

This circular has been updated to include the nursing associate role



Protecting the public through professional standards

NMC Circular 21/2006
SAT/gl
October 3 2006

Dear Colleague

Preceptorship Guidelines

The guidelines in this Circular are primarily intended for registrants, employers and programme leaders in NMC approved institutions and may be applied from the date of this Circular. They **replace** guidance on preceptorship contained in the *Standards for the preparation of teachers of nurses, midwives and specialist community public health nurses* (NMC 2004), which is now withdrawn.

The NMC strongly recommends that all 'new registrants' have a period of preceptorship on commencing employment, this applies to those newly admitted to the NMC Register who have completed a pre-registration programme in the UK for the first time, or have subsequently entered a new part of the register. New registrants also include those newly admitted to the register from other European Economic Area States and other nation states.

Preceptorship

Preceptorship is about providing support and guidance enabling 'new registrants' to make the transition from student to accountable practitioner to:

- practise in accordance with the *NMC Code*;
- develop confidence in their competence as a nurse, midwife, nursing associate or specialist community public health nurse;

To facilitate this the 'new registrant' should have:

- learning time protected in their first year of qualified practice; and
- have access to a preceptor with whom regular meetings are held.

The role of preceptor

The preceptor should:

- facilitate the transition of the 'new registrant' from a student to a registrant who is:
confident in their practice,
sensitive to the needs of patients/clients,
an effective team member, and
up-to-date with their knowledge and practice.
- provide positive feedback to 'new registrants' on those aspects of performance that are being undertaken well;
- provide honest and objective feedback on those aspects of performance that are a cause for concern and assist 'new registrants' to develop a plan of action to remedy these;
- facilitate 'new registrants' to gain new knowledge and skills; and
- be aware of the standards, competencies, or objectives set by the employer that the 'new registrant' is required to achieve and support them in achieving these.

The nature of the relationship between the preceptor and the 'new registrant' is best agreed in accordance with their own needs taking account of the environment within which they practise.

The role of the 'new registrant'

The NMC firmly believes that the 'new registrant' who is receiving preceptorship has a responsibility to:

- practise in accordance with *The Code*;
- identify and meet with their preceptor as soon as is possible after they have taken up post;
- identify specific learning needs and develop an action plan for addressing these needs;
- ensure that they understand the standard, competencies or objectives set by their employer that they are required to meet;
- reflect on their practice and experience; and
- seek feedback on their performance from their preceptor and those with whom they work.

Period of preceptorship

The NMC recommends strongly that all 'new registrants' should have a formal period of preceptorship of about four months but this may vary according to individual need and

local circumstances. Formal preceptorship is dependent upon 'new registrants' having easy access to a named individual with due regard to the same part of the register and field of practice, who can be called upon to provide guidance, help, advice and support. An exception would be the nursing associate whose preceptor can be a registered nurse.

These guidelines can be incorporated within existing systems and practices for supporting 'new registrants'. Where preceptorship is not currently available, the NMC strongly recommends it be introduced.

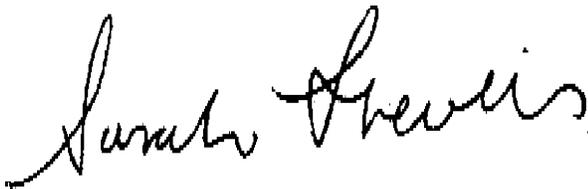
Those 'new registrants' who are self-employed or intend to practise infrequently should arrange to receive support that meets the principles of these guidelines.

Preparation for preceptors

Whilst there are no formal qualifications associated with being a preceptor, individuals will need preparation for the role. Preceptors should be registered midwives, registered specialist community public health nurses, first level registered nurses or nursing associates who have had at least twelve months experience within the same area of practice as the 'new registrant'.

For further information regarding this Circular please contact the Education and standards team at EducationandStandards@nmc-uk.org.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Thewlis', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Thewlis

Chief Executive and Registrar