Guidance for Learning Disability Students undertaking Clinical Skills in Practice Placements.

This guidance is aimed at students, supervisors and mentors of Learning Disability nursing students and teaching staff.

It aims to clarify the position of learning disability nursing students in undertaking clinical skills on placement. The term clinical skills may be applied broadly i.e. not only those physical nursing / care tasks but those activities which normally require the input of a professional such as assessment, treatment and therapeutic interventions.

This guidance must be read in conjunction with Restricted Clinical Nursing Skills for Pre-registration Learning Disability Nursing Students (appendix one).

Students

Students are expected to discuss their previous relevant experience with their mentor at the earliest convenience on commencing a new placement, and make time to complete their initial planning paperwork to set out appropriate learning goals.

It is the responsibility of Learning Disability Nursing Students to check and practice according to:

(a) the Policies/Guidelines covering their clinical practice placement

(b) the Policies/Guidelines of Oxford Brookes University, School of Health & Social Care.

(c) The NMC Guide for Students of Nursing and Midwifery

(d) Restricted Clinical Nursing Skills for Pre-registration Learning Disability Nursing Students (appendix one)

In all instances, students must seek consent from patients prior to caring for them and prior to performing any nursing procedure.

The following excerpts from the Guidance on professional conduct for nursing and midwifery students (NMC 2009:12) provide further instruction for students who are planning to undertake a clinical skill in practice:

*Recognise and work within your limits of competence
You should:
- Recognise and stay within the limits of your competence
- Work only under the appropriate supervision and support of a qualified professional and ask for help from your mentor or tutor when you need it
- Work with your mentor and tutor to monitor the quality of your work and maintain the safety of people for whom you provide care
• Seek help from an appropriately qualified healthcare professional, as soon as possible, if your performance or judgement is affected by your health

Ensure your skills and knowledge are up to date
You should:
• Take responsibility for your own learning
• Follow the policy on attendance as set out by your university and clinical placement provider

Supervisors and mentors

The clinical skills which are restricted for Learning Disability Nursing Students or have specific conditions relating to their undertaking are tabled in appendix one. It is important for mentors and supervisors to follow the special notes beside each of the listed restricted skills.

For all other skills not mentioned on the Restricted Clinical Nursing Skills for Pre-registration Learning Disability Nursing Students (appendix one) mentors should follow the guidance below:

Supervisors and mentors should use the initial planning meeting plus other planned and informal contact sessions with the student to identify their level of confidence and competence within the placement area. As the opportunity to practice a clinical skill arises (or is organised) for the student, the mentor must check their readiness to undertake it. Some anxiety and apprehension should be expected from a student carrying out a new skill; this does not mean that they should not attempt to practice it.

However, if the student is not ready or has not had the appropriate theoretical or practical preparation on placement or within their programme this should be acknowledged and they should not practice the skill until they are better prepared. It is acceptable to teach the student a clinical skill for the first time within the placement if the mentor is confident and competent to teach and assess that skill. In which case, the mentor must explain what preparation the student must do before carrying out the skill i.e. reading a policy, reading some clinical guidelines, observing others.

The following excerpts from the Standards to Support Learning and Assessment in Practice (NMC 2008:31) provide further instruction for mentors:

3.2.4 Supporting learning in practice
The NMC requires mentors to support learning in practice for several reasons (section 2.1):
• Provide support and guidance to the student when learning new skills or applying new knowledge.
• Act as a resource to the student to facilitate learning and professional growth.
• Directly manage the student’s learning in practice to ensure public protection.
• Directly observe the student’s practice, or use indirect observation where appropriate, in order to ensure that NMC defined outcomes and competencies are met.
Skills teaching and Simulation of Practice Learning within the Learning Disability Nursing Programme.

Teaching staff will be instrumental in planning and facilitating Simulation of Practice Learning sessions for Learning Disability Nursing students. Whether the facilitator is one of the Learning Disability Nursing programme team or someone from another programme or an external facilitator, the “Supporting direct care through simulated practice learning in the pre-registration nursing programme” (NMC, 2007:4) guidance must be adhered to:

**Principle 2**
- Facilitators of simulated practice learning must be clinically credible in relation to field of practice
- Simulated practice learning environments must be supportive, safe and appropriate to the activity being undertaken;

**Principle 4**
- Students should have sufficient time to fully engage with each simulated activity and rehearse the skills taught
- Learning opportunities should build on previous student experience
- Students should take increasing responsibility for their own learning as they progress and develop

Mentors should expect to assess evidence of the student’s competence from a range of sources. This may include testimonies received from another registrant or supervisor or evidence of completing a Simulation of Practice Learning activity.

Mentors should consider how evidence from various sources might contribute to making a judgement on performance and competence. The NMC recognises that the total assessment strategy would include assessment through various means i.e. direct care, simulation, OSCEs and other strategies.

NMC (2008:32)

Further information and detail about the teaching of skills and Simulation of Practice Learning can be obtained from the Skills Lead for Learning Disability Nursing (currently Natalie Smith) or Clair Merriman (cmerriman@brookes.ac.uk) and on the PLU website: http://shsc.brookes.ac.uk/plu/simulation-and-practice-learning

Ideas, questions or concerns about Learning Disability Students undertaking Clinical Skills in Practice Placements.

If you have an idea, a question or a concern about Learning Disability Students undertaking clinical skills in practice placements, please contact the Link Lecturer in the first instance. If you are unsure who this is, contact pluadmin@brookes.ac.uk to find out. You may also contact the Skills Lead for Learning Disability Nursing (currently Natalie Smith) at Natalie.smith@brookes.ac.uk.
**Appendix 1: Restricted Clinical Nursing Skills for Pre-registration Learning Disability Nursing Students**

This document must be used in conjunction with Guidance for Learning Disability Students undertaking Clinical Skills in Practice Placements.

*This list does not preclude students from performing other skills not included here.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILL</th>
<th>SPECIAL NOTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check, calculate dosage and administer (non-controlled) drugs through the following routes: inhalation, PO, buccal, PR, PV, topical, eyes, ears, enteral feeding tubes, IM Injections and SC Injections</td>
<td>Yes Students must be under direct supervision of a registrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administer vaccinations/immunisations</td>
<td>Yes Only to adults (over 16 years) and under direct supervision of a registrant. <strong>Students must not participate in the administration or second checking of patient group directives (PGD’s).</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check, administer or participate as a second checker in the administration of a Patient Group Directive</td>
<td>No Students can only observe a registrant. They may be able to articulate related theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculate the rate of IV maintenance fluid and prime giving sets/lines</td>
<td>Yes Students must be under direct supervision of a registrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect IV maintenance fluid or IV drugs to a patient and flush IV access lines including venflons</td>
<td>No Students can observe a registrant. They may be able to articulate any related theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check or calculate dosage of IV drugs, including drugs added to IV bags and burettes</td>
<td>Yes Students can act as a second checker with the registrant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check, calculate dosage, set up PCA/other IV infusion pumps (including priming/ changing giving sets/lines, and setting rates on pumps etc)</td>
<td>No Students can observe a registrant. They may be able to articulate any related theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check and calculate Blood Transfusions and Blood Products</td>
<td>Yes Students can act as a second checker with a registrant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect Blood Transfusions and Blood Products</td>
<td>No Students can observe a registrant. They may be able to articulate any related theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defibrillate-manual</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defibrillate – AED</td>
<td>Yes Under supervision and ONLY where local policy explicitly permits students to operate an AED.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood glucose monitoring</td>
<td>No Students can only observe a registrant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insert male / female urinary catheters</td>
<td>No This role requires additional training and is not addressed during pre-registration education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catheter care</td>
<td>Yes Under supervision according to local policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean a percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) site post surgery</td>
<td>No Students can only observe this skill.</td>
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N Smith July 2010
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Task Description</th>
<th>Under supervision?</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Clean a percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) site after ten days post operative.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Under supervision according to local policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Connect and run feed / fluids via percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) bolus or via pump</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Under supervision according to local policy NB see point 1 for medication administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Pass a nasogastric (NG) tube</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Students must be under <strong>direct supervision</strong> of a registrant due to the risks of aspiration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Connect and run feed / fluids via nasogastric (NG) tube - bolus or via pump</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Students must be under <strong>direct supervision</strong> of a registrant due to the risks of aspiration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FINAL YEAR ONLY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Check, calculate dosage and administer controlled drugs through the following routes: PO, PR, buccal, enteral feeding tubes, IM Injections and SC Injection</td>
<td>In accordance with local placement policy and under <strong>direct supervision</strong> of a registrant although “As students progress through their training their supervision may become increasingly indirect to reflect their competence level” NMC 2008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Use airway adjuncts-insert naso/oropharyngeal airways</td>
<td>No</td>
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</table>

**Direct Supervision** requires that the Registered Nurse responsible for the student must remain in constant attendance with the student for the entire duration of the procedure/skill/competency.

**Key to Abbreviations:**
- **IM** = Intramuscula
- **IV** = Intravenous
- **SC** = Subcutaneous
- **PO** = Per Orally
- **PR** = Per Rectum
- **PV** = Per Vagina
- **AED** = Automated External Defibrillator
- **PCA** = Patient Controlled Analgesia
- **PGD** = Patient Group Directive/Direction
References:


NMC (2008) Standards to Support Learning and Assessment in Practice. Available at:

NMC (2009) Guidance on professional conduct for nursing and midwifery. Available at: