



Practice Educators (Mentors)

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers (FAQs)

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| Q1 | Who can be a practice educator? |
| A | Every Paramedic who has had a minimum of 12 months experience as a frontline paramedic. |
| Q2 | I am an NQP, can I still mentor? |
| A | Yes as long as you have fulfilled the above. At 9 months into the NQP process you will be able to apply for a mentoring course, and at 12 months you will be able to mentor a pre-registration undergraduate. You will NOT be able to be a preceptor to other NQP's during your 2 year consolidation period. |
| Q3 | What qualifications do I need? |
| A | A level 6 mentoring qualification is what is required for mentoring student paramedics. This is a course that will be funded by the trust and must be completed within your own time. Courses are advertised on the SWAST CPD website , and applications made through them. You may be asked to mentor without this qualification and this is fine, however the expectation is that this will be attained. |
| Q4 | What is practice education? |
| A | Practice education is seen as bridging the gap between the formal training that is received within the educational institutions, and that of independent clinical practice. We need education within the workplace to be able to provide a safe and engaging environment for our students to be able to practice their clinical skills and learn the role within the clinical and "real" setting. Practice educators should be able to offer them support and guidance as well as providing them with their own knowledge and experiences. |
| Q5 | Who will I be asked to mentor? |
| A | Student Paramedics, both those on external courses and our own internal students. There may be occasions where you will be asked to "look after" nurses, first responders, doctors and GP's who have applied through the Observer Policy to gain an understanding of our roles. |



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| Q6 | Can I mentor more than 1 student? |
| A | Yes. There are times when you may be asked to mentor more than one student. This may be one of our internal students (ECA's) on the DLP and an external student on a university taught course. Your ECA colleague does not need to be mentored for 100% of their shifts. The course requires the ECA on the conversion course to be mentored 25% of their time. A year 1 direct entry student needs to reach the competency standard of an ECA by the end of year one. An ECA with more than 1 years' experience can support and guide a student and they can learn from each other. Sharing a learning experience can be reached by clearly stating the expectations at the start of a shift, the ECA can be more involved in patient care on scene as it is likely they will be driving the patient to hospital, the direct entry student can then continue their learning being with you in the back during the transfer to hospital |
| Q7 | I have a Portsmouth student and would like an additional student. Can the Portsmouth students shift be allocated to prevent a clash of shifts and allow me to give them the same levels of support without conflict? |
| A | Yes. With good planning by the placement team there should be no conflicts of interest. This will be helped by all paramedics being open to supporting students which will allow the placement team more flexibility and options for practice educator selection. Portsmouth students should also be based as the third person on the vehicle for their placement blocks and allocation will occur through ROC. |
| Q8 | How do I express my interest in becoming a practice educator? |
| A | <p>You may find that your practice placement coordinators (PPC's) will be in contact with you in relation to a student that they would like to place with you. You may also like to contact them directly for the area in which you work</p> <p>North – Nicola Shephard or Sarah Hodiernie</p> <p>East – James Buckley</p> <p>West – Marie Knowles</p> <p>You can find their contact details here:</p> <p>Meet the Practice Placement Coordination team</p> |



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| Q9 | Can I have the same student as last year; I have a good rapport with them? |
| A | Practice educator rotation is the preferred option as this allows students to experience different working practices and can give them varied opportunity to work in rural and urban areas. Close practice educator rapport can lead to a conflict of interest should a student not achieve the expected standards. When practice educator availability is low the only options maybe to keep the student with you, however this would not be the preferred approach for the student's development. In addition rotation allows, where possible, you to have a break from supporting a student which is important for your exposure to clinical skills. |
| Q10 | What support is available if I feel my student is not meeting the expected standards or if I don't get along with them? |
| A | The student's academic tutor is available to you in the first instance they will be able to support and guide you; they may meet you and/or spend a shift alongside you and your student. If you feel you are not making progress it is essential you contact your SWAST local practice placement coordinator who can ensure they pick up the university communications and ensure your operations officer is aware. Between the university and SWAST practice placement coordinator full support will be given to you. You are encouraged to attend a mentorship or clinical supervision course and attend a mentor update day where strategies to enable to support students are fully explored. |
| Q11 | I haven't completed a mentoring course, could I still be allocated a student? |
| A | Yes. All qualified Paramedics are encouraged and expected to support the future workforce and potential colleagues. You have a privileged opportunity to shape how a paramedic student develops. The band 6 pay deal was negotiated to ensure the NHS has a sustainable growing workforce, in order to achieve this qualified team members should embrace this opportunity. It is therefore encouraged all qualified Paramedics should attend or complete through distance learning, a mentor course either credited or unaccredited. You can find courses on www.swastcpd.co.uk |
| Q12 | I have applied for another position in the trust and am concerned if successful I will not be able to continue with my student and let them down |
| A | Your development and opportunity is essential for you and your chosen career. Please ensure your local SWAST PPC is made aware so arrangements can be made to ensure your student is not without an allocated practice educator. |



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| Q13 | I no longer want to be a practice educator..... |
| A | There may be times when supporting a student is not appropriate. If you feel that you wish to have 'time out' then you are encouraged to discuss your reasons with your Operations Officers and PPC. |
| Q14 | What Learning Outcomes are expected per Block / year and I do not understand the portfolio/PAD who can help me? |
| A | If you are unsure what competencies your student needs to achieve each block then you are encouraged to contact your students' academic tutor. In addition attending a practice educator update day will have representation from your local University where you can have an opportunity to raise any questions you have. |
| Q15 | I do not have/get any down time to complete the students Portfolio / PAD? |
| A | The PAD is designed to be completed easily each time a student completes a skill or demonstrates an expected level of knowledge. Your student must bring their PAD in each shift (if a paper copy) or allow you access to their PAD through their remote application. A student who is not proactively ensuring their portfolio is completed should be referred early to their academic tutor. You would not be expected to sign off competencies achieved over a long period of time which leads to being a very time consuming task and not always allowing you to recall the events which led to the achievements. If you have a student who requires additional action plans or more support than can be given on shift then contact your Operations Officer and PPC to enable you to have facilitated time to complete the additional task, this would not be seen as common place providing the student has allowed you to sign off as each competency is achieved and they are not requiring additional support to achieve. The practice placement coordinator will ensure the University is aware which may lead to a meeting being arranged to ensure you and the students have the support you need. |