



**A
Mentor's/
Assessor's
Toolkit**

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Welcome to the mentor's/ assessor's toolkit!

- **Why are mentor's/assessors so important?**

The public have a right to expect qualified nurses to be safe and competent. As a practical assessor it is your role to ensure that each student nurse who qualifies meets this criteria. This toolkit will help you apply practical assessment processes fairly and equitably to all student nurses that you assess. You are asked to use your professional judgement to regulate the nursing profession by ensuring those who enter it are suitable to do so.

The information contained in this pack aims to provide you with some of the essential information required when supporting students in clinical placement.

The format of the toolkit is around questions that are often asked by assessors and is aimed to help you navigate around the whole process of supporting a student

• Which Universities do the students come from?

At present the placement areas accept students for placements from both The University of Birmingham (UOB) and University of Central England (UCE). Occasionally out of area students may apply for a placement, but this is strictly limited due to the demand on placements. As an assessor you will be supporting students from both degree and diploma programmes from both Universities. The UCE also train military students (Army, RAF, Navy) and whilst they are still student nurses, they wear different uniforms from UCE students. UCE also has a post graduate diploma course which is a two year programme. Students on this programme already have a degree. Many areas also support students on post registration programmes.

• Who are the Practice Placement Managers (PPM) and what is their role?

There is at least one PPM working in each Trust in the Birmingham and Solihull and Black Country area. A PPM is a Senior Nurse or Health Professional with management responsibility, who works for a Trust to support assessors and students in practice. They have responsibility for placement quality and capacity for all nursing and Allied Health Professional Students. The PPMs are the link with Universities who run diploma/degree courses and provide the link to the Strategic Health Authority. The PPM's work differently depending on the size of the organisation, number of placement areas, and number of students allocated to placement.

PPMs also offer:

Student Support:

- Visit students with difficulties and offer support and advice
- We also visit students without difficulties when time allows
- 1:1 on the phone, email, face to face contact with students for a variety of reasons
- Facilitate student skills sessions, student forums, welcome and induction meetings (varies from area to area)
- Work through allocation reports before reaching the placement area

Assessor Support:

- Assist with assessor training
- Visit assessors who are dealing with student problems or difficulties and offer support and advice
- Documentation sessions for assessors
- Meet with placement areas to help improve the student experience

PPMs are also involved in the quality review of the learning environment, including student feedback, placement audit, and the external quality monitoring of placements for all professional groups.

• What are the Students Working Hours?

Students are supernumerary when on placement. However, this does not mean that their role is purely observational; students should participate in patient care and the nursing role under supervision but cannot be counted in the workforce numbers. Students should experience the 24 hour cycle of care including early, late, and night shifts and weekends. UoB and UCE do not advocate long days, but they may be worked at the discretion of the manager in the placement area if the student wishes to. Students may have individual concerns about meeting shift patterns, which they should negotiate with the manager/assessor. If students request specific hours (or state the University has given them permission), please contact your Practice Placement Manager or the student's personal tutor for confirmation that this is acceptable. All students are on a full time programme and are to work full time hours. It is not acceptable that the students request to work less than this.

Study Days – Official study days will be noted on the allocation sheet for UCE students. Birmingham University provide details of their students study days in an individual letter to the manager in the placement area. Occasionally, there may be additional study days for which the students must produce a letter or a memo. If the student fails to produce evidence then study leave should not be granted. Throughout the course students work 2300 hours in practice.

- **Can I give my student additional 'study time' whilst on placement?**

Students are to work in practice at all times when on placement. The students can leave the placement for learning opportunities, but this must be negotiated with the assessor. If you have structured a learning experience for your student then you may give them the time to carry this out. If you have concerns about a student's progress you should ensure that they spend their time working in the placement area, in order that you can closely support them.

Tutorials – students may need to visit lecturers in order to discuss assignment issues. Tutorials are in the student's own time and should only be granted within placement hours at the discretion of the assessor/manager.

- **Who do I need to inform when my student reports Sickness ?**

Phoning in sick – students should phone the UCE sickline or the UoB nursing office as soon as they know they will miss a shift due to sickness. This should be done before the shift has started.

The UCE sickline number is: 0121 331 7010 (permanent answering machine)

The UoB nursing office number is: 0121 414 6893
(Receptionist during the day and answering service out of hours)

It is not acceptable for the student to call after the shift has been missed and definitely not acceptable not to phone at all.

As well as contacting the university the student should contact the placement area and speak to the member of staff in the placement area. Staff are invited to contact the sickline numbers and/or the practice placement managers where there are concerns about a student's sickness or absence.

Both Universities documentation includes an attendance sheet that must be completed and signed by the assessor at the end of the placement. If a student fails to contact the placement area and the University to report sickness they should be marked absent on the attendance sheet. Please advise the student of the local policy for sickness and absence.

Reporting Fit: Once recovered the student should follow the same process above in order that there are no discrepancies in the sickness information. Students who are off sick for greater than 7 days need to follow their universities sickness and absence guidelines.

- **If a student nurse is a seconded student do they have to follow the same procedure as above?**

Seconded students (both Universities) must comply with the seconding Trust sickness policy, because they still remain employees. Therefore, these students are aware that as well as following the procedure above they also have to contact their line manager in their own Trust.

• Who do I need to inform when my student is absent?

Do you find that students you are expecting do not turn up?
Do you find students go off sick without telling you?

Then read on.....

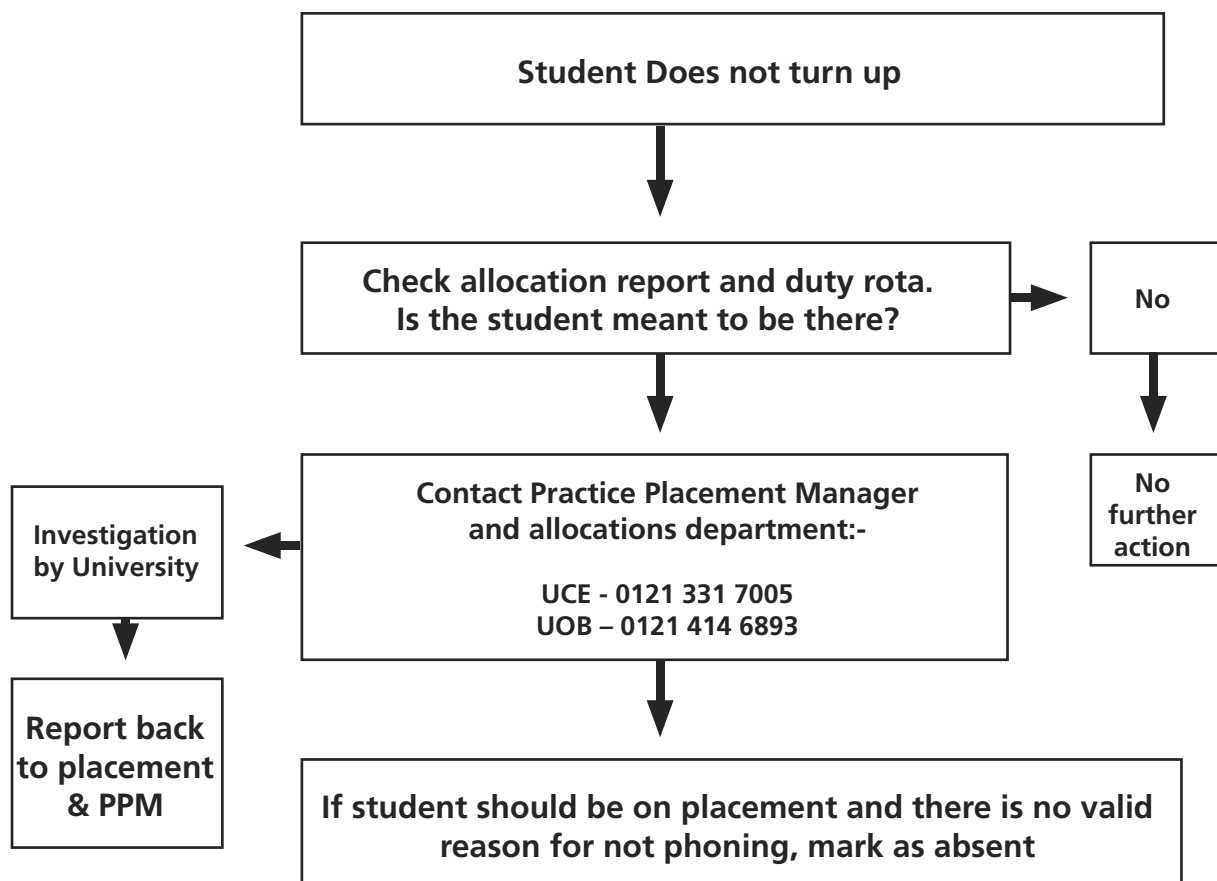
The vast majority of students are very conscientious and keen to make the most of their placement opportunities. However, if you find that any of the above happens please contact the relevant sickline number above and/or the practice placement manager.

Recording Students Attendance: Student's shift patterns must be recorded on the duty rota, as it is difficult when trying to track attendance and the shift patterns of a student are not recorded (a complaint/clinical risk issue/emergency situation may require tracking of students working hours). Please remember where possible that you ensure that the student follows the assessor's duty rota. Often students are given the opportunity to 'choose' their shift patterns, but please remember that if this opportunity is given to students it should be closely monitored by both the assessor/manager of the placement. Remember: please ensure that your students have their duty rota in advance, as many students have childcare/carer responsibilities.

Once you have informed the university an investigation as to the whereabouts of the student is carried out by telephone or letter, and you will be contacted regarding the results of the investigation as soon as possible. The student should be marked absent until otherwise informed.

The success of the process relies on the assessors/placements informing either the Practice Placement manager or the University of unreported absence of students. The aim is to ensure that the placements are not abused and that the learning experiences are used to their full potential.

Student has not reported for duty and has not contacted the ward



• Are students allowed special leave or carers leave?

This should only be granted by the manager in charge of the placement area and the practice placement manager should be informed. This ensures that the university and the student's tutors are aware of any issues whilst the students are in placement which enables the student to have the full support of the faculty staff on return to University. If students are seconded their line manager should give approval for special leave. If special leave to seconded students is granted 'out of hours' then the PPM should be informed.

• If a bank holiday falls within placement time are the students to work it?

UCE - If a bank holiday falls within placement time the students do not have it as holiday, it can be given as a normal day off in the working week or as a shift. Their annual leave entitlement is calculated within the three year programme inclusive of bank holidays. If students are working in placement Monday-Friday, please arrange an alternative learning opportunity for them on a Bank Holiday.

UoB – If a bank holiday falls within placement time the students do have it as holiday as well as their days off.

• How does student attendance affect the practical assessment process?

There is a requirement from the Nursing and Midwifery Council that all pre-registration students undertake a minimum of 2,300 hours in practice and 2,300 hours in theory during a 3 year period of study before they will allow them to become a Registered Nurse. All students' attendance will be monitored to ensure this requirement is met.

It is therefore essential that assessors ensure that the Record of Attendance sheet which forms part of the students' Clinical Practice Report is completed accurately.

Student Nurses are required to:

- Telephone both the CPSU sick line and their practical placement if they are sick / absent.
- Telephone both the CPSU and their practical placement when they are fit to return to placement.
- Complete a UCE Birmingham self certification form for each individual day or period of days amounting to less than 7 days and submit this with the Attendance Record to CPSU.
- Supply a medical sick note for periods of 7 days or more.
- Seconded students must also follow the appropriate trust's policy for sickness and absence.

The "A" grade in Clinical Practice Reports has been adjusted in the light of the new policy to read – "The assessor cannot judge the student's ability due to the amount of sickness/absence taken by the student during the placement." Therefore if an assessor does not feel they can assess a student because they have not been able to observe the student's practice sufficiently due to the student's non-attendance, they should award the student an "A" grade.

Please note that the sickness and absence grading criteria in some Clinical Practice Documents may not be up to date because of timescales for printing. Students will have been supplied with a label to attach to the front cover of their document indicating the new amendment to the grade.

ALL STUDENTS ARE NOW SUBJECT TO THE NEW SICKNESS AND ABSENCE POLICY and have been informed of this by email, letter and during lectures.

To read the full policy visit our website at www.health.uce.ac.uk/cpsu

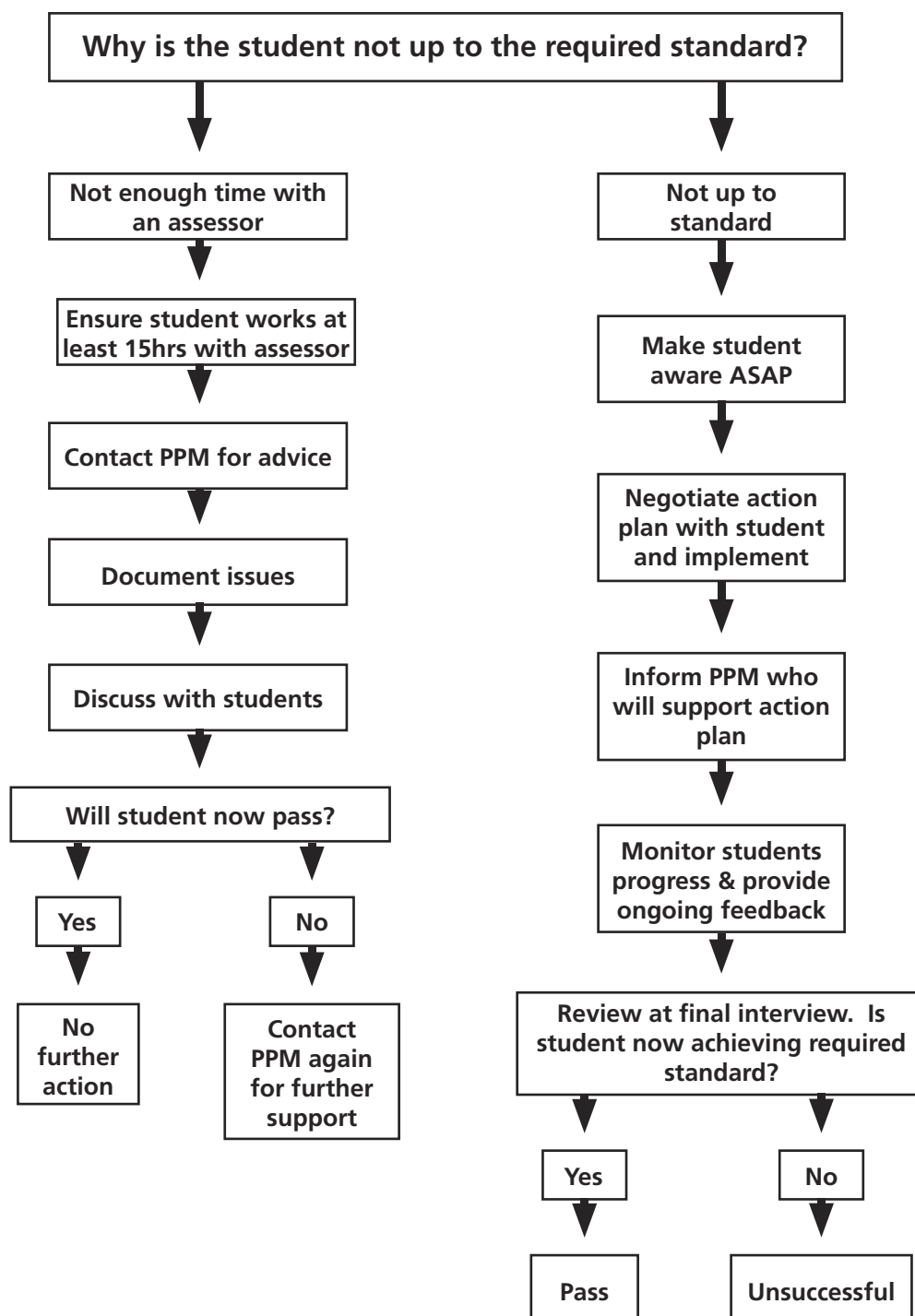
- **What should I do if a student has alternative employment whilst on placement?**

Some students have genuine hardship difficulties and work additional hours to supplement their bursary/student loan in order that they can complete the course. Alternative employment should not impact on the student's placement. However, it is at the discretion of the placement to negotiate the duty with the student, and it is always appreciated, by the students, if you discuss any particular problems or concerns they may have with meeting the duty arrangements.

- **What do you do if you think a student is under achieving/ failing in practice?**

If you are concerned about a student's progress and feel that they will not achieve their learning outcomes within the practical assessment document then please contact the practice placement manager as soon as possible. It is essential that the student is made aware as soon as possible that they are not achieving the required standard and an action plan is developed to give the student every opportunity to achieve in their remaining time in placement. The Practice Placement Manager will help both the mentor/assessor and the student develop the action plan. It is vital that you remember that 50% of the course is practice based and as an mentor/assessor you are accountable for your decision when passing a student as 'competent in practice'. It is not acceptable to pass the student assuming that the next placement will 'give them more of a chance', or 'the ward is too busy to sort out action plans for the student'. If you make the decision that a student is underachieving or failing you must follow the process below.....

Process for a student not up to the required standard



• **If a student is unsuccessful in practice what happens after they leave the placement?**

Practical competence is considered to be as equally important as academic ability in assessing students on pre registration courses and both universities ensure that students have passed their placements before progressing on the course.

UCE – The UCE have a practice panel, which reviews the practice of students who have failed at the first attempt in practice and issues the reattempt documentation. A practice field board also reviews the standard of practical assessment across all four branches of nursing and across all practice placements.

The primary aims of the practice field board and practice panels are:

- To ensure the rigor of the practical assessment of the course to ensure the same standards as that of theoretical assessment
- To raise the profile of practice as an essential element of the course and ensure that it is seen as being as credit worthy as theory
- To ensure that there is continuity and parity of assessment across all four branches of nursing, so that all students are treated equally.

The practice field board and practice panel have been set up to ensure that clinical practitioners have an appropriate arena in which to discuss the progress of students who have experienced difficulties in achieving the required standard in their practice competencies. Membership is made up of the practical mentor/assessor (from the practice area the student has failed in), Practice Placement Manager (of the Trust/Organisation the student was allocated to), the students personal tutor, the practice field board co-ordinator and the chair person who is always a senior member of the Faculty of Health and Community Care. They meet after every cohort of students finishes a placement allocation. Students who have failed in practice are then presented to the practice panel for a discussion.

• **Fitness for Practice Statement**

UCE Practice Documentation: Assessors are required to document the professional behaviour of the student in the practical assessment document. For example if you have concerns about the students lack of professionalism which are not addressed by the learning outcomes/proficiency statements in the assessment document you should complete this form. This sheet can be used as evidence when referring students to the Fitness for Practice Committee at UCE.

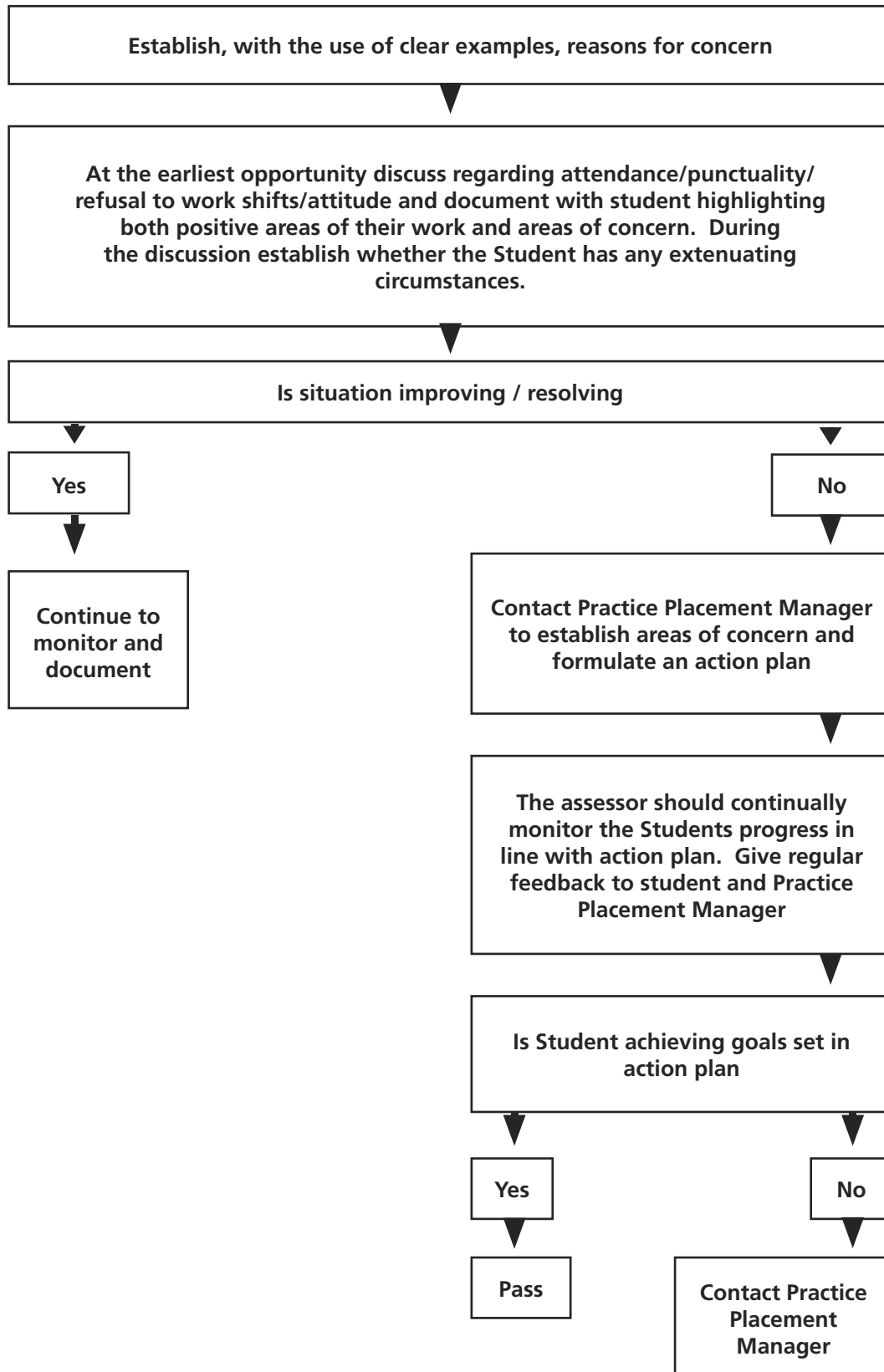
For any Fitness to Practice issues or concerns please follow the flow chart on page 10 for both UCE and Birmingham University students.

The UoB deals with failure in practice on an individual basis with the course director/module tutor and the student's personal tutor working in partnership with the mentor/assessor and the practice placement manager.

- **Do you have concerns about a student's conduct whilst in placement?**

If you have concerns about a student's professional conduct whilst in placement i.e. Poor attendance/punctuality/ refusing to work shifts, poor attitude.....please follow the process below

Problems with Student behaviour e.g. poor attendance / punctuality / refusal to work shifts, poor attitude towards learning etc.



Both Universities treat conduct issues very seriously and have strict processes to follow regarding fitness to practice. If concerns regarding conduct are raised with either the University or the practice placement manager they will help you make a decision as to the course of action.

- **Do the Universities have uniform guidelines for students?**

The Universities have strict uniform guidelines of which all the students are expected to adhere to. Where placements do not require the students to wear a uniform, the student should be advised of the local guidelines in respect to the dress code. Students should at all times have their university identity badge with them and displayed so that it is visible to both staff/patients/clients. If you are concerned that your student may not be adhering to the uniform policy or local dress code, please approach them first and advise them of your concern. If the student then fails to dress appropriately you may seek advice from the Practice Placement Manager or the University. Where local policy applies in respect to identification badges please ensure you advise your student how to obtain a badge or indeed how they should wear it (clips or chains may not be appropriate in certain placements).

Practical Assessment Documentation

The documentation of a student's clinical experience is crucial and so is the support the students have from their assessor. Therefore it is important to recognise the key role you play in student support.

The aim of the assessment process is to demonstrate fitness for practice. An assessor should be an appropriately qualified first level nurse.

Mentor's/Assessor's are very important to the Universities and placement providers. The assessor is responsible for deciding whether a student is fit for practice. Mentor's/Assessor's are appropriately qualified and experienced practitioners that assume responsibility for the student's learning in the practice setting, the quality of that learning, and the assessment of students to ensure that they have achieved the required standard.

- **What are the main responsibilities of the mentor/assessor?**

- Facilitate student learning across pre registration programmes;
- supervise, support and guide students in practice in institutional and non institutional settings
- implement approved assessment procedures

Please Remember !..... the NMC states an assessor should work with their student for at least 2 shifts per week/15hours.

(Ref - Assessors Information Pack –The University of Birmingham, with kind permission)

- **Is the student documentation the same for each University?**

Each University uses different documentation, but both documents embrace the statutory proficiencies/learning outcomes for registration with the NMC. It is the student's responsibility to complete the document on each clinical placement with the support of the mentor/assessor. As the mentor/assessor it is vital that you complete the relevant parts of the document and sign where requested. Once the placement is completed the student is required to return the document to the university to demonstrate achievement in practice. Students from both universities have to pass their practice placements in order to proceed on the course.

Remember that anything you write within the students documentation should be considered as important as when you write in the patients notes. Please do not sign a document that is completed in pencil, and also use your signature/print your name and never use a 'tick' in any part of the document.

- **How do I know how my student performed on placement before?**

All student nurses have a portfolio, which records both the practical, and university led aspects of the course and all the practical assessment documents will be held within the portfolio. As an mentor/assessor you can ask to see the students previous practice assessment documents to help with identifying learning needs and for you to gain perspective on their current level of experience of the student you are supporting.

Students from both universities are allocated a personal tutor, who will supervise progress throughout the course and will monitor and formally assess development through the course. The student will meet with the personal tutor at various points to review placement experience. The personal tutor will discuss the placement experience and the documents with the student. Any problems or concerns/missing information within the document will be identified and may be returned to the practical mentor/assessor for completion. It seems a good place to remind you, as the mentor/assessor, not to complete the document in the absence of the student, all entries/signing of proficiencies should be communicated with the student in order that the appropriate feedback can be given. Students are reminded not to let the mentor/assessor take the document home, so please do not ask your student if you can do this!! (UCE students are required to pay for lost documents).

- **How do I know what my student has been studying in University prior to placement?**

At the initial interview please take the opportunity to discuss any academic assignments the student may be preparing for as they may be linked to practice. As an assessor you are not required to read or comment on academic assignments (students should be referred to their personal tutor or module leader for academic support).

If you are unsure which module or part of the course the student is undertaking you can refer to the module guide. For UCE students this is in the front of the practice assessment document and UoB provides this information in a letter directly to the placement. The module guides give the mentor/assessor an outline of the module aim and contents. This information will help you to ensure that the student link theory to practice! UoB have an mentor's/ assessor's guide, which includes this information (please contact your Practice Placement Manager or UoB if you would like a copy).

- **What are my main responsibilities when completing the document?**

The student's document will clearly state what the expected learning outcomes/competency statements are for the placement and the expected level that the student should achieve. There are different requirements for each placement and some placement areas have students at different levels in the course, so be sure to read the document to find out! Although the student is responsible for completing the main parts of the document, the mentor/assessor is responsible for verifying its content and applying judgement to ensure that it is completed correctly. There are three key times when you and the student will review the document together:

The initial interview
The midway interview
The final interview

- **What do the documents look like?**

The toolkit includes two sample pages from each Universities document, and remember even though they look different the learning outcomes for the overall course are the same.

Example of How to Complete a Clinical Practice Report

PLAN FOR ACHIEVING LEARNING OUTCOME (Student to complete and discuss with assessor)		
Learning Outcome: F2.1	Plan	Review Date
<p>Discuss methods of, barriers to and the boundaries of communication and interpersonal relationships</p> <p>Demonstrate sensitivity when interacting with and providing information to patients and clients</p>	<p><u>Practice</u></p> <p><i>Communicate with people who have a specific communication problem.</i></p> <p><i>Liaise with an interpreter.</i></p> <p><i>Handover a patient to a colleague.</i></p> <p><i>Explain a procedure so that it is understood by the listener.</i></p> <p><i>Talk to patients whilst I am caring for them.</i></p> <p><i>Recognise how to communicate professionally.</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p> <p><i>Week 4</i></p> <p><i>Week 3</i></p> <p><i>Week 4</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing</i></p> <p><i>Week 5</i></p>
	<p><u>Knowledge</u></p> <p><i>Read the Code of Conduct and identify specific issues.</i></p> <p><i>Read Trust policies on</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>- consent</i> <i>- code of conduct</i> <i>- cultural awareness</i> <p><i>Identify patient information leaflets and the variety of ways they are produced to aid communication.</i></p> <p><i>Find out how to contact members of the interprofessional team.</i></p> <p><i>Identify three barriers to communication.</i></p> <p>ONE other piece of evidence that demonstrates a practice/knowledge link</p> <p>Some things I could use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>- a letter I have written</i> <i>- a report I have written about a patient</i> <i>- a leaflet and the variety of ways it is produced.</i> 	<p><i>Week 2</i></p> <p><i>Week 3</i></p> <p><i>Week 2</i></p> <p><i>Week 3</i></p> <p><i>Week 4</i></p> <p><i>Week 4</i></p>

EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVING LEARNING OUTCOME F2.1 (Student must present ALL 3 types of evidence indicated below)	Assessor Signature
<p>1. Evidence of direct observation of learning outcome being achieved</p> <p>28/1/29 Talked to a patient who has a hearing aid, he showed me how it works.</p> <p>4/2/29 Handed over 2 patients to my assessor.</p> <p>12/2/29 Identified some worries a patient had by talking to them whilst helping them to bathe.</p> <p>12/2/29 Talked to an unconscious patient whilst caring for them.</p> <p>13/2/29 Explained visiting hours to a relative.</p> <p>17/2/29 Liaised with the interpreter about a patient's needs.</p> <p>18/2/29 Answered telephone queries using professional terms.</p>	<p>ASS</p> <p>DPK</p> <p>DPK</p> <p>CO</p> <p>ASS</p> <p>DPK</p> <p>DPK</p>
<p>2. Evidence of student's application of knowledge</p> <p>21/1/29 Identified NMC Code of Professional Conduct no 3, no 4, no 5 are all relevant to this Learning Outcome. Discussed with my assessor.</p> <p>26/1/29 Found out how to bleep members of the interprofessional teams.</p> <p>27/2/29 Identified barriers to communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - deafness - language - unconscious <p>25/2/29 Discussed Trust policies on consent, code of conduct, cultural awareness</p> <p>26/2/29 Explained to my assessor how to maintain confidentiality.</p>	<p>DPK</p> <p>CO</p> <p>DPK</p> <p>DPK</p> <p>DPK</p>
<p>3. ONE other piece of evidence that demonstrates a practice / knowledge link (please specify and present with this document)</p> <p>Patient information leaflet in various formats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Braille - English - large type - variety of languages <p>with completed "Linking Knowledge and Practice" form</p>	<p>DPK</p>
<p>I CONFIRM THAT THE STUDENT HAS ACHIEVED THE REQUIRED STANDARD FOR Learning Outcome: F2.1 Module: Introduction To Inter-Professional Life In Health care - GM4079</p> <p>Assessor's Signature: DP Knight Student's Signature: L Hunt Date: 3/3/29</p>	

The University of Birmingham - Document Example.

SAMPLE OUTCOME

Manage oneself, one's practice and that of others in accordance with the NMC's Code of Professional Practice recognising one's own abilities and limitations

Criteria for achievement	Directly Observed		Question & Answer		Other Evidence		Experience not available	
	Assessor	Student	Assessor	Student	Assessor	Student	Assessor	Student
1.1 Practices in accordance with the NMC Code of Professional Conduct	M Dealy	B Harper						
1.2 Actively reviews own practice & performance under the guidance of their assessor					M Dealy	B Harper		
1.3 Recognises own limitations and seeks help when necessary			M Dealy	B Harper				

Action Plan:

To discuss NMC code of Practice with mentor/assessor
 To discuss with other caring team members their specific role within the team, eg. Doctor, physiotherapist, pharmacist
 To work closely with mentor/assessor

Date:	Signature of assessor	Signature of student
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Midway Evaluation:

(Mentor's/Assessors comments on students achievement of above action plan.)
 Have discussed MNC code and implications for practice
 To work alongside physiotherapist in week 5.

Date:	Signature of assessor	Signature of student
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Final interview:

Has achieved overall outcome by working closely with myself as mentor/assessor and is able to recognise own limitations and abilities.(Mentor's/Assessor's comments on overall achievement of learning outcome).

Date:	Signature of assessor	Signature of student
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- **How can I help the student plan their learning?**

Each learning outcome/competency statement allows space for the student to write how they plan to achieve it. This is often the most difficult part, as the student is unfamiliar with the placement environment, and unsure of the learning opportunities available. This is an ideal opportunity for you to give the student the placement handbook (if available within your area) and also to help them plan their learning. The students do not expect the mentor/s/assessor/s to do all of this for them however, if they don't know an opportunity is available, they cannot plan to achieve it! The review date (UCE documentation) gives the student the opportunity to identify a date by which they plan to achieve a learning outcome/competency statement. This is an excellent idea as it also helps the mentor/assessor to ensure the student is making the most of the placement. A specific date is not necessary, but a week should be identified i.e. by Week 4.

- **How can I help my student apply the learning outcomes /competencies to my area of practice?**

To help you, each university has given some extra guidance for both the student and the assessor to help them identify how the outcome/competency can be achieved. For UCE these are called the 'basis for assessment' and Birmingham University they are called criteria for achievement. These are on every page to support each outcome/competency.

• How many interviews do I have to do whilst the student is in placement?

The students are required to have a formal interview with their assessor three times during placement:

- The initial interview – The mentor/assessor should introduce the student to the placement routine as well as insuring that the student is introduced to the local policies and procedures (you must sign in the front of the documents that you have discussed these with the student). The student should be informed of action to take in case of an emergency (e.g. fire/cardiac arrest). The mentor/assessor should also discuss learning opportunities available as well as discussing any personal development needs that the student shares with you. This should be completed in the first week of placement. Also please remember to advise your student who will support them whilst you are not on duty.
- The midway interview – The midway interview should be halfway through placement and gives both the mentor/assessor and the student the opportunity to discuss progress. If you are concerned about a student's progress you may contact the Practice Placement Manager who will advise you how to complete the documentation, as well as help you and the student formulate an action plan. Any sections that the student has achieved can be signed off at this point. Both you and the student have the opportunity to review progress and you should ensure the student completes their self-evaluation section (UCE students) prior to the midway interview. This ensures that the mentor/assessor can gauge at what level the students understands they are working at and you can compare the level at which you understand they are working at.

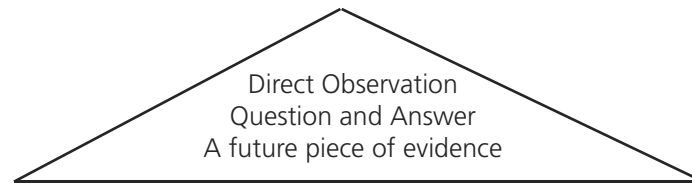
UoB students have a midway evaluation for each learning outcome, which you and the student should discuss together and the assessor should document progress.

- The final interview – The final interview should be completed in the final week of placement. All interviews should be completed in the presence of the student, so please do not take the document home! The student should only be signed as up to the required standard if you are happy that you or a colleague has directly observed a students performance in practice, and the student is able to answer questions about their practice. The student should also have 'other evidence' to support each learning outcome/competency. If you are not satisfied that a student has demonstrated the required standard in all three areas then the student should fail.
Please ensure that you sign all parts of the document especially the attendance sheet. Personal tutors will also review the comments made by mentor/assessors at the end of each placement, and these may help form the basis for a student's reference at the end of the course.

The interviews give you the opportunity to sit down with the student and review their performance. As the mentor/assessor you can make this process a lot less time consuming by reviewing the document throughout the placement (for example one learning outcome per week), and giving feedback on progress as part of your everyday contact with the student. Students realise how difficult it is for the mentor/assessor to have time to complete the document, but equally they may feel despondent if an mentor/assessor dismisses the importance of it or fails to read/complete it correctly. Many students also state that the mentor/assessor has informed them that they don't know how to 'complete the document'. If you are unsure after reading this toolkit.....please ask for help (See role of Practice Placement Manager or clinical link/personal tutor).

- **How do I ensure that the student has achieved each learning outcome/competency?**

For each learning outcome/competency statement there are three ways that the mentor/assessor should ensure the student has completed the work required



These 3 elements that are essential to the assessment process

For example:

If the overall learning outcome is: **Demonstrate the importance of promoting equity in patient/client care by contributing to nursing care in a fair and anti-discriminatory way.....**

You must ensure that your student has been observed by you and your team interacting with patients/client groups in a fair and anti-discriminatory way. They should be able to answer questions relating to fair and anti-discriminatory practice (for example: the questions may relate specifically to the placement area or local policies/national initiatives or guidelines).

And finally that the student has a further piece of evidence to support their practice/knowledge/background reading of the subject (for example: an article or example of how they have used documentation in practice to support this).

If you fail to ensure that your student can do all three elements then you may be signing a student as competent when they may not be!! You should never assume that just because you have seen a student do something that they have the underpinning knowledge or can answer questions relating to their practice. Likewise a student may have excellent background knowledge but when you observe them they may not be at the required standard. Mentor's/Assessors must be aware that if you fail to ensure a student is competent in all three elements you may be passing a student who should have failed!

• What can be used as a further piece of evidence?

Assessors should be examining students' practice to ensure that they can perform to the required standard. The assessment process has three elements.

1. That the student can do what is required of them.
2. That the student's practice is based on sound nursing knowledge.
3. That the student can link the theory and practice. This is sometimes called the third piece of evidence.

In order to be assessed the student needs to plan how they are going to achieve the learning outcomes or standards of proficiency in the Clinical Practice Report. The student should then implement this plan and record evidence that confirms all the situations which they have been involved in that demonstrate achievement. Assessors must review the evidence students present them with and judge based on this whether the student has achieved to the required standard.

The following points are given to students to guide them:

1. Your clinical practice document does not need to be written in an academic style.
2. Keep your report with you in practice and note down what you do as soon after you have done it as is realistic.
3. Keep notes short and to the point.
4. Always maintain people's confidentiality (use a pseudonym)
5. Even small events should be recorded, it is the sum of all the small events that make the whole picture that your assessor will review.
6. Remember to learn from everyone and gather evidence from the whole interdisciplinary team.
7. Always remember to ask yourself why you are practising in a certain way, it helps you to link knowledge and practice.
8. Find out if you don't know the answer.
9. Never include a third piece of evidence if you can't demonstrate how you used it in practice.

Students MUST produce a third piece of evidence that demonstrates they can link nursing practice and nursing knowledge for EVERY learning outcome or proficiency and assessors must review this when assessing a student.

Students can be as creative as they wish but the evidence presented must demonstrate that they can link knowledge and practice and it must be relevant to;

- The care being delivered in the placement
- The particular learning outcome/proficiency

1. Journal articles

It is important that the student can demonstrate how they used the third piece of evidence so if a journal article is being used it is important that the student can show how it was used in practice. The student should use a form which is available in the Portfolio which aids the student in considering how this information influenced the student and their practice. The "Linking Knowledge and Practice Form" is available on the CPSU website.

2. Documents from practice

If a student includes a document from practice such as an observation chart, risk assessment sheet, care plan etc they must consider how the document aided practice and consider its value to the nurse and the patient. Blank documents should never be submitted, the student must have used them with a patient and be able to interpret them and demonstrate the relevance of the information that was gathered. A form which assists the student to do this is included in the Student Portfolio. The student must be reminded to maintain confidentiality. The 'Linking Knowledge and Practice Form' is available on the CPSU website.

UCE students: Linking Knowledge and Practice

Students are now provided with sheets which they complete to demonstrate that they have reviewed, understood and applied the literature which they present as a third piece of evidence. If the student presents a piece of literature it should be accompanied by one of these sheets which are available on CPSU website.

- **Can the student use a reflective piece of work as a further piece of evidence?**

Yes. Students are encouraged to reflect on practice throughout the course. A minimum of one piece is required for each document. Students must now submit this on a separate piece of paper. A reflective model of the student's choice can be used. When the student meets with their personal tutor after their placement, a piece of reflective work (for UCE students) is presented (see record of interview with personal tutor/reflection on a learning experience within the UCE student documentation). This work is not awarded an academic grade, but it can be presented to the assessor as a 3rd piece of evidence.

If a student wishes to use a reflective piece for a learning outcome/competency statement, this is acceptable for both Universities.

It is a course requirement that the student must present at least one piece of evidence in the form of a piece of reflection in every Clinical Practice Report. This is so that the student's personal tutor can monitor their standard of reflection and ensure that this is developing. Assessors should consider this piece of work in terms of its value to the student's practice. Assessors are not required to comment on the academic worth of the piece. Guidelines for reflection are available in the Student Portfolio and on the CPSU website.

- **Do student have to achieve all the skills in their document ?**

Students from both universities have skills they have to achieve within their training. As a mentor/assessor it is important that you refer to the skills list (UCE students) and the skills booklet (UoB students) to help your students towards achieving them. Please advise the student at the initial interview which skills are available in the placement areas. If the skills listed are not available (please write N/O in the box for UCE students). However, please utilise other teams or colleagues who may be able to help the students achieve their skills.

UCE students: have a skills list in each document and the students will also carry a skills inventory with them. Students can opt to achieve additional skills from the inventory if available in placement.

- **Do students evaluate their experience in placement?**

All students are given the opportunity to evaluate their placement experience on return to university. The evaluation form asks the student to provide information on 4 key areas of their experience:

The learning environment
Assessment of practice
Student support
Strengths and Weaknesses of the placement environment

The universities are incorporating this information as part of the placement annual audit. Please ensure that you accept feedback from the student whilst they are in placement, because mentor's/assessor's can often rectify any issues before the student leaves. Also the placement evaluation enables the student to feedback on the positive issues including mentor/assessor support! The placement evaluations are fed back to the senior manager in the placement area who is responsible for the learning environment.

- **How can you contact the PPMs ?**

This varies between Trusts. Some PPMs carry pagers, beeps or mobile phones. Others have email or office numbers. If you are unsure then the local switchboard should have the information. Throughout the toolkit advice is given when to contact the PPM e.g student underachieving or failing in practice.

- **Are the students visited by their University tutors whilst they are in placement?**

Tutors from both Universities visit their students whilst they are in placement. UCE students are visited by their personal tutor and UoB students are usually visited by the module leader. Students will not be visited on every placement however, if you wish to discuss a particular issue or concern with the tutor, please see the front of the document for UCE students, which states who the personal tutor is, or for UoB the module leader.

The personal tutor will discuss both academic and placement issues with the student and give the assessor the opportunity to discuss the progress of the student. Please do not wait to see a tutor until you highlight concerns about a student, as the tutor may not be due to visit the student

- **Who are CPSU/allocations team?**

Both UoB and UCE (CPSU – clinical placement support unit) have very close links with the Practice Placement Managers and these teams are responsible for audit, allocation of students to clinical areas, dealing with any practice based issue by linking directly with the Practice Placement Managers. Each University has a lead link: Carol Doyle for UCE and Bill Daley for UoB.

- **How do the placement areas know the students are coming?**

The allocations team from both Universities' work together to allocate the students to specific placement areas. The allocations staff also work extremely hard to match student locality and placement choices to the final allocated placement. The placement receives the allocation sheet well in advance of the students starting in placement. It is often difficult when students contact a placement area and they state they are not expecting them, this often leaves the student feeling despondent. Therefore, please make every effort to make your student feel part of the team even before they start!

- **If a student approaches me and informs me that they have a disability what should I do?**

Both permanent staff and students at all levels may be working with a recognised disability. If a student informs you that they have a disability you should encourage them to give you permission to seek advice from the Practice Placement Manager/University. The Practice Placement Manager or University colleague will advise you of any support/assessment that will ensure that the student is fully supported in placement.

- **If a student informs me that they are pregnant what should I do?**

Inform the manager of the placement area as a local policy should be referred to.

And Finally!

- **Who advises the student what to expect in placement?**

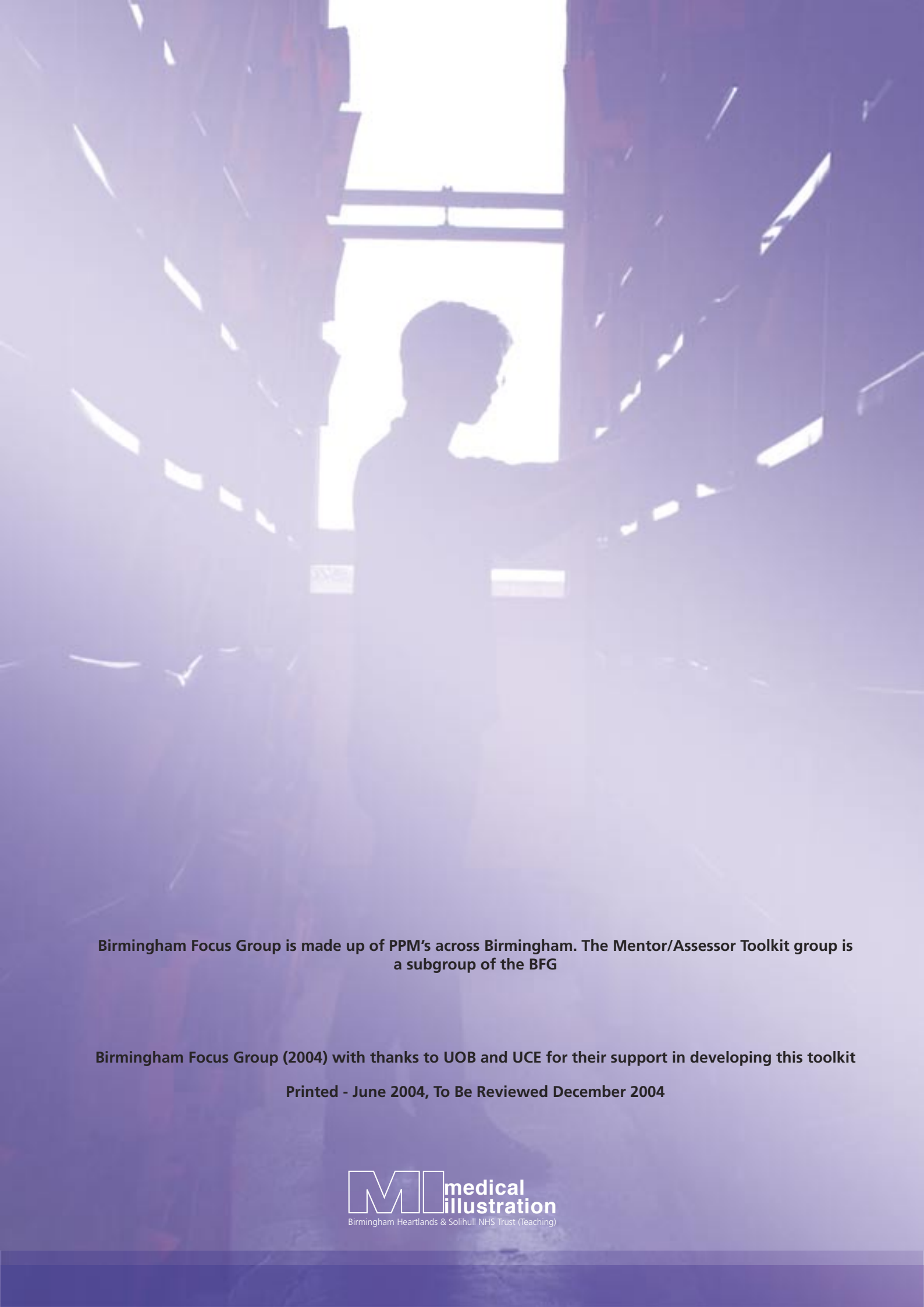
The Universities have pre placement preparation sessions for students which allows time for them to discuss how to complete the placement assessment document, and any specific concerns or questions they may have in relation to practice placement. The PPM's often attend the meeting to answer trust specific issues. The RCN also provides some additional advice for students in preparation for placement – Helping the students get the best from their practice placements (2002) on this is available on the RCN web site: www.rcn.org.uk This document provides the student with information from understanding their role as a student in a placement area to how to deal with bullying/harassment and reporting poor practice.

AlsoThe Clinical Placement Support Unit (CPSU) have a website <http://www.hcc.uce.ac.uk/cpsu> which holds lots of information for the students at UCE in relation to their course, this website also allows UCE and UOB student's to link to placement information relating to placement areas.

Thank you for taking time to read this 'toolkit' and if you would like to discuss any specific issues in relation to student support and they do not appear in this document then please contact the PPM or personal tutor/module leader who will be happy to advise you.

Notes:

This document was put together to help guide practical assessors through the assessment process, if you would like any additional information to be included then please contact the PPM for your area.



Birmingham Focus Group is made up of PPM's across Birmingham. The Mentor/Assessor Toolkit group is a subgroup of the BFG

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