

Table of Contents

Safe and effective learning	2
Safe learning experiences	3
Effective learning experiences	4
Designing and reviewing a safe and effective learning environment and experience	5
Upholding quality	6
What must be in place	7
Individual responsibilities	10
Types of learning experiences	11
Different types of learning environments	13
Different learning opportunities	14
Equality and diversity considerations	15
Support for those who deliver education	16
Raising concerns	17

Safe and effective learning

Reference: LE1 Last Updated: 01/03/2019

[Safe](#) and [effective](#) learning experiences uphold public protection and the safety and dignity of people, and provide students with suitable learning opportunities to help them to meet their learning outcomes.

Transferability and use of documentation

A key part of safe and effective learning is the use of appropriate documentation, and the transferability of this documentation across environments.

Good learning experiences can't be delivered without an understanding of student learning and achievement across their programme. Decisions on student assessment must also be underpinned by appropriate documentation and evidence.

The AEI, with its practice learning partners, should have processes to ensure that the appropriate student records, for example a practice assessment document or ongoing record of achievement, are in place and available for use across relevant environments.

Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education: [S1.1, S1.2, R1.1-R1.4, R1.10, R1.13, R1.14](#) (page 6), [R2.4, R2.9](#) (page 7), [R2.11, R2.13, R2.14, R2.16, 2.18](#) (page 8), [S3.1, S3.2, R3.5-6](#) (page 9), [R4.8, R4.11](#) (page 11)

Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes: [4.10](#) (page 11)

Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes: [4.9](#) (page 5)

Safe learning experiences

Reference: LE1-A Last Updated: 01/03/2019

Safe learning experiences promote and preserve the safety of everyone involved. Public safety includes making sure that people are informed about and empowered to be part of their care. People should be given the opportunity to give and if required, withdraw, their informed consent to students being involved in their care.

A safe learning experience is dependent on both the safety of the learning environment(s) and the culture within it. All learning environments should meet the relevant standards and regulatory requirements for the course that is being delivered.

People must be protected from potential harm that may arise from a student's practice. This includes students being given the correct training and preparation for practice learning and making sure students are not placed with patients whose needs are outside of their capability, without appropriate support and supervision.

In a safe learning environment students must also be protected from potential risks to their safety, while having opportunities to practise the skills required to build proficiency.

The AEI, with its practice learning partners, should prioritise safety and have processes in place to make sure that learning environments, and the culture within them, are safe for students to learn in.

Effective learning experiences

Reference: LE1-B Last Updated: 01/03/2019

Effective learning places the student at the centre of the learning experience. Students are given the opportunities and space to take responsibility for their own learning, to seek out learning experiences and develop their own practice, without compromising public safety. The level or form of practice supervision can decrease or change with the student's increasing proficiency and confidence.

An effective learning environment is one which provides opportunities for meaningful learning experiences that contribute to a student meeting their learning outcomes. This can mean a variety of things depending on the student's learning outcomes, their stage of learning, and the environment in which they are learning.

An effective learning experience can take place across different environments, allowing students to learn and consolidate a set of skills across different settings and situations. Learning experiences should include the full spectrum of care relevant to the student's area or field of practice.

The culture within an effective learning environment values learning, and all people within the learning environment should understand their role in enabling learning.

An effective learning experience also takes account of any equality and diversity considerations, or reasonable adjustments that need to be made to student learning and assessment.

Designing and reviewing a safe and effective learning environment and experience

Reference: LE2 Last Updated: 01/03/2019

The AEI, with their practice learning partners, is responsible for ensuring that learning experiences are delivered that meet our standards. It is up to the AEI, with its learning partners, to decide how this will happen. We do not specify how or in which environments learning can be carried out.

All learning experiences must comply with the standards we set out in the relevant standards documents for each course. This includes, amongst others, the following for all courses from the Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education:

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Standard 2.1: There are effective governance systems that ensure compliance with all legal, regulatory, professional and educational requirements, differentiating where appropriate between the devolved legislatures of the United Kingdom, with clear lines of responsibility and accountability for meeting those requirements and responding when standards are not met, in all learning environments.

We do not specify what governance systems must be in place, only that they must enable our standards to be met and public protection to be upheld.

In order to ensure a safe and effective learning environment or experience programmes should be designed, developed, delivered, evaluated and co-produced with service users and other stakeholders.

All learning experiences and environments must be designed and reviewed with the needs of students, the service, and public protection in mind. Learning experiences should not prioritise student achievement at the expense of public safety.

Find out more about designing and reviewing a safe and effective learning environment and experience in the following pages:

- [Upholding quality](#)
- [What must be in place for a learning environment to be considered safe and effective](#)
- [Individual responsibilities in the organisation of safe and effective learning experiences](#)

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Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education: [R1.11, R1.12, R1.13](#) (page 6), [S2.1, S2.2, R2.1-2.7](#) (page 7), [R2.12-R2.20](#) (page 8), [R3.3, R3.5, R3.6, R3.8](#) (page 9), [R3.14, R3.16-R3.18](#) (page 10), [S4.1, R4.1-2, R4.7](#) (page 11), [R5.5](#) (page 12)

Standards for student supervision and assessment: [1.1-11](#) (page 5)

Upholding quality

Reference: LE2-A Last Updated: 01/03/2019

In order to ensure that learning environments and experiences are safe and effective, all environments should be regularly reviewed, and all concerns and complaints about practice learning addressed effectively and in a timely way. AEs, and their practice learning partners, should have the processes in place to manage this effectively.

More information on this can be found in our [QA framework](#).

What must be in place

Reference: LE2-B Last Updated: 04/09/2019

All learning environments must have the capacity and resources needed to deliver safe and effective learning experiences.

We set a number of standards in this area across our different standards documents. The following are particularly relevant:

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:

2.14 have the capacity, facilities and resources in place to deliver safe and effective learning opportunities and practical experiences for students as required by their programme learning outcomes

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must ensure that:

1.4 there are suitable systems, processes, resources and individuals in place to ensure safe and effective coordination of learning within practice learning environments

What this will mean will differ in different circumstances, it will be up to individual providers to decide depending on amongst others; the course of study the student is on, the outcomes the student is trying to achieve, the confidence and independence of the student, and the environment they are in.

In order to be considered safe and effective, a learning environment must have the right people in place to supervise and support students. Who the right people are will differ depending on the circumstances.

The following are the roles that we set out in our standards:

Practice supervisors

More information can be found on the practice supervisor role in the section on [practice supervision](#). We do not specify how many practice supervisors must be in each learning environment. It may also be possible to have some learning environments in which there are no practice supervisors.

Practice assessors

All students must be assigned to a practice assessor for a placement or a series of placements, in line with local requirements. They are responsible for assessing a student's practice learning for a placement or series of placements. We do not specify that practice assessors must be present within practice environments.

More information can be found in the section on [practice assessment](#).

Academic assessors

All students must be assigned to an academic assessor for a part of the programme. We do not require the academic assessors to be present within a practice or academic environment with the student.

More information can be found in the section on [academic assessment](#).

Learning environments and experiences

Nominated person

We require that all students have access to a nominated person while in practice, as is set out in the following standard:

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must ensure that:

1.5 there is a nominated person for each practice setting to actively support students and address student concerns

We do not stipulate who this person might be, or what qualifications or registration they need to have, only that they must be available to support students and be able to suitably address their concerns. This can mean a number of things depending on the circumstance or concern that has been raised. The nominated person should work within local processes for raising and managing concerns whenever relevant.

They do not necessarily need to be based within the learning environment, and in many cases it may be inappropriate for them to be so. For example, if it would mean that, due to staffing constraints, a practice supervisor would also be the 'nominated person'. It will be up to the AEI, with their practice learning partners, to decide who can fulfil this role, provided students are supported and our standards and public protection are upheld. Students should be informed throughout their course about who the nominated person is for each environment, what their role is, and how to get in touch with them should they need to raise any concerns.

We do not specify who must be present within academic and practice environments, only that there must be a suitable number of qualified people to deliver the programme and meet our standards.

Although our standards state that all students should be supervised while learning in practice, this can mean that students learn within an environment that does not have any 'practice supervisors' or registered people; provided their practice supervisor(s), practice assessor, or any other suitable person has oversight of the learning within that placement.

These placements could be enrichment opportunities, or in environments where there are no registered health and social care professionals but provide an opportunity for students to learn for a variety of environments in-line with the Standards of Proficiency. The person or people who are coordinating the students learning may wish to draw up a plan for these placements, and coordinate with the student and those within the environment before, during and after the placement to discuss the learning outcomes that may be learnt and how they can be achieved. Those supporting students within such an environment must also have the knowledge and skills necessary to help students meet the learning outcomes specified.

Students should not be placed in a practice learning environment, or provide direct care, without suitable support and supervision.

The AEI, with its practice learning partners, must ensure that all such placements have proper oversight and governance. This can be done in a number of different ways, such as through documentation, audits and visits.

When using an environment without any registered people the AEI, and their practice learning partners, should be able to evidence why such a step was taken, how it will enrich student learning, and what measures were taken to protect the safety of both students and the public.

We don't specify how many people will be needed within each environment or for each 'experience', only that they must be sufficient for a safe and effective learning experience. What this means will be dependent on, amongst others:

- the environment (for example a GP surgery that offers student placements might need fewer staff than a large hospital)
- the number of students
- student outcomes and learning needs

The AEI, with practice learning partners, is responsible for assessing the risks within a learning environment. They will decide what roles are needed to preserve a safe learning environment, if they meet our criteria, and if needed, that there are a sufficient number of each.

Individual responsibilities

Reference: LE2-C Last Updated: 01/03/2019

We do not set any specifications for who must do what in the organisation of learning experiences as this will vary depending on, amongst other things, the way in which a service is provided, and student learning needs and outcomes. Learning must happen in a way that preserves public safety, enables the student to meet their learning outcomes, and facilitates a fair and evidenced based assessment. There are many different ways of organising a learning experience and many different people can be part of a learning experience.

All nurses, midwives and nursing associates have a responsibility for supporting learning as set out in the Code:

Share your skills, knowledge and experience for the benefit of people receiving care and your colleagues

To achieve this, you must:

9.4 support students' and colleagues' learning to help them develop their professional competence and confidence

This can mean a number of different things, and may not always mean nurses, midwives or nursing associates acting as a 'practice supervisor'.

Everyone within a learning environment could be part of student learning. Many different individuals, registered and not registered, including other students, have the capacity to be part of education and to contribute to student learning. The student should be empowered to seek out learning experiences from all those who can provide them, in line with the following standard:

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must ensure that:

1.8 students have opportunities to learn from a range of relevant people in practice learning environments, including service users, registered and non-registered individuals, and other students as appropriate
The AEI, with its practice learning partners, should ensure that learning environments and experiences enable this without compromising public safety.

Types of learning experiences

Reference: LE3 Last Updated: 01/03/2019

The aim of practice learning is to provide students with opportunities to achieve their proficiencies, gain the knowledge, skills and attributes of a safe and effective practitioner, and to work towards becoming independent practitioners.

For pre-registration nursing students this means becoming proficient at the point of registration in their chosen field of practice, as set out in the following standard:

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:

2.3 ensure that programme learning outcomes reflect the Standards of proficiency for registered nurses and each of the four fields of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing
The new proficiencies for the future registered nurse expect student nurses to be able to provide care to a wide variety of people across the lifespan in a variety of settings. However students must also be able to demonstrate a greater depth of knowledge and the more advanced skills required to meet the specific care needs of people in their chosen field of practice.

For pre-registrations midwifery students this means ensuring students experience the role and scope of the midwife enabling them to provide holistic care to women, newborn infants, partners and families as set out in the following standard:

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:

2.3 ensure programme learning outcomes reflect the NMC Standards of proficiency for nursing associates
The new proficiencies for the future registered midwife specify the knowledge, understanding and skills that midwives must demonstrate at the point of qualification, when caring for women across the maternity journey, newborn infants, partners and families across all care settings. They reflect what midwives are expected to know and be able to do in order to deliver safe, effective, respectful, kind, compassionate, person-centred midwifery care.

How this is achieved will be for individual AEs, with their practice learning partners, to decide.

For pre-registration nursing associate students this means becoming proficient at the point of registration to deliver safe and effective care, to a diverse range of people, across the lifespan and in a variety of health and care settings. Experiencing learning in hospital, closer to home and at home.

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:

2.3 ensure programme learning outcomes reflect the NMC Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.
Find out more about types of learning experiences in the following pages:

- [Different types of learning environments](#)

Learning environments and experiences

- [Different learning opportunities](#)
- [Equality and diversity considerations](#)

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Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education: [R1.2](#) (page 6), [S2.1, S2.2, R2.6, R2.7, R2.10](#),(page 7), [R2.17](#) (page 8), [S3.1, S3.2, R3.1-3.4, R3.11-12](#) (page 9), [R3.15-R3.17](#) (page 10), [R4.3, R4.5, R4.9](#) (page 11), [R5.9](#) (page 12)

Standards for student supervision and assessment: [1.9](#) (page 5)

Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes: [2.4-8, 2.11-2.14](#) (page 9), [3.1-3.6](#) (page 10), [4.5-8, 4.11](#) (page 11)

Standards for prescribing programmes: [3.3](#) (page 11), [4.8](#) (page 12)

Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes: [3.1-3.4](#) (page 4)

Different types of learning environments

Reference: LE3-A Last Updated: 01/03/2019

Nursing and nursing associate students should be given the opportunity to learn and provide care across a range of different learning environments that will enable them to meet their learning outcomes and experience the variety of care situations for a diverse population. We do not specify what constitutes a learning environment. These environments should include a mix of hospital and community, and other independent health and social care environments as relevant to the programme.

Environments can also include settings' such as schools, prison wards, or working with the armed forces.

It will be up to the AEI, with practice learning partners, to decide which practice placement environments to use, and to be able to evidence that they meet our standards and that student and public safety is upheld.

Midwifery students should be given the learning opportunities to experience midwifery care for a diverse population and provide care across the across the continuum in a range of different learning environments that will enable them to meet their learning outcomes. We do not specify what constitutes a learning environment.

These environments should be from across a range of hospital and community settings, including midwifery-led services as required to meet the pre-registration midwifery programme standards.

Practice learning can also include other environments where women require care by midwives such as mother and baby units in mental health or prison settings.

It will be up to the AEI, with practice learning partners, to decide which practice learning environment to use, provided our standards are met and public safety is upheld.

Different learning opportunities

Reference: LE3-B Last Updated: 01/03/2019

Students should be provided with a variety of learning experiences across and within learning environments.

There are a number of different learning experiences that can be delivered within learning environments, using different methods such as group learning, one to one learning, peer to peer learning, classroom learning, simulation and direct patient care. More information on some of these can be found within the section on [practice supervision](#). We do not specify how learning must be delivered, only that it should be done in a way that upholds public protection and enables the students to meet their learning outcomes.

Learning experiences do not need to be confined within a particular environment, or to a particular episode of care. A learning experience can follow a person's episode or experience of care, and can involve a student being assigned to a service user throughout their treatment or care, across environments.

Learning experiences should also have an interdisciplinary and interprofessional learning context, including learning with and from other professions where relevant.

Simulation is another way of creating a learning experience and it can and should be used in learning and assessment strategies, as is set out within the following standard:

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must ensure that all students:

3.4 are enabled to learn and are assessed using a range of methods, including technology enhanced and simulation-based learning appropriate for their programme as necessary for safe and effective practice. Simulation is defined by us as an artificial representation of a real world practice scenario that supports student development and assessment through experiential learning with the opportunity for repetition, feedback, evaluation and reflection. Effective simulation facilitates safety by enhancing knowledge, behaviours and skills.

Simulation should not be used as an end in itself, but should be appropriately integrated in a blended approach to learning, and implemented to address specific learning or clinical needs.

The AEI, with their practice learning partners are responsible for deciding what learning experiences should form part of student learning. The student should also be empowered to take advantage of a variety of different learning opportunities, and to direct and identify their own learning needs, as appropriate.

Equality and diversity considerations

Reference: LE3-C Last Updated: 01/03/2019

The AEI, with its practice learning partners, is responsible for ensuring that the equality and diversity needs of all those who are part of an educational experience are taken into account. If needed, they should make adjustments, for example by removing barriers to learning for those that are disabled or to enable religious needs to be met within the requirements of the standards.

The AEI and its practice learning partners should have policies and procedures in place for this to happen.

Support for those who deliver education

Reference: LE4 Last Updated: 01/03/2019

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must ensure that all educators and assessors:

4.3 receive relevant induction, ongoing support and access to education and training which includes training in equality and diversity

4.4 have supported time and resources to enable them to fulfil their roles in addition to their other professional responsibilities

In order for a learning environment or experience to be considered safe and effective all those who play a part in education must be given the support to do so. What this means will vary from [protected or supported time](#) to carry out their duties, to having the correct training and preparation to carry out their roles, and having access to student documentation.

The AEI, with its practice learning partners, must make sure the correct support is in place, for all those who play a part in education.

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Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education: [R2.4](#) (page 7), [2.14](#) (page 8), [R3.7](#) (page 9), [R4.3](#), [R4.4](#) (page 11)

Standards for student supervision and assessment: [1.6](#) (page 5)

Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes: [3.7](#) (page 10)

Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes: [3.5](#) (page 4)

Raising concerns

Reference: LE5 Last Updated: 01/03/2019

All individuals involved in the delivery of a learning experience or within a learning environment have a responsibility to raise any concerns about that environment and student learning. For nurses, midwives and nursing associates, this should be done in line with our [Raising concerns guidance](#).

All learning environments must have in place clear processes for raising concerns and should signpost students, and all relevant people, to these.

The AEI, with its practice learning partners, should also have the capability and processes for managing complaints and concerns that have been raised about student learning, and student learning environments.

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Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education: [R1.5- R1.9](#) (page 6), [R2.1, R2.9, R2.10](#) (page 7), [R3.18, R4.8](#) (page 11)