

The Good Educator

How to be a good supervisor and the professional and personal benefits of being a placement educator.



FUTURE ALLIES

Developing tomorrow's NDIS Allied Health professionals

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The functions of supervision

Placement supervision can be seen to have three functions:

- Educative - developing the skills and knowledge of the work placement student; acquiring professional competence; engaging in reflective practice;
- Administrative/Managerial - promoting and maintaining good standards of work; implementing agency policies; monitoring and improving work performance;
- Supportive - maintaining harmonious working relationships, morale and job satisfaction for the student, the other staff and the NDIS participant.



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Successful student support

Successful supervision depends on developing a relationship based on trust. There are a number of principles to remember when providing supervision:

- Apply adult learning principles. Adults prefer support to be goal-oriented, relevant, practical, and respectful.
- Appreciate different learning styles – what works for you may not work for your students.
- Always provide high quality feedback (specific, factual, descriptive, constructive, understood, timely, sensitive and directed at the behaviour).
- Make a plan – plan the frequency and methods you will use when supporting students, make some goals for the way you will do this and plan how you might deal with conflict.

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Successful Supervision

Keep these principles in mind when providing student placements:

- Determine what the requirements are for assessing or evaluating student performance
- Once student learning goals have been established , develop and implement a support plan. You should monitor your students' progress and follow up any issues promptly.

(Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health, 2018)

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Orientation

Once the student has arrived for their placement the first step is to orient them to the service. Help them feel as comfortable as possible, as early as possible.

Help them understand:

- The layout of the facility – ensure they understand key landmarks, particularly if the facility is large or spread out.
- Who's who – who are the key people and what are their roles.
- Location of staff services – bathrooms, tea rooms, personal storage, public transport, parking, bike storage, food outlets.

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Orientation

- Work health and safety procedures including hand hygiene and manual handling
- Organisational culture – detailed information.

Ensure the student has provided you with copies of Working with Children clearance, immunisation status, and other required documents.

New South Wales Government: Health Education and Training, 2018)

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Orientation

Providers valued making placement-specific orientation information available to students before placements. They report this should:

- set the tone of the placement and clearly state the provider's expectations for the placement.
- explain the importance of:
 - partnering respectfully with participants
 - articulating and solving problems
 - understanding confidentiality
 - clinical knowledge
 - specific clinical skills



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Orientation

- prompt students to consider their personal experience with disability as relevant background experience for the placement, particularly when planning personal learning goals for the placement
- describe the range of participants and their families supported by the provider organisation, as well as the services provided.
- reinforce professional standards – dress codes, identification

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Orientation

- explain the NDIA and the NDIS in a case study format and addressing the question “How does the NDIS work in the context of a participant’s journey from initial assessment through to service/equipment provision?”. Case studies should:
 - reflect participants supported by the provider organisation
 - illustrate the importance, within the NDIS funding context, of:
 - efficient time management
 - being goal orientated, organised and staying on track with participants

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Expectations of the student's abilities

The university and the student will be able to tell you the expected scope for their placement. In addition the student will have specific learning goals for the placement. The university and the student should communicate the goals and objectives at the beginning of the placement.

The student skill level will vary depending on the discipline and what year they are in. The support required for each student and each activity will also vary significantly.



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Placement activities for the student

Work with the University to plan each placement in advance to ensure that their time with you benefits both of you. The key is being organised and anticipating what can be achieved in their allocated time.

Students can undertake activities that you and your staff are often too busy to. Their 'fresh eyes' may provide perspectives you haven't previously considered. Depending on the students' interests, allocated time and competence the following activities may be suitable.

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Placement activities for the student

Consider **participant focused** activities such as:

- Working with administration / reception staff to understand booking, admission, billing practices, record retrieval.
- Taking health histories / conducting physical assessments.
- Communicating with a variety of NDIS participants and their supporters to better understand their experiences with the NDIS.

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Placement activities for the student

Consider **participant focused** activities such as:

- Menu reviews.
- Support with activities of daily living.
- Monitoring and supporting exercises.
- Providing a longer session before or after your session to address certain issues.
- Reviews of practice, home programs etc.
- Drafting reports, correspondence letters to patients, appointment scheduling and phone liaisons.

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Placement activities for the student

Consider **service focused** activities such as:

- Researching new equipment or stock items.
- Activities such as formatting marketing or educational material, and the development of PowerPoint presentations.
- Reviewing and providing feedback on systems and procedures.

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Placement activities for the student

Consider **service focused** activities such as:

- Undertaking an improvement project for example: to develop educational tools; to perform a literature review on a relevant topic, to perform a research project or analysis of particular issues.
- Undertaking audits and quality improvement activities.
- Plan and present a case study to the team

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Professional behaviour

Use your time with the student to further develop their professional behaviour and socialisation into the NDIS. Role model great professionalism at all times, question their understanding and perceptions, challenge them to think and critique others behaviours, discuss their approach and better options. Professional behaviour is made up of the following three components.



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Professional behaviour

Think about how to build this in to your support:

- Professional Boundaries - what are they, how do you protect them, how are they breached.
- Professional Appearance - what are your standards, why are they important
- Respectful communication - what is it, how do they address clients, colleagues e.g. expected response time to emails.

Remember habits develop early in our professional life, you have the opportunity to influence positive behaviours.



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Feedback and Reflection

Open and regular communication is essential for a positive learning experience for both you and the student. You should plan at least three formal meetings with the student: one at the beginning (to plan goals, learning opportunities, etc.), one mid-way through the placement and one at the end. In many cases a weekly meeting will ensure the placement is on track and issues are resolved early.

Provide feedback on sessions, reports, and other student progress. Make sure to label any feedback as feedback – students sometimes think you are having a nice chat and feel that they have not received feedback.

Reflective practice is a vital skill for students to learn. Reflecting allows students to recognise their strengths and weaknesses, identify areas to improve and develop clinical reasoning used in the delivery of successful NDIS participant support.

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Feedback

Initial meeting

The more effort put into this initial meeting the more likely the placement will run smoothly and be a positive experience for all involved.

Meeting agenda:

- Orientation to the placement, organisation and staff.
- Ensure learning goals and objectives are clearly articulated and agreed.
- Outline your process for support, assessment and feedback. Find out what the student requires of you.
- Ensure there is a mutual understanding of each other's expectations and needs.

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Feedback

Weekly or Mid-Way Meeting

At these meetings:

- Encourage students to track their own progress against goals and objectives.
- Encourage the student to reflect on experiences and relate these back to their objectives.
- Make any changes to their placement to ensure learning needs are being met.
- Clarify and discuss any issues. Contact the university for support if required.
- At the mid placement meeting, complete any required student progress assessment and submit it to the university

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Feedback

Final Meeting

At this meeting:

- Evaluate the placement. Ask the student for their views of the placement.
- Provide final feedback on the students' progress (there should be no surprises as any issues should have been raised directly at the weekly / mid-way meetings).
- Complete the students' final assessments as well as any other requirements of your organisation and/or the University.

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Reflection

Reflective practice should have been discussed with the University in preparation for the placement. The student should have indicated how they will be undertaking their reflective practice. Reflective practice can be:

- Verbal: discussion of issues or incidents, where the educator asks questions to encourage the students to reflect on what happened, how they reacted, how they could have reacted, confirmation of appropriate behaviours and areas in need of improvement.
- Written: students are encouraged to record their experiences in a journal/diary or through reflections on individual incidents or time points during the placement. They can work through the issues and reflect on their learning. They can then use this as a tool for discussion with their supervisor or to keep as a personal record of their learning.



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Reference List

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