

Practice Educator Professional Standards for social work¹

These Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS) set out requirements for practice educators at two stages, commensurate with the different levels of complexity and responsibility in teaching, assessing and supervising social work degree students.²

These standards came into effect in October 2013, and are minimum requirements for all placements from the academic year 2013/14. **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.

A glossary of terms used is provided at the end of this document.

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 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 Institutions (HEIs) and employers to develop suitable ways of enabling candidates to meet the PEPS learning outcomes. These may include self-managed portfolio development and presentation and/or a variety of in-house, distance and open learning or HEI-based training activities.

¹ 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 The PEPS relate specifically to supporting and assessing students on qualifying programmes. Practice Development Educator Standards have also been developed, offering a parallel set of outcomes for people supporting learning from ASYE onwards.

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 to meet local workforce planning needs.

Assessment, accreditation and maintaining currency

Evidence that demonstrates that the learning outcomes have been met may be generated within the workplace without the need for HEI accreditation and approval arrangements. Partnerships and networks may plan together formal Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) arrangements and credit ratings where these are considered 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 maintain currency 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. They 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 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 framework³ who are qualified and registered social workers are accepted as having reached the standards for stage 2 of the framework. PTA holders can continue to be responsible for assessing and teaching students at all placement levels. They may be able to act as mentors and assessors for PE candidates if employers and HEIs are 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.

³ who have also met the practice educator standards observation of practice assessment requirements in the attached table

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 PEPS stage 2, and must therefore 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 contracting agency or HEI to ensure that they are confident that the independent practice educators are capable 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 placement⁴. 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 a 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 PCF

The PEPS are cross-referenced within the PCF at social worker and experienced social worker levels.

⁴ 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 (PEPS)

Requirement	Stage 1	Stage 2 and combined stage 1 and 2 pathways
Professional qualification	Registered social worker.	Registered social worker.
Experience	Two years' relevant work experience before taking full responsibility for assessing a social work placement, qualified for two years.	Three years' relevant work experience, qualified for two years by the end of the programme.
Knowledge, skills and values – linked to learning outcomes	Pathways and programmes must support practice educator candidates to meet stage 1 outcomes in PCF domains A, B and C and apply values to practice.	Pathways and programmes must support practice educator candidates to meet all learning outcomes in domains A–D and apply values to practice.
Support	Guided support from an appropriate mentor (Practice Educator stage 2) on individual or group basis.	
Assessment process	Applicants for the role must evidence achievements against learning outcomes in domains A–D, according to arrangements made by local or regional employer networks.	
1. Evidence	Applicants for the role must evidence achievements against learning outcomes in PCF domains A–C, according to arrangements made by local or regional employer networks.	Applicants for the role must evidence achievements against learning outcomes in domains A–D, according to arrangements made by local or regional employer networks.
2. Observation of practice	One direct observation of a practice educator candidate teaching, supervising and assessing a social work student against the PCF.	Two direct observations of a practice educator candidate teaching, supervising and assessing against the PCF. Evidence of work-based professional capability from taking full responsibility for one social work student and one other ⁵ being assessed against the PCF.
3. Assessors	All assessors of practice educator candidates, including those observing a candidate's practice, must be appropriately qualified at stage 2 or equivalent. ⁶	

⁵ 'One other' can refer to any person who is being assessed by the person concerned against the PCF. It could be a second student, or it could be a newly qualified social worker on an ASYE programme, or a trainee AMHP. Please also refer to page 20 of PEPS on the TCSW and Skills for Care websites

Requirement	Stage 1	Stage 2 and combined stage 1 and 2 pathways
4. Assessment standards	Partnerships will wish to develop mechanisms which ensure that all their practice educators 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. ⁷	
Links with quality assurance	All candidates should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the completion or review of a QAPL⁸ (or equivalent) audit • Complete a QAPL (or equivalent) practice educator feedback form for each student they assess. 	
Programme structure	There should normally be some core input around PCF domains A and B before the practice placement starts.	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.

⁶ See Appendix 2 (Questions and Guidance) for more info

⁷ See Appendix 2 (Questions and Guidance): section 12 for more info.

⁸ Quality assurance benchmark statement and guidance on monitoring of social work practice placements (QAPL)

Appendix 1: Guidance statements

Domain A

Organise opportunities for the demonstration of assessed capability 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 practice capability.
2. Devise an induction programme that takes into account learners' needs and their previous experience.
3. Negotiate with all participants in the workplace, including service users and carers, the appropriate learning opportunities and the necessary resources to enable the demonstration of practice capability.
4. Work openly and co-operatively with learners, their line managers, workplace colleagues, other professionals, and service users and carers, in the planning of key activities at all stages of learning and assessment.
5. Co-ordinate 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.⁹
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.

⁹ Or similar.

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 practice capability, 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 that 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 judgements 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 learners 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 the holistic assessment of learners' performance against the PCF at the relevant level.
3. Ensure that holistic¹⁰ assessment decisions are the outcomes of informed, evidence-based judgements 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 that provide clear evidence for decisions.
11. Ensure that disagreements about assessment judgements 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 that 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.

¹⁰ See Resource Paper on TCSW website under 'Reform resources' – 'Understanding what is meant by holistic assessment.'

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.

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 orientationin 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 2

Practice Educator Professional Standards¹¹

Questions and guidance

The Social Work Reform Board (SWRB) 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 PEs, and how existing qualifications and training should be viewed in light of these standards.

These amendments came into effect from September 2012. Existing PEs who do not 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 PEs 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 Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS)?

The PEPS, formerly known as the Practice Educator Framework, 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 SWRB in November 2010. Stewardship of the PEPS now lies with The College of Social Work (TCSW).

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 **up to and including the last placement**.

2. What are the timescales for introducing the PEPS?

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

¹¹ 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.

3. What are the transitional arrangements for PEs who are not registered social workers (RSWs)?

From October 2015, all PEs of social work students must be registered social workers (RSWs). These are minimum expectations. Employers and HEIs are free to develop requirements at a higher level individually or collaboratively. There will be transitional arrangements for PEs who are not RSWs until October 2015 (see Table1).

Transitional arrangements for PEs

(See section 8 for placement supervisors)

Table 1: Requirements for on-site and off-site PEs

2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<p>First placement: Practice educator, ideally Registered Social Worker (RSW) stage 1 or 2 Non-RSWs may continue to practise</p>	<p>First placement: Practice educator, ideally Registered Social Worker (RSW stage 1 or 2 Non-RSWs may continue to practise</p>	<p>First placement: Practice educator (RSW) stage 1 or 2 Non-RSWs no longer able to assess students but may be able to be placement supervisors (see section 8)</p>
<p>Last placement: Practice educator (RSW) stage 2</p>	<p>Last placement: Practice educator (RSW) stage 2</p>	<p>Last placement: Practice educator (RSW) stage 2</p>
<p>Any placement: Practice educator (RSW) stage 2</p>	<p>Any placement: Practice educator (RSW) stage 2</p>	<p>Any placement: Practice educator (RSW) stage 2</p>

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 – including a final year student.

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 as described will not be eligible for endorsement by TCSW. TCSW's endorsement scheme for qualifying courses will complement the regulatory function of approval carried out by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). TCSW's 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?

The SWRB recommendations for improving the quality of social work education will be monitored consistently and nationally through endorsement of social work qualifying courses by TCSW. Within the endorsement criteria, programmes will be expected to demonstrate how they develop and monitor the learning and development of PEs in relation to the PEPS. The HCPC approval process expects courses to reflect the requirements of their professional bodies. The easiest way of demonstrating this will be via the TCSW scheme.

Programmes are not required to achieve endorsement, but it will be viewed as a mark of quality. In addition, as endorsement offers an assurance of the implementation of the reforms, future students are likely to consider whether a course has been endorsed when considering where to study. Similarly, employers will be more secure in making judgements on collaborative activity with an education provider and employment of future social workers if they can see that the programme is endorsed.

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, including final placement students. 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 RSWs) 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 (PTA), 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)

The only existing qualifications accepted as having reached the standards for stage 2 are the PTA and the Higher Specialist Award in practice education within the GSCC PQ framework. 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** partnerships¹² 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**

¹² Partnerships will include employers, HEIs and service users and carers.

- Have had relevant experience in practice education (e.g. co-ordinating 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.¹³
- **Enabling Others**

PEs who have successfully completed an Enabling Others module or pathway within the PQ framework will not automatically meet stage 1 outcomes. 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.

- **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.

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.

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 RSW on site?

On-site practice supervisors who are RSWs 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 PE. It is for the line manager to ensure that a practice supervisor has the professional capability to provide day-to-day practice supervision of social work students. If RSWs do meet the stage 1 learning outcomes and assessment requirements then they may become stage 1 PEs.

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

¹³ See section 11 below.

For all placements, if the practice supervisor is not a RSW then the PE (on- or off-site) must be a RSW, at stage 2. This is required to ensure that all social work students are assessed by a RSW from October 2013.¹⁴

Last placements also need to adhere to the social work profession's placement criteria for statutory interventions which state that where the PE 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 also be a RSW, 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 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.

9. What are the requirements for off-site PEs?

From October 2013, independent off-site PEs are expected to meet the capabilities as an experienced social worker and to have demonstrated proficiency at stage 2, so therefore must be RSWs. This also applies to any off-site PEs who are employees of the organisation hosting the placement. Off-site PEs 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.¹⁵

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 safeguarding checks have been undertaken.

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

- **Will the two-year currency that applies to existing PTA holders be applied to all PEs in future?**

TCSW 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 HCPC's re-registration requirements. It is also recommended that PEs record their role as a practice educator within their 'scope of practice' as defined by the HCPC. 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).

¹⁴ All students need a RSW contributing to their assessment – until 2015 they could have a PE who is not a RSW for the first placement.

¹⁶ See PEPS glossary.

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.

- **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 co-ordinating 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 TCSW's recommendation.

11. Assessment questions and issues

- **Who will ensure that all PEs are at the same level given that there is 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 TCSW's endorsement criteria. The final assessment decision will be made jointly by the HEI and employer representatives ensuring that:

- The employer representative is a stage 2 PE working towards or meeting the professional educator capabilities¹⁶ within the PCF.
- The HEI representative has delegated responsibility for practice learning provision.

- **What is the minimum involvement an HEI must have with an in-house training route?**

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

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

¹⁶ It is up to partnerships to agree on how they would expect PEs to demonstrate their level of capability; however this could be evidenced via a CPD portfolio or organisational performance management and appraisal systems.

Partnerships will want to ensure that they have audited the qualifications of existing PEs and have a plan to ensure a sufficient supply of stage 1 and stage 2 PEs by 2015. They may also want to be sure that they have:

- Identified gaps in existing PEs with respect to the PEPS and planned an appropriate range of 'top-up' learning opportunities or programmes.
- Planned and commissioned stage 1 and/or stage 2 programmes for new PEs.
- Set up assessment processes for determining whether PEs can meet or can continue to meet PEPS.
- Developed a range of CPD opportunities for existing PEs.
- 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.
- 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.

13. Does a Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) count as an acceptable award for the PEPS stage 2?

The PGCE is not sufficient to demonstrate equivalence on its own. It would need to be mapped against the learning outcomes for stage 2 to check for equivalence and the PEPS assessment requirements would also need to be met, i.e. they would need to be assessed and observed taking full responsibility for two learners being assessed against the PCF, one would have to be a student social worker. Please refer to the section in the guidance on existing qualifications that do have equivalence.

14. Can PEPS stage 2 award holders maintain currency by taking qualified students who are undertaking their ASYE and/or AMHP training?

No. At present PEPS stage 2 award holders can only maintain their currency by taking pre-qualification social work students.

15. What does a mentor do and should they be involved directly in the assessment of the final year social work student?

No, the mentor does not need to be directly involved in the assessment. They can be the person responsible for assessing the PE in training/assessing the direct observations. Partnerships need to decide the specific role and responsibilities of mentors for their programme.

16. Can I continue to be a PE if I am not a social worker?

A non-RSW can continue to act as an on-site practice supervisor for **first placements**, indefinitely.

17. Do PEP courses have to be endorsed?

There is no requirement for a PEPS course to be endorsed, although they are encouraged to apply for endorsement under the TCSW CPD endorsement scheme.

18. Is it correct that all final year student placements must be in a setting where there is a qualified social worker working alongside the student?

Yes, for final year placements and even in exceptional circumstances where the supervisor is not a RSW, they need to be working alongside a social worker in order to undertake statutory tasks.

Glossary

HEI – Higher Education Institution

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 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 PCF.

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.