



University of Greater Manchester

School of Health, Science & Society

Safe Supervision & Scope of Practice Policy

Issued by the School of Health and Social Sciences

Approved by Senate: October 2026

Technical updates of this document take place on an annual basis to reflect changes to the University of Greater Manchester's organisational and management structure and to incorporate earlier, approved amendments to related policies, procedures and regulations.

Date: 08/05/2026

Version Number: 1

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Appendix 1 – SCOPE OF PRACTICE GUIDANCE

INTRODUCTION

Practice placements are an essential component of many health-related programmes within the School of Health, Science & Society. They equip learners with the skills required to meet programme outcomes and, where applicable, gain registration with their relevant professional body.

Public safety underpins all professional standards and regulatory requirements. Learners will have contact with service users throughout their programme, and it is essential that this learning takes place in a safe, structured, and effective manner.

All placements are arranged by the school in partnership with local placement providers and are regulated by relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and/or NHS England (NHSE) education frameworks.

Each professional body sets specific expectations for supervision and scope of practice. Learners are responsible for understanding and adhering to these requirements to ensure safe and appropriate practice at all times.

1. SCOPE

This policy applies to all learners on programmes that include placements involving contact with service users, whether on university premises or in external placement settings.

2. SAFE SUPERVISION

Safe supervision involves providing structured support, guidance, and oversight by qualified professionals to ensure service user safety and high-quality care, while enabling learners to achieve their educational outcomes.

Role of the Practice Assessor / Supervisor

A registered health or social care professional who:

Guides the learner

Models safe and effective practice.
Provides feedback on progress.

Balancing Responsibilities

Practice assessors/supervisors must balance the learner's developmental needs with their duty of care to patients, clients, and service users, ensuring safety at all times.

Tailored Supervision

Supervision levels should reflect:

The learner's experience and confidence.

The complexity of the task or skill.

The level of skill and knowledge of the learner and the point they are at on their programme.

Supervision varies from direct ("hands-on") to indirect oversight.

Public Protection

If a learner is assessed as unsafe or not yet proficient, the supervisor must intervene immediately to prevent harm or distress to service users.

Learner Engagement

Learners are expected to actively engage in their learning, using feedback and coaching approaches to develop competence, and co-ordinate the completion of practice records.

DIRECT SUPERVISION

For the purposes of this policy, direct supervision means:

The learner is in the immediate presence of a registered practitioner.

The practitioner provides continuous observation.

The practitioner is competent in the skill.

The practitioner can intervene and stop the learner at any time.

INDIRECT SUPERVISION

For the purposes of this policy, indirect supervision means:

The learner works under the overall direction and control of a practice supervisor/assessor.

The supervisor does not need to be physically present during the activity.

This applies only when the learner has been assessed as proficient.

The supervisor/assessor:

Retains accountability for assessing knowledge, attitude, and competence.

Must countersign documentation in real time.

Must intervene if safety concerns arise.

Should consult the university or pre-registration team if there is any uncertainty.

Assessing Knowledge and Skills

Practice supervisors/assessors are responsible for:

Confirming a learner's knowledge and skills before allowing them to perform any procedure.

Making objective decisions about competence.

Ensuring that skills are not treated as routine tasks but as professional responsibilities.

Delegation of supervision is only appropriate when:

The learner's competence is assured.

The supervising practitioner is themselves competent and experienced in the skill.

3. SCOPE OF PRACTICE

In pre-registration healthcare education, scope of practice refers to the limits and boundaries of a learner's knowledge, skills, and experience that define what they can safely and effectively do.

Scope of practice:

Is not based solely on what has been taught.

Depends on demonstrated competence.

Evolves as experience and training increase.

Must align with professional and organisational standards.

Exists to protect the public.

Working outside of one's scope without appropriate supervision may result in legal, ethical, and academic consequences.

(See Appendix 1 for further guidance.)

Factors Defining Pre-Registration Scope

Educational Standards

Programme requirements set by PSRBs (e.g. Nursing and Midwifery Council NMC, The Health and Care Professions Council HCPC, Social Work England SWE).

Supervision

Learners must practise under qualified supervision, with competence assessed before independent activity.

Professional Standards

Adherence to relevant codes of conduct (e.g. NMC Code, HCPC Standards, BASRaT).

Organisational Policies

Placement providers may restrict practice beyond general professional scope.

Government legislation

Example -The Human Medicines Regulations 2012 / schedule 19

Factors Defining Pre-Registration Scope:

Educational Standards: Approved pre-registration programmes (e.g., set by the NMC or HCPC, Social care England, BASRaT) determine the skills learners must master to be eligible for registration.

Supervision: Pre-registration learners must practice under the supervision of qualified professionals who determine if you are competent to perform skills.

Professional Standards: Learners must adhere to the same professional codes of conduct as registrants, such as the NMC Code or HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics.

Agency Policies: Whilst a skill / procedure may technically be within a profession's scope, a learners specific placement employer (e.g., a hospital trust, private & voluntary organisation) may restrict it.

4. PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODIES (PSRBs)

PSRBs are external organisations that:

- Set professional standards
- Monitor quality of education
- Accredite programmes
- Enable professional registration or licensure

All learners are required to read and understand the professional standards for the profession they are working towards.

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/>

<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/>

<https://www.nmc.org.uk/>

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/66320cddd958fd5652fcfba5/t/68f8b9c2be6f3e59cd8032bd/1761130946302/Standards+of+Ethical+Conduct+and+Behaviour+-+Nov+2024.pdf>

<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/nhs-delivery-and-workforce/workforce/guidance-for-the-supervision-of-pas-and-aas>

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Support-for-leaders-and-managers/Managing-people/Supervision/Effective-supervision-guide.pdf>

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

The learner must:

- Seek advice immediately if unsure.
- Always Work within their level of competence.
- Decline tasks outside their scope of practice.
- Not undertake procedures for which they lack theoretical knowledge or appropriate supervision.
- Adhere to PSRB codes of conduct where applicable.
- Follow placement provider policies and procedures.
- Ensure all care is in the best interests of the service user.
- Obtain consent before undertaking any activity.
- Raise concerns immediately if asked to work outside scope or boundaries.

The University of Greater Manchester is responsible for:

- Providing appropriate placement opportunities and learning experiences.
- Quality assurance of placement environments.
- Collaborating with practice partners to support staff development.
- Monitoring capacity and safety of placement provision.
- Ensuring staff are trained to provide pastoral support.
- Raising concerns regarding placement quality if required.
- Working with partners to ensure appropriate support systems are in place.
- Providing clear processes for raising concerns.
- Maintaining appropriate learner documentation (e.g. assessment records).

Equality Impact Assessment

“The University of Greater Manchester is committed to the promotion of equality, diversity and a supportive environment for all members of our community. Our commitment to equality and diversity means that this procedure has been screened in relation to the use of plain English, the promotion of the positive duty in relation to race, gender and disability and avoidance of discrimination to other equality groups related to age, sexual orientation, religion or belief or gender reassignment.”

Summary – Supervision & Scope of Practice Policy	
Reference Number:	
Version number	1
Version Date	May 2026
Author	School of Health Science & Society
Owner	Professional practice & compliance
Responsible person	
Approving Committee	Senate
Date Approved	October 2026
Effective From	September 2026
Dissemination Method	Website
Review Frequency	Three yearly
Consultation History	Dr Michelle Powell, Operational Leads, Student services
Document History	