



Good Practice Guidance in relation to the Practice Educator Assessor and Mentor role

Background to this document

The Department for Education (DfE) specifies that students should have 'high-quality' practice educators who are supported in their professional development. Additionally, the PEPS refresh has made changes to their guidance which are more explicit in terms of the role and expectations of the PE Assessor/Mentor.

In early 2022, the West Midlands Teaching Partnership commissioned Ros Gowers, Independent Social Worker, Practice Educator, Practice tutor and Practice Education Mentor/Assessor, to complete a report to address queries about the range of Practice Mentor/Assessor provision in the region, the areas of similarity and of difference in that provision. The report identified that there was a range of good practice across the partnership, however it also identified a wide variation of expectation and practice across the region.

This document proposes principles and a framework for a Partnership approach to the PE Assessor/Mentor role, which takes into consideration both the updated PEPS guidance and the recommendations from the report by Ros Gowers.

Principles

All Local Authorities, Trusts and HEIs within the WMSWTP should have a consistent approach in the following areas which relate to the role of the Practice Educator Assessor/ Mentor role:

- An agreed Practice Educator Assessor/Mentor Job role expectation, with qualifications and experience to be included
- An agreed Practice Educator candidate – Practice Educator Assessor/Mentor contract
- A shared agreement on the content of the direct observation form
- A shared agreement on the content of the PE report
- An agreement on the meaning and implementation of ratification of Pass/Fail decisions

In the majority of agencies within the region the term Practice Assessor/Practice Mentor is used interchangeably, and the role is combined and undertaken by a single individual. However, in agencies where the role is separated the BASW (PEPS refresh 2022) definitions of the roles will be used.

Practice Assessor/Mentor Qualifications

- A Practice Educator Assessor/Mentor will be both PEPS 1 and PEPS 2 qualified.

- Prior to taking on the role of Practice Educator Assessor/Mentor, the Practice Educator will have had experience of supervising at least 5 learners in the practice learning context, including those they supervised during PEPS 1 and 2.
- Supervision of a learner should have been for a significant period, (not one-off supervisions but not necessarily a beginning to end placement)
- A Practice Educator Assessor/Mentor will have an appropriate level of experience and capability to support Trainee Practice Educators through complex decision-making. They will also have experience of managing complexity in practice education or have the potential to do so (evidence of their experience will be documented in their Practice Educator CPD log see Good Practice in Practice Educator Quality assurance guidance annex D & E).

Practice Assessor/Mentor Role Expectations

- A Practice Educator Assessor will develop the skills and knowledge of the Trainee Practice Educator and be responsible for assessing the Trainee Practice Educator against the Values Statements and PEPS Domains.
- A Practice Educator Assessor will undertake direct observations of the Trainee Practice Educator. A minimum of 3 direct observations will take place across 2 learners. At least 2 of which will be undertaken by the Practice Educator Assessor. These can be online or face to face but ideally one will be face to face. The third may be undertaken by a PE qualified colleague, who has not necessarily had 5 learners. Observed activities could include Peer reviewed supervision, leading a group supervision or leading a teaching and development opportunity for the learner but at least 2 must be supervision sessions with 2 different learners. (See Annex A for an example of a template for observed supervision). It is for the employer and learning provider to assess if the allocated Practice Educator Assessor meets the requirements regarding experience for the role and if the threshold of at least five learners has been met.
- A Practice Educator Assessor will agree and sign off formal assessment documents which include the mid-point review, direct observations and final report. (A PEPS 1 qualified Trainee Practice Educator may independently assess a student undertaking their first placement).
- It is advisable for the Practice Educator Assessor to have sight of the Placement Learning Agreement and the induction plan.
- A Practice Educator Assessor (or Practice Educator Mentor where this role is used) should provide at least 6 mentoring/supervision sessions to the Trainee Practice Educator across PEPS 1 and 2.

- Where the Practice Educator Assessor role is separate to that of the Practice Educator Mentor it is expected that there will be close working and sharing of feedback about the progress of the Trainee Practice Educator. (The mentor will not be making a final assessment on the Trainee Practice Educator.)
- As Practice Educator Assessor, it is expected they will demonstrate the BASW Value Statements of Practice Education and promote anti oppressive, anti-discriminatory and anti-racist practice.

Learning agreements between the Practice Educator Assessor and the Practice Educator trainee:

Learning agreements are recommended to clarify roles and expectations of both parties, with core components which might include:

- Names, roles and contact details of the parties to the agreement.
- Where you will meet (e.g., a room in the workplace/online)
- How often and for how long you will meet.
- Dates for a minimum of 3 mentoring/supervision sessions (both during PEPS 1 and PEPS 2)
- Agenda items – will this be fixed or agreed at the beginning of each supervision?
- Arrangements for note taking and recording, with timescales for completion.
- Agreement about confidentiality and any limitations around this.
- Agreement on how differences of opinion are to be managed.
- Agreement about the anti-discriminatory values embedded by you in your learner/assessor relationship.
- Identification of agreed learning outcomes and needs that have been agreed.
- Identification of the agreed assessment methods, with timescales noted.
- Confirmation that the nature of evidence for meeting PEPS has been agreed with reference to PEPs values statement and the 4 domains.

(See Annex B for an example contract)

Agreed content for Direct Observations of a supervision session

Evidence of the following areas:

- Planning for the observation
- Student wellbeing
- Clear review of actions from the previous session and actions for the next session
- Clear demonstration of the functions of supervision: pastoral, accountability, case management, learning and development, organisational skills, using a theory informed approach, use of a reflection model.

- Clear links to the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).

The Practice Educator Assessor will allow time with the student following the supervision session to gather feedback on the trainee Practice Educator.

Suggested content for Mentoring/Supervision sessions

The agenda and content for mentoring/supervision sessions may vary dependent on whether the trainee PE is undertaking PEPS 1 or PEPS 2, whether the student is undertaking their first or final placement, and the stage of the student placement. However, suggested areas for discussion are:

- The PEPS requirements, PEPS course content and requirements.
- The student: First or final placement, University Programme (BA, MA, Apprenticeship), knowledge of the student's course requirements and portfolio, understanding of the PCFs/KSS.
- Reflections on the trainee PE's strengths and learning needs.
- Placement updates: Induction, preparation, mid-point review, supervisions.
- Any difficulties with the student placement.
- Action points.
- Agreement on accuracy of previous notes/minutes.
- Date, time and location of next mentoring/supervision session.

(See Annex C for an example supervision template)

Agreed content for the Practice Educator Assessors report

Key principles to include would be:

- A comment on how each of the PEPS domains has been evidenced and their ability to meet the value statements.
- Areas of particular strength and further development
- Could include record of supervision, mentoring sessions or a record of contact points.

An agreement on the meaning and implementation of ratification of Pass/Fail decisions

- The Practice Educator Assessor is confirming there is evidence for the Practice Educator Trainee's decision whether to pass/fail the student learner.
- It is expected that the progress of the student learner is discussed as an ongoing process between the Practice Educator trainee and the Practice Educator Assessor.

Annex A

Report on observation of the Practice Educator Trainee *(from Coventry University)*

Section 1: The PE Trainee should complete this section and send to the mentor **in advance** of the observation.

<p>Name of PE Trainee:</p> <p>Date of observation:</p> <p>Date observation is due to be submitted:</p>
<p>Day of placement: <i>(If the observation takes place on day 57 of a 100-day placement, please insert 57/100. Observations should take place ideally after day 33 of a 100-day placement, and after day 23 of a 70-day placement).</i></p>
<p>Type of supervision (face-to-face or virtual)</p> <p>Please indicate the frequency of supervision and whether this is normally face-to-face, virtual, or alternating between the two.</p>
<p>Please confirm that you have spoken to the student about the requirement for you to be observed in supervision and have gained their consent for this.</p>
<p>Please identify 2-3 areas for specific feedback from your mentor <i>(Examples could be: how I manage time in the session, how I support the student to make links with their knowledge base, how we discuss how the student's progress against the PCF, how we address issues around power, values, and anti-oppressive practice).</i></p>

Section 2
MENTOR REPORT ON THE OBSERVATION

Mentor's name:

Mentor's email address:

Details of Mentor's qualifications in Practice Education (Date and Title of Award):

Please answer each question and provide a summary of key strengths and areas to continue to build on at the end of each section.

1. Management of the session

How well did the PE Trainee plan and prepare for the session and appear to have required the student to plan and prepare?

How well did the PE Trainee manage the use of the available time to complete the planned agenda?

Was the supervision agenda agreed at the beginning of the session? Was the agenda suitable for the supervision of a Social Work student? Did it have a learning focus?

Summary

Please identify key strengths around management of the session. (We suggest 1-3 points but please add more if required.)

Please identify key areas that the PE trainee can continue to build on. (We suggest 1-3 points but please add more if required.)

2. Content of the session

Please answer each question

Pastoral

How did the PE Trainee support the student to consider their wellbeing?

Case management

Did the PE Trainee appear to have a good overview of the work the student was undertaking?

Was there evidence of accountability? Did the PE Trainee and the student review previously agreed actions? If these had not been completed, was there consideration of the reasons why not and any blocks and barriers addressed?

How did the PE Trainee enable the student to hypothesise and identify a possible course of action? Was the level of guidance and direction appropriate to the student's stage of development?

Values and anti-oppressive practice

How did the PE Trainee support the student to explore issues around power, values, and anti-oppressive practice in the supervision session?

How well did the PE Trainee respect the rights of the student and value difference?

Assessment

Were links to the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS) made to most of the discussions?

Was there sufficient consideration of the student's progress with portfolio evidence?

Did you observe the PE Trainee giving feedback to the student, or discussing of feedback from others?

If the PE Trainee needed to address any concerns with the student, how effectively did they manage this?

Learning and Development

Was there evidence that the PE Trainee had identified appropriate learning opportunities? Did the volume and complexity of the work appear appropriate to the student's stage of development?

How did the PE in Training support the student to draw on their knowledge base (theory, legislation, policy, or research) to inform practice?

Was any discussion around the knowledge base clearly linked to the practice the student was undertaking?

Was there any discussion around specific skills required by the student? Did the PE Trainee model skills, support the student to rehearse any skills or signpost to other learning around skill development?

Was there evidence of a focus on reflective practice? Was a specific model or tool used to structure the discussion? How effective was this in enabling the student to reflect?

Summary

Please identify key strengths around the content of the session. (We suggest 1-3 points but please add more if required.)

Please identify areas that the PE trainee can continue to build on. (We suggest 1-3 points but please add more if required.)

3. Communication.

Please comment on the following:

Who did most of the talking in the session?

Did the PE Trainee demonstrate active listening skills?

Did the PE Trainee draw effectively on different types of questions in the session?

If the PE Trainee responded to questions or gave explanations, were these clear and easy to follow?

Summary

Please identify key strengths around communication. (We suggest 1-3 points but please add more if required.)

Please identify areas that the PE trainee can continue to build on. (We suggest 1-3 points but please add more if required.)

4. Recording

Did the PE Trainee send the record of supervision through to you within the agreed timescale?

How well did the record of the session reflect what you had explicitly observed happening in the session? Are there any major gaps or differences between what was observed and what is recorded?

Was the record clearly written and easy to follow?

Did the record reflect the contributions of both parties?

Did the record clearly evidence accountability and review of agreed actions?

Did the record clearly evidence discussions around power, values, and anti-oppressive practice?

Did the record clearly evidence consideration of the underpinning knowledge base (theory, methods and approaches, legislation, policy and procedures, key messages from research)

Did the record make clear links with the PCF and KSS and provide clear evidence the student's progress? If any concerns were raised, were these clearly recorded?

Summary

Please identify key strengths around the record of supervision. (We suggest 1-3 points but please add more if required.)

Please identify areas that the PE trainee can continue to build on. (We suggest 1-3 points but please add more if required.)

5. Student feedback

After the session, the mentor should meet privately with the student to discuss their experience of supervision. Please provide a summary of their feedback here.

6. Mentor's Summary Comments

Please use this section to add in any further comments. If not addressed in the body of the report above, mentors should comment on any specific areas for feedback identified by the PE Trainee in Section 1.

7. Recommendation

Overall, was the practice demonstrated by the PE Trainee in line with the requirements of the Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS) at Stage 1?

YES / NO

Do you recommend a pass for the observation?

YES / NO

Mentor signature

Candidate signature

Date

Section 3 PE Trainee's comments on the Mentor Report

To be completed by the PE Trainee following receipt of the report (approx. 200 words)

Please comment briefly on the feedback in this report.

Please indicate if you are in agreement with the feedback or note any areas of disagreement.

What are the key learning points for you arising from this feedback and what changes might you make to supervision as a result?

It is the PE Trainee's responsibility to submit this report to the university by the agreed submission date

Annex B

Practice Educator Trainee/Practice Educator Mentor/Assessor Learning Agreement *(adapted from Staffordshire University template and University of Wolverhampton Handbook)*

CONTACT DETAILS

	TRAINEE	ASSESSOR
NAME		
JOB TITLE		
EMPLOYER		

CONTACT ADDRESS		
EMAIL		
TELEPHONE		

EMPLOYER PRACTICE LEARNING CO-ORDINATOR:	
TELEPHONE:	
EMAIL:	

INTRODUCTION

This learning agreement forms the basis of the contractual understanding between the trainee Practice Educator (PE) and their Practice Educator Assessor/Mentor (PE A/M) for the purposes of the completion of PEPS 1 and PEPS 2. It also ensures that the Practice Education Professional Standards are being met, in that the trainee PE is mentored and supervised with sufficient frequency whilst working towards a stage 1 and 2 qualification and working directly to assess a student whilst on their practice placement.

It is therefore important that this agreement has been discussed and signed **prior to the student commencing their placement** with the trainee.

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

The introductory discussion should form the basis of the working relationship between the PE trainee and their PE A/M. As a minimum this should include the trainees post qualifying journey, and the assessor's practice education experience. Please record relevant information in the box below.

TRAINEE	
Date and type of Qualifying Award: <i>e.g. BA/MA in social work, DipSW,</i>	
Post qualifying roles/ areas of work	
Any other formal post qualifying training undertaken <i>e.g. AMHP, BIA</i>	
Is this the first time you have studied at post graduate level?	Yes/ No
Do you have any personal learning needs/ disability that your assessor should be aware of?	If yes – please comment briefly
Please make a note of any other relevant discussions held, that is pertinent to this agreement. <i>e.g. have you known the assessor in a personal/formal capacity previously – how will this be managed? Have you previously worked with a social work student in any capacity?</i>	

ASSESSOR

**Date and Name of Stage 2 approved
Practice Education qualification:**

**Please give brief details of your experience
of practice education (*eg student
placements managed, involvement in
related practice education activities etc*)**

SUPERVISION/MENTORING ARRANGEMENTS	
<p>Please discuss and agree how supervision/mentoring sessions will be undertaken.</p> <p>You may wish to consider and include the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Where you will meet</i> • <i>How often and for how long</i> • <i>Dates for sessions</i> • <i>Agenda Items</i> • <i>Arrangements for notetaking/recording of sessions</i> 	

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trainee

In signing this agreement, the trainee undertakes to:

- Work in the practice educator role with a social work student
- Meet with the assessor on approximately six occasions over the course of PEPS 1 and PEPS 2, these can include a feedback session following direct observations of practice
- Arrange for the two direct observations to take place of them working in the practice educator role with the student. One should be before the mid-point review and one after. Arrange for the third direct observation of the practice educator with another learner.
- Prepare for the direct observations and reflect on these after the event.
- Be prepared to share with their assessor, evidence of work completed for the **student's** portfolio. This should be done on an ongoing basis so that feedback for further development can be given before the end of the student's placement.
- Complete and submit the required work to the assessor by a mutually agreed date which allows the assessor time to consider the evidence and conclude their assessment on time.

The Assessor

In signing this agreement, the assessor undertakes to:

- Familiarise themselves with the trainee's programme of study.

- Meet with the trainee on approximately six occasions over the course of PEPS 1 and PEPS 2, these can include a feedback session following direct observations of practice
- Provide mentoring and guidance to the trainee as required.
- Undertake a minimum of two direct observations, at evenly spaced intervals during the student's placement. The third observation can be observed by another person, it is preferable that this is a qualified practice educator. Gain feedback from the other observer.
- Obtain feedback from the trainee's student on at least two occasions, as a minimum, at the end of each observation.
- Read, assess and provide feedback on:
 - The trainee's involvement in the student's learning plan, and opportunities agreed
 - Direct observation recording by the trainee
 - The Mid-way Review
 - The Student's Final Report
- The assessor must sign off on the student's portfolio (The Practice Educator Assessor is confirming there is evidence for the Practice Educator Trainee's decision whether to pass/fail the student learner.)
- Assessors should seek feedback from the Team Manager and Team as a potential source of evidence for capability as appropriate

DIFFICULTIES

In the event of a disagreement between the assessor and the trainee, in the first instance this should be discussed between the two parties. Where no resolution is possible, the practice learning co-ordinator from the trainee's agency and the module lead should be informed, and a four-way meeting arranged. If no resolution can be made, disagreements should then be followed up using the agency and/ or the university complaints procedure.

Where a trainee is assessed as failing or marginal, the assessor and/ or the trainee should contact the practice learning co-ordinator **and** the module lead at the earliest opportunity. A four-way meeting will be held, to identify and agree an action plan and developmental support for the trainee.

NB Where a trainee assesses that a student is failing, or there are difficulties between the student and the trainee, the student's programme procedures for a failing student must be followed by the trainee. The assessor has no direct role to play within this.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Assessor and Trainee agree that the evidence generated during the undertaking of PEPS 1 and PEPS 2 is for the purposes of assessment of the trainee only and for no other purpose. Evidence must be kept securely and can be destroyed on completion of the qualifying process.

The Trainee must advise the student that they are undergoing assessment, and that the work that the student produces as part of the portfolio, in addition to the supervision sessions may be seen by the assessor. This must be discussed as part of the **student’s** learning agreement, and where directed to do so the student must sign their learning agreement to indicate that they are aware and agree to this. The Assessor should check that this has been completed as part of their verification of evidence.

The Trainee and Assessor agree that all documentation within the portfolio will refer to “the student” rather than any identifying code such as initials.

The Assessor agrees to abide by a code of confidentiality and will not discuss any issues pertaining to the placement, student or service users outside of the assessment process.

OTHER ISSUES

The outcome of this assessment will in no way affect the decision of the trainee in relation to their assessment of the student (i.e., passing or failing the student)

SIGNATURES

Trainee.....

Print Name.....

Date.....

Assessor.....

Print Name.....

Date.....

Annex C

Example PE Assessor/Mentor supervision/mentoring template

(Adapted from Coventry University mentoring template and student social worker supervision template)



<u>Practice Educator Mentoring/Supervision Template</u>	
PE Trainee	
PE Assessor/Mentor	
Date of session	
Previous notes/minutes completed and agreed	
Review of previous agreed actions	

Agenda Item	Understanding of PEPS/Course requirements
Discussion	

Actions arising with date for completion	

Agenda Item	PE Trainee areas of strength/learning needs
Discussion	
Actions arising with date for completion	

Agenda Item	Student Discussion (Placement details, programme of study, course requirements, portfolio)
Discussion	
Actions arising with date for completion	

Agenda Item	PCFs/KSS
Discussion	

Actions arising with date for completion	

Agenda Item	Placement update (Induction, supervision, midpoint review, final report, any difficulties arising)
Discussion	
Actions arising with date for completion	

Date/time/venue of next session	
Notes/minutes to be completed by Assessor/Trainee	
Notes to be completed by: Date	