develop some milestones!

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### At your assessment point:

#### Don’t panic!

“**If you don’t go through the barrier, then you don’t get the benefit of knowing what the benefit is...**”

(Emergency Care Student)

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<td><strong>Plan meetings</strong>, observations or other assessments in good time</td>
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<td><strong>Ask</strong> if there is anything you are unsure about</td>
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<td>Make sure your documentation reflects the practice learning you have achieved</td>
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<td>Obtain written reports from others as appropriate to support your evidence</td>
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<td>Be open and honest in documentation and discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Accept the feedback given to you</strong> and make sure you understand the reasons for the judgment, asking for further information/clarification as needed</td>
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<td>Consider how to use the feedback constructively in identifying your future learning</td>
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“A colleague of mine summed it up nicely when we started. He said, er, the thing about the degree isn’t really arriving at the end with a tick in the box, it’s the journey that’s the most important thing and you do get out of it what you put in.... That journey, it was great as far as I was concerned.”

(Emergency Care Student)
Preparing the Student:

**Guidelines**

- Try to speak to your new student before they start their placement or practice assessment experience with you. It is usually their responsibility to make first contact.
- Find out about your student's background to help plan their 'journey'.
- Provide opportunities for your student to talk to previous or current students in the placement if possible.
- Assist your student to plan for the competing demands of practice, academic work, and personal commitments, being realistic about the placement work pattern and requirements.
- Check that your student understands their programme's assessment methods and documentation.
- Encourage your student to take ownership of their learning experience and help them devise a learning contract with appropriate objectives.
- Encourage your student to gain holistic experiences and not solely focus on core skills.
- Encourage your student to take advantage of any wider learning opportunities which may arise and help them to make contact with relevant individuals.
- If you are in a position of teaching as well as assessing the student, be prepared to adapt your methods to meet the student's learning style and help them to make contact with relevant individuals who can provide feedback on core skills.
- Encourage your students to proactively seek specific feedback from a range of people including, e.g., other staff, service-users.

**Comments**

- “It's worth the investment because you really do see these people actually going through a journey, which does change people actually going through because you really do see those changes.”

Assessing the Student:

**Guidelines**

- Take your responsibility for assessment seriously.
- Remember you need to maintain a professional boundary with your student to enable you to work with your student to enable you to provide effective feedback and support.
- Plan an appropriate Educational experience that enables your student to develop the knowledge and skills they need to meet your programme's educational and professional standards.
- Plan an educational experience that enables your student to develop the knowledge and skills they need to meet your programme requirements.
- Provide opportunities for your student to plan for the competing demands of practice, academic work, and personal commitments. - Plan an educational experience that enables your student to develop the knowledge and skills they need to meet your programme's educational and professional standards.
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- Encourage your student to adopt a professional role-model.

**Comments**

- “It's worth the investment because you really do see these people actually going through a journey, which does change people actually going through because you really do see those changes.”

(Emergency Care Academic)
Preparing yourself as a practice assessor

Introduction to the Resource:

The most pivotal parts of an assessment are the people making judgments.

It doesn’t matter what the university does. If you haven’t got a good system on the clinical side you’re still not going to catch up.

We hope that this resource will provide some food for thought as well as being an aide memoir to your experience of practice assessment.

You are invited to use the staff guidelines for your own purposes, and share the student section (seen on the reverse of this resource) with any learner placed with you.

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It is recognised that professional/programme requirements will vary and more commonly, only basic and superficial engagement is expected. However, it is likely that the majority of suggestions made will be applicable to most professions.

We wish you success in your support of students!

The Cepl Assessment of Practice team

Please note: The materials of suggestions made may be returned to your particular situation. However, it is recognised that professional/programme requirements will vary and more commonly, only basic and superficial engagement is expected. However, it is likely that the majority of suggestions made will be applicable to most professions.

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Preparing your role as a practice assessor:

1. Time

Set aside time for the student’s learning needs at that time. If you think the placement may be an assessment area or source, you need to ensure you time to plan your role in assessment – an assessment plan must be considered.

2. Enquiry

Enquire about the support in the placement.

Who is a good system on the clinical side of the university? Does it matter what the name is or who they are? If you haven’t got a good system on the clinical side you’re still not going to catch up.

3. Preparation

Enquire about the support in the placement.

If you are new to practice assessment, ask for a visit from/someone on the programme team or a more experienced peer.

4. Support

Ensure you are up to date with the current programme and assessment process and documentation relevant to the student you will be assessing.

Gain the support of your managers and the academic staff in enabling you to undertake your role – e.g.: accessing preparation/updates, clarifying queries, providing time for the role.

Ensure contact details for support are known – e.g.: programme team, support in the placement area.

Inform the programme team or your manager if you identify any issues which might compromise your ability to perform your role as an assessor or if you think the placement may not be suitable for the student’s learning needs at that time.
Top Tips For Staff:

Guiding Your Student Through Their Practice Assessment Journey