

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](#).

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.

