

Certificate in Healthcare Practice (T01) and Foundation Degree / Diploma of Higher Education in Healthcare Practice (X16)

Guidance for employers and supervisors

Introduction

The aim of this document is to provide guidance on the role and requirements of the supervisor, in order to support and assess a staff member in the workplace working towards a qualification in Healthcare Practice with The Open University.

Employers are asked to provide support to staff working towards a Healthcare Practice qualification, by identifying that the staff member is working in a healthcare environment which involves them in the direct delivery of care, and that they will have access to supervision.

Supervisors are asked to provide their student with regular supervision and support throughout a practice or work-based module. They are required to judge the day-to-day performance in the workplace of the student and to liaise with other qualified staff and the OU practice tutor about their performance. They work with the student to enable completion of a portfolio, which will be submitted to the OU for inclusion in the assessment outcome for the module.

The role of the supervisor is essential and carries with it high levels of responsibility and accountability. Work-based modules require students to demonstrate that they have developed a range of skills and competencies, based on National Occupational Standards (Skills for Health) and are capable of performing these to a satisfactory level. This is done by the supervisor using levels of practice criteria identified within the student portfolio.

Your role as a supervisor

Criteria that you must meet

- Be qualified in the same field of practice as the one in which their student is practising.
- Have completed a minimum of one year's post-qualifying experience in the same field of practice as the one in which their student is practising.
- Complete supervisor preparation as specified in accordance with statutory/ professional body standards where available. Comply with any statutory body/ professional standards related to continuing to act as a supervisor, where specified.
- Complete an induction to the Open University portfolio requirements (this will be provided by an OU practice tutor)

Key functions of the supervisor

The supervisor fulfils the following functions:

- facilitate the student's work-based learning
- provide supervision commensurate with the student's competence and confidence
- liaise with colleagues to access feedback on the student's performance in the workplace
- liaise with the practice tutor as required through agreed methods of communication
- participate in three review meetings with the student
- complete workplace assessment records
- be accountable for the assessment of the student's workplace performance
- alert the student's practice tutor to any concerns about the student's capacity/ability to meet the standards of conduct and health required of a student in healthcare practice.

The student may well be working towards a more advanced role in healthcare. This can represent a significant transition from their current role. All students will be making the transition to being a work based learner and will be acquiring additional knowledge and understanding, alongside enhanced performance and decision-making. Assisting the student and others who may provide support in the workplace to appreciate what is required for successful role transition is also an important part of the supervisor role.

Support for supervisors

The significance of the role as a supervisor in assessing a student's performance in the workplace and being accountable for the assessment decisions is fully recognised by the Open University. Whilst the assessment decisions are theirs alone, if they have any queries about the principles of applying the levels of practice criteria, or any other aspects of completing the portfolio, the student's practice tutor is there to offer guidance and advice.

Practice tutors are appointed by the Open University and are available to support both the student and supervisor throughout the period of the module. Practice tutors are experienced in both healthcare and practice-oriented education and will use this experience to ensure students meet the workplace-related requirements of the module and that supervisors feel confident and competent in the delivery of their role. The practice tutor will provide you with details of how he or she can be contacted, and any query can also be referred to the designated staff tutor at your OU nation/region centre.

Supervisors are provided with a handbook to guide them through module requirements, an induction to the module and access to the student's practice tutor for a minimum three face-to-face meetings with the student.

For new supervisors, or for those wanting to update their knowledge and skills, we recommend supervisors access the OU's on-line continuing professional development course "[Supporting Workplace Study](#)". This course is free and you can choose to work through it all, or just select those parts from the seven that are available, that you feel will be most useful to you.

We hope supervisors will feel a considerable degree of satisfaction in championing their staff member's development. Supervisors have a very important role to play and the Open University is committed to ensuring that they receive the support they need.