

Education Seminars 2011 – Case Study 3

Practice Placements

Situation

Due to changes at an education providers' main practice placement areas the majority of experienced practice placement educators have retired or moved to another area. The programme team have been very successful in recruiting new placement educators by utilising their network of alumni and utilising the less experienced staff at the existing practice placements.

In line with the education providers policy all new supervisors have undergone the training session by completing it via distance learning. However, the education provider has to change its policy of all placement educators being at least 3 years post qualification and some new supervisors are only 1 year post qualification. Where this has occurred the education provider has asked that these supervisors are assisted by senior colleagues if possible.

A secondary result of the staffing cuts has been that the education provider has had to reduce the amount of practice hours undertaken by students. This has brought them under the number of hours recommended by the relevant professional body. However, the education provider has amended the learning outcomes associated with the practice placement experience and has ensured that all of the relevant standards of proficiency can be met. Where this is not possible in placement the programme team will supervise students on an objective structured clinical examination (OSCE).

Questions

What risks do you think may be associated with the practice placements in this situation?

Do you think the application HPC standards of education (SETs) and training would minimise these risks? What, if any, further evidence do you think the HPC would require to be sure that the programme continues to meet the SETs?

If you were a newly qualified professional in this situation would you feel comfortable supervising students? Would you have more empathy with them or would you need more support from the education provider?