Information Sheet For Medical Mentors Considering Supervising a Students or Students on this Module

Summary of Independent & Supplementary Nurse Prescribing

This module provides the approved programme of preparation for eligible registered nurses, midwives and health visitors to prescribe safely and competently as both independent & supplementary nurse prescribers.

A nurse prescriber can independently prescribe any medicine including controlled drugs permitted during the extended nurse prescribing scheme. An independent nurse prescriber can prescribe for any condition (DOH 2005a)

Supplementary prescribing is defined as “a voluntary partnership between an independent prescriber (a doctor or dentist) and a supplementary prescriber, to implement an agreed patient-specific Clinical Management Plan with the patient’s agreement” (DOH 2005b paragraph 8). Currently supplementary prescribers can only be registered nurses, midwives, health visitors, pharmacists, chiropodists/podiatrists, physiotherapists and radiographers. However this module currently only prepares nurses, midwives and health visitors to become supplementary prescribers.

There are no legal restrictions on the clinical conditions that may be treated under supplementary prescribing, although the Department of Health would normally expect supplementary prescribing to be used for the management of chronic medical conditions and health needs.

There is no specific formulary for supplementary prescribing. Provided medicines are prescribable by a doctor or a dentist at NHS expense, and that they are referred to in the patient’s Clinical Management Plan, supplementary prescribers are able to prescribe:

- All General Sales List (GSL) medicines and all Pharmacy (P) medicines
- Appliances and devices prescribable by General Practitioners
- All Prescription Only Medicines (POMs) including controlled drugs.
- Medicines for use outside their UK licensed indications (i.e. ‘off label’ use), antimicrobials, ‘black triangle’ drugs and drugs marked ‘less suitable for prescribing’ in the BNF.
- Unlicensed drugs.

Summary of the module

The module is 26 weeks long and has to include 10 taught days in the University, 2 days participating in blended learning using Blackboard, 2 days participating in educationally led visits and 12 days unsupervised directed learning. In addition students must spend 90 hours or 12 days of supervised practice with a medical mentor. On successful completion of the module the student is awarded 30 masters’ level credits. In addition to fulfil the requirements of Nursing and Midwifery Council Circular 26/2007 the students should have, where possible, an experienced nurse/midwife prescriber to support the application of learning to the student’s specific area of nursing/midwifery practice. This role is in addition to the medical mentor required by law.

Establishing the scope of prescribing for the student

Prior to the commencement of the course it is important to establish with the student the likely medical conditions for which they will prescribe, the medications involved and whether independent or supplementary formulary prescribing is indicated. This should also be negotiated and agreed with the student’s manager. However it is important to note that assessment of practice by the medical mentor is only undertaken for the independent nurse-prescribing component of the module. Assessment of practice is not deemed necessary by the Government for the supplementary prescribing component owing to the supervisory nature of supplementary prescribing as expressed via the Clinical Management Plan.

The learning contract

The students have been advised to agree a learning contract with their medical mentor. A learning contract format has been provided for the student in their practice e-portfolio for this module. The students learning needs will mostly relate to the module learning outcomes and practice competencies, but they may have other learning needs which they wish to fulfil whilst undertaking this module. It is recommended that this learning contract is agreed between the medical mentor and student as soon as possible after the module commences.
Examples of how students could receive supervision from the medical mentor

The Department of Health (2004) advice on how students could receive supervision from their medical mentor is as follows:

1. Provide dedicated time and opportunities for the student to observe how the medical mentor conducts a “consultation/interview” with patients and/or their carers, and the development of a subsequent management plan.
2. Provide opportunities to allow in-depth discussion and analysis of clinical management using a random case analysis approach, when patient care and prescribing can be examined further.
3. Facilitate student learning by encouraging critical thinking and reflection with the use of the student’s eportfolio.
4. Allow opportunities for the student to carry out consultations and suggest clinical management and prescribing options, which are then discussed with their mentor.

Furthermore the Department of Health (2004) also adds how they envisage supervision “will work in practice” as follows:

1. Supervised learning in practice will comprise a total of 12 days during a 26-week module. The medical mentor should be willing and able to devote a sufficient part of their time during this period of supervision to provide appropriate guidance to the student.
2. Learning in practice will be related to the medical conditions and circumstances in which the student is likely to prescribe on an independent or supplementary prescribing basis.
3. The supervising medical mentor may be a doctor with whom the student normally works. However arrangements can be agreed where another suitable medical mentor acts as supervisor provided the above criteria are met.

Assessment of Practice

The medical practitioner is responsible for assessing part 3 of the module assessment schedule. This includes verifying:

1. that the student has satisfactorily completed the period of supervised practice experience of 12 days over the 26 week duration of the module.
2. that the student has achieved all the competency statements on an achieved/not achieved basis. For the student to achieve each competency statement they must be able to demonstrate the relationship of theory to practice throughout. The student also needs to successfully complete learning outcome 8 where applicable.

The ePortfolio

The student will be provided with an eportfolio at the commencement of the module and an explanation of its use. The completion of this eportfolio provides the evidence for part 3 of the 4 part assessment of the module. For data governance issues, you will need to provide an email address supplied by your employer on the medical mentor form the student will ask you to complete.

Medical Practitioner tasks as module proceeds:

1. The medical practitioner needs to verify achievement of the competency statements.
2. Achievement of competence can be demonstrated by the student at any time throughout the module but must be demonstrated by week 26 of the module.
3. The medical practitioner also needs to verify achievement of learning outcome 8 where applicable.
4. The medical practitioner needs to verify the eportfolio by week 26 of the module.

Summary of the responsibilities of the medical mentor

In summary the medical mentor will have the following responsibilities:

1. providing opportunities to the student for shadowing, support, and supervision for 12 days over the 26 week duration of the module
2. providing a suitable learning environment for the student and facilitating effective learning
3. arranging alternative experiences as appropriate to meet the learning outcomes for the module
4. summatively assessing part three of the module assessment schedule.
Support for the Medical Mentor

Further support can be obtained from me, Val Ely, the module leader. I am pleased to deal with any queries or problems you might encounter. My contact details are provided below. A tripartite meeting between yourself, the student, and me can be arranged. Please contact me or ask the student to arrange such a meeting.

Course Leader Contact Details:

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Principal Lecturer

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