PRACTICE EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE
Practice Educator Professional Standards for Social Work
Revised version May 2012, transition starts from September 2012

These Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS) set out requirements at two stages, commensurate with the different levels of complexity and responsibility in teaching, assessing and supervising social work degree students. The standards may also be helpful for those supporting and assessing newly qualified social workers, experienced social workers undertaking formal or informal continuing professional development or others engaging in learning and development activities.

These standards will come into effect in October 2013, and are minimum requirements. They apply to all placements within the academic year 2013/14 and thereafter. From October 2015 all practice educators of social work students must be registered social workers. Partnerships may individually or collaboratively wish to develop requirements at a higher level. The standards will be phased in from October 2012 through transitional arrangements, outlined in Questions and Guidance (April 2012).

A glossary of terms used is provided in Appendix 1.

Staged approach
The PEPS outline two stages of progression for practice educators:

Stage 1
Practice educators at this stage will be able to supervise, teach and assess social work degree students up to but not including the final assessment prior to qualification. At this stage they may contribute to the last placement but not take full responsibility for assessment or act as the practice educator on a day-to-day basis.

Stage 2
Practice educators at this stage will be able to supervise, teach and assess social work degree students up to and including the last placement. In effect, these practice educators will have the authority and capability to recommend, on the basis of appropriate evidence, that the social work students are fit to practise at the point of qualification.
Developing pathways or programmes to meet the standards.

It is for Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and employers to develop suitable ways of enabling candidates to meet the learning outcomes. These may include self managed portfolio presentations and/or a variety of in-house, distance and open learning or HEI-based training activities.

Programme providers may wish to combine stage 1 and stage 2 training arrangements and assessment of learning outcomes into an integrated programme to maximise flexibility and local workforce planning needs.

Assessment, accreditation and maintaining currency

The underpinning principle of the two proposed stages is that evidence to meet the learning outcomes may be generated within the workplace without the need for HEI accreditation and approval arrangements. It would be for partnerships and networks to plan together formal APL/APEL arrangements and credit ratings where these are appropriate. Partnerships should also ensure that practice educators have relevant opportunities to undertake continuing professional development (CPD) and are able to demonstrate continued proficiency and capability. Practice educators should keep a record of CPD relevant to their role as a practice educator and be prepared to present this as evidence for re-registration (if requested by the regulator). Practice educators normally need to maintain currency through taking full responsibility for a social work student at least every two years.

Practice educators, as registered social workers, need to apply their professional value base to whatever role they undertake in a range of contexts. Practice educators will need to ensure that the values on which they base their own practice and on which they teach, supervise and assess learners are in line with current expectations of The College of Social Work, and also the Health and Care Professions Council’s Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics.

Equivalent practice educator qualifications

Practice Teacher Award (PTA) holders and those who have achieved a Higher Specialist Award in practice education within the former GSCC PQ framework who are qualified and registered social workers, are accepted as having reached the standards for stage 2 of the proposed framework. PTA holders can continue to be responsible for assessing and teaching students at all placement levels and may be able to act as mentors and assessors for PE candidates if employers and HEIs are

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1 who also have met the practice educator standards observation of practice assessment requirements in the attached table

PRACTICE EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE (edref11)
satisfied that they have continued to regularly practise as a practice educator. Normally this would mean they have had direct responsibility for at least one student in the last two years or had relevant experience in practice education and have retained and developed their skills, knowledge and value base. For further guidance see Appendix 2:11.

Off-site practice educators and practice supervisors

From October 2013, independent off-site practice educators are expected to meet the capabilities within the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) as an experienced social worker and to have demonstrated proficiency at stage 2, so therefore must be registered social workers. This also applies to any off-site practice educators who are employees of the organisation hosting the placement. It is the responsibility of the agency or HEI contracting the independent practice educators to be satisfied that the independent practice educators are competent and suitable to carry out their responsibilities. This would include ensuring that safeguarding checks have been undertaken.

Practice supervisors would not have to reach stage 1 proficiency to support and supervise the day-to-day work of a social work student and would not necessarily have to be registered social workers for the first placement. (click here for more guidance) However, it is recommended that they should be working towards the stage 1 learning outcomes (excluding A5 and C11) and be supported by their line manager and practice educator. It is for the line manager to ensure that a practice supervisor is competent to provide day-to-day practice supervision of social work students.

Links with the Professional Capabilities Framework

The Practice Educator Professional Standards are cross-referenced within the PCF at social worker and experienced social worker levels.

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2 A practice supervisor who is not a registered social worker will not normally be able to provide day-to-day supervision for the last placement.
## Practice Educator Professional Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2 and combined stage 1 and 2 pathways</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional qualification</strong></td>
<td>Registered social worker.</td>
<td>Registered social worker.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Experience</strong></td>
<td>Two years’ relevant work experience before taking full responsibility for assessing a social work placement, qualified for two years.</td>
<td>Three years’ relevant work experience, qualified for two years by the end of the programme.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge, skills and values – linked to learning outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Pathways and programmes must support practice educator candidates to meet stage 1 outcomes in domains A, B and C and apply values to practice.</td>
<td>Pathways and programmes must support practice educator candidates to meet all learning outcomes in domains A – D and apply values to practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Support</strong></td>
<td>Guided support from an appropriate mentor (Practice Educator Stage 2) on individual or group basis.</td>
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<td><strong>Assessment process</strong></td>
<td>Applicants for the role must evidence achievements against learning outcomes in domains A – C, according to arrangements made by local or regional employer networks.</td>
<td>Applicants for the role must evidence achievements against learning outcomes in domains A – D, according to arrangements made by local or regional employer networks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Evidence</td>
<td>One direct observation of a practice educator candidate teaching, supervising and assessing a social work student against the Professional Capabilities Framework.</td>
<td>Two direct observations of a practice educator candidate teaching, supervising and assessing against the Professional Capabilities Framework. Evidence of work-based competence from taking full responsibility for one social work student and one other being assessed against the Professional Capabilities Framework.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Observation of practice</td>
<td>All assessors of practice educator candidates, including those observing a candidate’s practice, must be appropriately qualified at stage 2 or equivalent. See Appendix 2 (Questions and Guidance) for more info.</td>
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<td>4. Assessment standards</td>
<td>Partnerships will wish to develop mechanisms which ensure that all their PEs are meeting the standards. This will form part of The College’s endorsement criteria. The final assessment decision will be made jointly by the HEI and employer representatives. See Appendix 2 (Questions and Guidance): section 12 for more info.</td>
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<td>Requirement</td>
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<td>Links with QAPL</td>
<td>All candidates should:</td>
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<td>• contribute to the completion or review of a QAPL audit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• complete a QAPL practice educator feedback form for each student they assess</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme structure</td>
<td>There should normally be some core input around domains A and B before the practice placement starts.</td>
<td>Additional learning outcomes to be met either by an additional assessed module, through APL/APEL processes or via flexible CPD learning opportunities (e.g. in-house training, practice education conferences, e-learning, distance learning, a sequence of workshops). Achievement of learning outcomes from flexible learning opportunities must be evidenced.</td>
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3 Quality assurance benchmark statement and guidance on monitoring of social work practice placements (QAPL)

PRACTICE EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE (edref11)
GUIDANCE STATEMENTS

Domain A

Organise opportunities for the demonstration of assessed competence in practice

Practice educators at stage 1 and 2 should:
1. Take responsibility for creating a physical and learning environment conducive to the demonstration of assessed competence.
2. Devise an induction programme that takes into account learners’ needs and their previous experience.
3. Negotiate with all participants in the work place, including service users and carers, the appropriate learning opportunities and the necessary resources to enable the demonstration of practice capability.
4. Work openly and cooperatively with learners, their line managers, work place colleagues, other professionals, and service users and carers, in the planning of key activities at all stages of learning and assessment.
5. Coordinate the work of all contributors. Ensure they are fully briefed, understand their roles and provide them with feedback.
6. Complete or review an audit and complete a practice educator feedback form for each student they assess in line with the Quality Assurance for Practice Learning (QAPL) framework.
7. Monitor, critically evaluate and report on the continuing suitability of the work environment, learning opportunities, and resources. Take appropriate action to address any shortcomings and optimise learning and assessment.
8. Contribute to the learning and development of the agency as a training organisation. Help to review and improve its provision, policies and procedures and identify barriers for learners.
Domain B

Enable learning and professional development in practice

Practice educators at stage 1 and 2 should:

1. Teach the learner using contemporary social work models, methods and theories relevant to the work, powers and duties, and policy and procedures of the agency, demonstrating the ability for critical reflection.

2. Establish the basis of an effective working relationship by identifying learners’ expectations, the outcomes which they have to meet in order to demonstrate competence, and their readiness for assessment. Agree the available learning opportunities including multi-professional contexts, methods, resources and timescales to enable them to succeed.

3. Discuss, identify, plan to address and review the particular needs and capabilities of learners, and the support available to them. Identify any matters which may impact on their ability to manage their own learning.

4. Discuss and take into account individuals’ learning styles, learning needs, prior learning achievements, knowledge and skills. Devise and deliver an appropriate, cost-effective teaching programme, which promotes their ability to learn and succeed.

5. Make professional educational judgments about meeting learners’ needs within the available resources, ensuring the required learning outcomes can be demonstrated in accordance with adult learning models.

6. Identify which aspects of the management of the learning and assessment programme learners are responsible for, in order to achieve their objectives. Describe and agree the roles of the practice supervisor and/or educator in mentoring, coaching, modelling, teaching, supervising, managing and supporting the placement.

7. Establish how the learning and assessment programme is to be reviewed. Encourage learners to express their views, identify and agree any changes and discuss how disagreements on any aspects of it are resolved.

8. Advise learners how to develop their ability to manage their learning. Advise, guide and respond to any difficulties encountered by them and where necessary provide instruction.

9. Support the learner in gathering evidence according to programme requirements.

Additional learning outcome for practice educators at stage 2

10. Apply an appropriate range of supervisory models, roles and skills, which recognise the power dynamics between practice educator and learner.
Domain C

Manage the assessment of learners in practice

Practice educators at stage 1 and 2 should:

1. Engage learners in the design, planning and implementation of the assessment tasks.
2. Agree and review a plan and methods for assessing learners’ performance against the Professional Capabilities Framework at the relevant level.
3. Ensure that holistic assessment decisions are the outcomes of informed, evidence-based judgments and clearly explain them to learners.
4. Evaluate evidence for its relevance, validity, reliability, sufficiency and authenticity according to the agreed standard.
5. Use direct observation of learners in practice to assess performance.
6. Base holistic assessment decisions on all relevant evidence and from a range of sources, resolving any inconsistencies in the evidence available.
7. Encourage learners to self-evaluate and seek service users, carers and peer group feedback on their performance.
8. Provide timely, honest and constructive feedback on learners’ performance in an appropriate format. Review their progress through the assessment process, distinguishing between formative and summative assessment.
9. Make clear to learners how they may improve their performance. Identify any specific learning outcomes not yet demonstrated and the next steps. If necessary, arrange appropriate additional assessment activity to enable them to meet the standard.
10. Ensure that all assessment decisions, and the supporting evidence, are documented and recorded according to the required standard. Produce holistic assessment reports which provide clear evidence for decisions.
11. Ensure that disagreements about assessment judgments and complaints made about the assessment process are managed in accordance with agreed procedures.
12. Seek feedback from learners on their experience of being assessed, and the consequences of the assessment programme for them. Incorporate the feedback into future assessment activity.
13. Contribute to standardisation arrangements and the agreed quality assurance processes which monitor the organisation’s training strategy.
14. Demonstrate the ability to make difficult holistic assessment decisions around areas of development, which may include marginal or failing learners.

Reference to be provided
Additional learning outcomes for practice educators at stage 2

15. Demonstrate the ability to mark learners’ academic and/or assessed work.

16. Demonstrate an ability to use a range of assessment methods including recording, reports, and the feedback of people who use services and carers, professionals and other colleagues.

Domain D

Effective continuing performance as a practice educator

Practice educators at stage 2 should:

1. Critically reflect upon and evaluate their own professional development and apply learning to subsequent practice education experience using a range of methods.

2. Demonstrate critical reflection on their own development as practice educators including the use of feedback from direct observations, colleagues and HEI tutors and other assessment sources.

3. Demonstrate knowledge of current HEI quality assurance systems and ability to liaise and negotiate HEI processes.

4. Maintain information and data relevant to the development of practice.

5. Demonstrate an applied knowledge of contemporary issues in research, policy, legislation and practice including agency policy, procedures and practice.

6. Demonstrate an ability to transfer practice educator skills, knowledge and values to new roles in mentoring, supervision, teaching and/or assessment.

7. Establish and maintain effective resources for their own support and supervision in respect of the practice educator role and demonstrate the ability to consult and work with others in contentious and challenging contexts such as dealing with failing learners and formal appeals and complaints.
1.1 **Values for practice educators and supervisors**

This guidance focuses on the implications of social work values in relation to the assessment process. The values statements closely reflect The College of Social Work’s core values for endorsement. In order to promote anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practices, practice educators and supervisors will:

- identify and question their own values and prejudices, the use of authority and power in the assessment relationship, and recognise and act upon the implications for their assessment practice

- update themselves on best practice in assessment and research on adult learning and apply this knowledge in promoting the rights and choices of learners and managing the assessment process

- respect and value the uniqueness and diversity of learners and recognise and build on their strengths, and take into account individual learning styles and preferred assessment methods

- accept and respect learners’ circumstances and understand how these impact on the assessment process

- assess in a manner that does not stigmatise or disadvantage individuals and ensures equality of opportunity. Show applied knowledge and understanding of the significance of
  - poverty
  - racism
  - ill health and disability
  - gender
  - social class
  - sexual orientation
  in managing the assessment process

- recognise and work to prevent unjustifiable discrimination and disadvantage in all aspects of the assessment process, and counter any unjustifiable discrimination in ways that are appropriate to their situation and role

- take responsibility for the quality of their work and ensure that it is monitored and appraised; critically reflect on their own practice and identify development needs in order to improve their own performance, raise standards, and contribute to the learning and development of others
Appendix 1

Glossary

HEI – Higher Education Institution.

Practice educator (PE) – This person takes overall responsibility for the student’s learning and assessment, utilising information from his/her own assessment and other sources. The practice educator is the person who makes the recommendation to the course examination board about the student’s competence in relation to the Professional Capabilities Framework.

Off-site practice educator – A person employed through the agency or university social work degree course to undertake the role of practice educator who is not located in the same work site as the student. The off-site practice educator normally partners a designated individual who is the on-site practice supervisor.

Practice supervisor – A person in the same work site as the student who is designated to manage the day-to-day activity of the student and who contributes to the student’s learning and assessment.

QAPL – Quality assurance benchmark statement and guidance on monitoring of social work practice placements.
Appendix 2

Practice Educator Professional Standards

Questions and Guidance

The Social Work Reform Board has decided that social work students should be assessed in practice by registered social workers who are practice educators who meet the Practice Educator Professional Standards. In this context, the abbreviation 'PE' is used to refer to practice educators.

This section will help you understand the expectations on practice educators, and how existing qualifications and training should be viewed in light of these standards.

These amendments will come into effect from September 2012. Existing practice educators who don’t meet the standards in this revised form (April 2012) will need to provide additional evidence by September 2015 to retain currency. This will apply to practice educators who will not have met the revised requirement to be observed supervising, assessing and teaching a social work student by September 2012.

1 What are the new Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS)?

The PEPS were formerly known as the Practice Educator Framework and were developed with the social work sector over a three year period. They were endorsed by the Social Work Development Partnership (Skills for Care, GSCC and CWDC) in September 2009, piloted by 15 projects involving 300 candidates in 2009/10 and endorsed and accepted by the Social Work Reform Board in November 2010. Stewardship of the PEPS now lies with The College of Social Work.

The PEPS outline two stages of progression for practice educators. Stage 1 practice educators will be able to supervise, teach and assess social work degree students up to but not including the final assessment prior to qualification. Stage 2 practice educators will be able to supervise, teach and assess social work degree students including the last placement.

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5 formerly Practice Educator Framework. This new framework is owned by The College of Social Work on behalf of the profession, and has been developed with the support of Skills for Care.
2 What are the timescales for introducing the Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS)?

The PEPS will come into effect in October 2013 and apply to all placements within the academic year 2013/14 and thereafter.

3 What are the transitional arrangements for PEs who are not registered social workers?

From October 2015, all PEs of social work students must be registered social workers. These are minimum expectations. Employers and HEIs are free to develop requirements at a higher level individually or collaboratively. Many HEIs are planning to use the PEPS from October 2012. There will be transitional arrangements for practice educators who are not registered social workers (RSWs) until October 2015 (see table below).

Transitional arrangements for practice educators

(See section 8 for placement supervisors)
Table 1: Requirements for on-site and off-site practice educators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
<th>2014/15</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Placement 1/2:</td>
<td>Normally practice educator and/or working towards stage 1.</td>
<td>First placement: Practice educator (ideally RSW*) stage 1 or 2 Non-RSWs may continue to practise</td>
<td>First placement: Practice educator (ideally RSW*) stage 1 or 2 Non-RSWs may continue to practise</td>
<td>First placement: Practice educator (RSW) stage 1 or 2 Non-RSWs no longer able to assess students but may able to be placement supervisors (see section 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final placement:</td>
<td>Normally practice educator (RSW) and/or working towards stage 2</td>
<td>Last placement: Practice educator (RSW) stage 2</td>
<td>Last placement: Practice educator (RSW) stage 2</td>
<td>Last placement: Practice educator (RSW) stage 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Off-site practice educators (working with practice supervisors):</td>
<td>Normally practice educator (RSW) and/or working towards stage 2</td>
<td>Any placement: Practice educator (RSW) stage 2</td>
<td>Any placement: Practice educator (RSW) stage 2</td>
<td>Any placement: Practice educator (RSW) stage 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current social work degree requirements&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt; (and working towards new standards)</td>
<td>New PEPS (&amp; transitional arrangements for non-RSWs at stage 1)</td>
<td>New PEPS (&amp; transitional arrangements for non-RSWs at stage 1)</td>
<td>Practice Educator Professional Standards</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

N.B. All PEs in training should be supported by a stage 2 practice educator/mentor. With these arrangements in place, a PE in training can take responsibility for a student social worker in a placement.

4 What would be the consequences of not meeting the requirements of the PEPS within the timescales?

A social work programme which does not meet the requirements of the PEPS by October 2013 will not be eligible for endorsement by The College. The College of Social Work endorsement scheme for qualifying courses will complement the regulatory function of accreditation carried out by the Health Professions Council.

<sup>6</sup> All social work degree courses on the GSCC approved list will pass to the HPC on 31<sup>st</sup> July and will remain approved until HPC visit to re-approve against their standards. Courses are encouraged to start preparing and implementing the reforms from this September (2012).
(HPC)\(^7\). The endorsement criteria are designed to ensure the application of the new curriculum framework including practice education; this will help to ensure that graduates are safe to practise.

5 Are the PEPS enforceable?
Endorsement is the only way in which the Social Work Reform Board recommendations for improving the quality of social work education will be monitored consistently and nationally. Within the endorsement criteria, social work programmes will be expected to demonstrate how they develop and monitor the learning and development of PEs in relation to these standards. The HPC\(^8\) approval process expects courses to reflect the requirements of their professional bodies. The easiest way of demonstrating this will be via The College scheme.

In addition, as endorsement offers an assurance of the implementation of reforms, employers and future students are likely to consider whether a course has been endorsed when considering where to study.

6 What is the status of social workers undertaking a development pathway to stage 1 or stage 2?
All PEs in training should be supported by a stage 2 practice educator/mentor. With these arrangements in place a PE in training can take responsibility for a student social worker in a placement. Practice educators in training or ‘working towards’ meeting the standards should normally expect to reach the required level within three years.

7 How do existing qualifications/courses held by PEs (who are registered social workers) convert into stage 1 and stage 2 recognition under the new arrangements?
Existing PEs will have undertaken a wide range of training and development programmes as illustrated below. These will include the GSCC Practice Teacher Award, the Higher Specialist Award in practice education, PQ 6 or Enabling Others modules or pathways in the existing or previous PQ framework. PEs may also have undertaken 2–5 day in-house or HEI based programmes which may or may not have been formally assessed and/or academically accredited.

- Existing qualifications that have equivalence (with conditions)

\(^7\) Health and Care Professions Council from August 2012
\(^8\)
The only existing qualifications accepted as having reached the standards for stage 2 are the Practice Teacher Award and the Higher Specialist Award in practice education within the GSCC PQ framework which also meet the PEPS (including observation of practice assessment requirements). PTA holders can be responsible for assessing and teaching students at all placement levels and may be able to act as mentors and assessors for PE candidates provided that partnerships are satisfied that the PTA holders:

- have continued to regularly practise as practice educators (normally have had direct responsibility for at least one student in the last two years) or
- have had relevant experience in practice education (e.g. coordinating or managing practice learning or teaching/assessing on a practice educator programme or acting as placement tutors) and
- have retained and developed their skills, knowledge and value base (see section 11 below).

**Enabling Others**

PEs who have successfully completed an Enabling Others module or pathway within the PQ framework will not automatically meet stage 1. Partnerships will be expected to make a decision as to whether they have evidenced all the learning outcomes specified for stage 1 and have met the assessment requirements, specifically in relation to direct observation of practice. ([link to learning outcomes here](#))

**Other PE training and qualifications (e.g. 2–5 day programmes)**

In order to assess whether existing PEs meet the PEPS, partnerships should consider whether the learning and assessment programme undertaken enabled the PE to evidence both the learning outcomes and requirements (specifically in relation to direct observation) within the PEPS. ([link to relevant learning outcomes here](#))

Partnerships may wish to develop a ‘top up’ pathway to enable existing PEs to meet learning outcomes or requirements not previously evidenced.

An alternative approach to mapping existing programmes against the PEPS is for partnerships to develop an assessment process to enable individual PEs (who may possibly have had minimal initial training but have continued to practise and develop as PEs) to present evidence that they are meeting the standards.

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9 Partnerships will include employers, HEIs and service users and carers.
All PEs at stage 1 and stage 2 must have been directly observed teaching, supervising and assessing a social work student as part of the assessment process (see PEPS for further details regarding eligible learners for observation and the number of direct observations required).

8 What are the requirements for on-site supervisors, especially in settings where there may not be a registered social worker on site?

On-site practice supervisors who are registered social workers may not have reached stage 1 proficiency to support and supervise the day-to-day work of a social work student. It is recommended that they should be working towards the stage 1 learning outcomes (excluding A5 and C11) and be supported by their line manager and a stage 2 practice educator. It is for the line manager to ensure that a practice supervisor is competent to provide day-to-day practice supervision of social work students. If registered social workers do meet the stage 1 learning outcomes and assessment requirements then they may become stage 1 practice educators.

Practice supervisors who are not registered social workers may still use the learning outcomes as a development framework but will not be eligible for stage 1 status.

For all placements, if the practice supervisor is not a registered social worker then the practice educator (on- or off-site) must be a registered social worker, at stage 2. This is required to ensure that all social work students are assessed by a registered social worker from October 2013.

Last placements also need to adhere to the social work profession’s placement criteria for statutory interventions, which states that where the practice educator is not on-site, the student will work alongside a social worker who must be in a post requiring registration. This will normally be the placement supervisor, who should be also be a registered social worker, but in exceptional circumstances, where this cannot be provided, the student must have the additional support of working alongside a social worker in a post requiring social work registration in order to undertake the required statutory tasks. Additionally, to support the

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10 See Resource Document ‘Placement criteria’ in the reform resource section of the TSCW website
development of professional identity, students should not be the sole social work representative in a setting.

Qualified social workers who are not registered with the HCPC can still act as practice supervisors for the first placement for the foreseeable future.
### Table 2: On-site practice supervision requirements

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<tr>
<td><strong>Placement 1/2:</strong></td>
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9 **What are the requirements for off-site PEs?**

Independent off-site PEs are expected to meet the capabilities as an experienced social worker and to have demonstrated proficiency at stage 2 from October 2013, so therefore must be registered social workers. This also applies to any off-site PEs who are employees of the organisation hosting the placement. Off-site practice educators take full responsibility for the assessment, teaching and supervision of a student when day-to-day supervision is provided by an on-site practice supervisor ([see PEPS glossary](#)).

It is the responsibility of the agency or HEI contracting any independent PEs to be satisfied that the independent PEs are competent and suitable to carry out their...
responsibilities, and have sufficient time to undertake their role effectively. This would include ensuring that appropriate CRB checks have been undertaken.

10 What is the role of The College in the training and recognition of PEs?
Demonstration that PEs meet the appropriate standards forms part of the endorsement criteria for The College. This would apply to initial training courses seeking endorsement, as well as (in the future) organisations seeking enhanced teaching status.

11 What are the requirements for PEs in maintaining currency and CPD?

- Will the 2 year currency that applies to existing PTA holders be applied to all PEs in future?
- The College recommends that to maintain currency, all PEs should take full responsibility for a social work student at least every two years; this is in line with HPC’s\(^{11}\) re-registration requirements. It is also recommended that PEs record their role as a practice educator within their ‘scope of practice’\(^ {12}\) as defined by the HPC. Continuing professional development (CPD) records need to reflect the registrants ‘scope of practice’. Therefore practice educators should ensure that CPD relevant to their role as a PE is included specifically in CPD documentation and can be presented as evidence for re-registration (if requested by the regulator).

- Where PEs take full responsibility for one student and one other professional social work learner (e.g. NQSWs or trainee AMHPs) assessed against the PCF during a three year period, they should also be considered to have maintained their currency.

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\(^{11}\) HPC becomes HCPC (Health and Care Professions Council) from 1\(^{st}\) August 2012

\(^{12}\) Your ‘scope of practice’ is the area (or areas) of your profession in which you have the knowledge, skills and experience to practise lawfully, safely and effectively, in a way that meets our standards and does not present any risk to the public or to yourself. Health Professions Council (2011), Continuing professional development and your registration [http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10001314CPD_and_your_registration.pdf](http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10001314CPD_and_your_registration.pdf)
• If your experience as a PE is not up to date, what do you need to do to become a PE again?
Partnerships of employers and HEIs need to be satisfied that PEs are capable of meeting the standards. One way of ensuring this would be for the partnership to recommend a refresher course and/or provide support and mentoring whilst the PEs take responsibility for the first social work student placement when they return to the practice educator role. The partnership may require the mentor (a stage 2 PE) to produce a report stating whether the PE continues to meet the standards.

• Is the only way to remain current to take full responsibility for a social work student?
PES should normally take students at least every two years. PEs who take an active, ongoing role in practice education will also maintain their currency. This would generally be through coordinating or managing practice learning or teaching/assessing/mentoring on a practice educator programme or acting as a placement tutor. The final decision rests with partnerships of HEIs and employers taking into account The College’s recommendation.

12 Assessment questions and issues

• Who will ensure that all PEs are at the same level if there are a range of assessment models including those for non accredited pathways?
Partnerships will wish to develop mechanisms which ensure that all their PEs are meeting the standards. This will form part of The College’s endorsement criteria. The final assessment decision will be made jointly by the HEI and employer representatives ensuring that:
  1. the employer representative is a stage 2 PE working towards or meeting the professional educator capabilities within the Professional Capabilities Framework
  2. the HEI representative has delegated responsibility for practice learning provision
  3. normally, it would not be deemed appropriate for the student’s tutor to be involved in the final assessment decision

13 It is up to partnerships to agree on how they would expect practice educators to demonstrate their level of capability; however this could be evidenced via a CPD portfolio or organisational performance management and appraisal systems.
• **What is the minimum involvement an HEI must have with an in-house route, if any?**

  It is for HEIs and employers to develop suitable ways of enabling candidates to meet the learning outcomes, ranging from self-managed portfolio presentations to a variety of in-house, distance and open learning or HEI-based training pathways.

13. **What is the role of local partnerships in the training and recognition of PEs?**

   This is an extract from practice learning guidance which is currently being developed, to illustrate how outcomes for partnerships could be presented, to give more clarity about the activities expected from partnerships.

   **Can you show that:**

   1. you have audited the qualifications of existing practice educators and have a plan to ensure a sufficient supply of stage 1 and stage 2 PEs by 2015, taking into account transitional arrangements for non-RSWs?

   **Have you:**

   2. identified gaps in existing PEs with respect to the PEPS and planned an appropriate range of ‘top-up’ learning opportunities or programmes?

   3. planned and commissioned stage 1 and/or stage 2 programmes for new PEs?

   4. set up assessment processes for determining whether PEs can meet or can continue to meet PEPS?

   5. developed a range of CPD opportunities for existing PEs?

   6. considered models of delivering practice placements that maximise the use of PEs able to meet PEPS, e.g. use of off-site stage 2 PEs or student unit arrangements?

   7. communicated how the PEPS will be met – to employers and HEIs, including senior managers, and to all practitioners wanting to contribute to the training of students, teams, team/service managers, existing PEs, those interested in becoming PEs?