

Grading Scenarios for B.Midwif Practice Assessors

Roxanna – first year student midwife

You have been the Practice Assessor for a 1st yr student on the postnatal ward. This is her last placement of the year. She has asked you to grade her for her postnatal & infant feeding skills when you do her final interview at the end of the week.

Feedback from her Practice Supervisor(s) indicate she has been a real pleasure to work with. She has lovely communication skills and is naturally empathetic with the women – they seem to trust her and they tell her bits of information that they haven't told anyone else before. She has been polite to everyone including the grumpiest members of staff!

She has worked really well with her Practice Supervisor(s), she seems to know when to join in a conversation and when to keep quiet and let them manage a situation. She asks insightful questions about some of the women with complex social histories so her Practice Supervisor(s) know she has understood their difficulties. She thinks carefully before she speaks, for example when a man phoned trying to find out if his wife was on the ward, you observed she handled the call well and didn't give any information she shouldn't have done.

She always reports back what she has found and asks if she thinks something is indicating a problem. She documents everything accurately. You feel confident that she can safely work with less direct supervision in this area as she is so good at reporting back and clarifying the plan of care.

It's not that she knows everything – after all she is only just at the end of year 1 – but when she comes across something she doesn't know, she asks good questions and really wants to build her knowledge. The first week she cared for a woman with a DVT. She said she had not covered this in university yet (It is a year 2 topic) so she asked a lot about the risks of DVT and about heparin therapy and looked at the policy on the intranet.

She is also keen to have feedback and reacts positively if Practice Supervisors suggest some improvements. For example, the other day her Practice Supervisor guided her while she did a dressing of an infected wound. Some suggestions were made about improving her ANTT technique and she thanked her Practice Supervisor and told the woman what a good support they were!

Her Practice Supervisors have been particularly impressed with her knowledge about helping breastfeeding mothers. She's very supportive of breastfeeding but doesn't pressurise the women.

Her main problem is that she is a bit slow as she is so careful to listen to the women and not to miss anything. But you can tell that she is going to be a really good midwife up-ahead.

How will you grade this student? (Think about the process for deciding the grade, what feedback might you want to give and look at the grading criteria to select a possible grade for Roxanna)

Judy – second year student midwife on the antenatal ward

Judy's been working with two Practice Supervisors on the antenatal ward for 4 weeks. She moved to the Trust in September, having completed her 1st yr in a different Trust– she is about half way through year 2 now. She has settled in well and already seems confident in this new Trust. She started with a 4 week allocation on delivery suite earlier followed by 6 weeks on the postnatal ward. She goes to the neonatal unit next and then back to delivery. Her final placement will be in community where she will start her case holding experience.

Judy is pleasant to work with. Her Practice Supervisors report she has been easy to supervise as she is cheerful and willing to get 'stuck in' to any work and works fast. She is popular with all the team and most of the women like her as she had a good sense of humour and makes them laugh although she is sometimes a bit crude with her jokes!

Initially she worked closely with her Practice Supervisors and she learned quickly, copying them in the way they explained things to women. Recently she has been working more independently as she has got more familiar with the type of problems the women are experiencing. She reports back well about what she has found and tells her Practice Supervisors what plan of care she thinks is needed. She mostly knows what needs to be done; however, her Practice Supervisors have fed back that when questioned further about why things are done she is not always so clear. She doesn't seem to feel that understanding the rationale is quite as important as just doing what needs doing.

You've observed that she is managing more and more on her own, including giving information to women about what is likely to happen for them, but once or twice you have had to correct some information – once about induction of labour and once about treatment for hypertension. She managed to irritate one of her Practice Supervisors the other day by contradicting her when engaged in a discussion about whether a woman would be able to give birth on the midwifery-led care unit.

Yesterday, she assisted her Practice Supervisor with setting up a blood transfusion. She was very quick and efficient about the practical tasks but was not able to tell you what might indicate a reaction to the transfusion – her Practice Supervisor probed her knowledge about this and she was a bit defensive, saying the university hadn't covered this so that's why she didn't know. However, she recovered quickly – her Practice Supervisors have commented that's one of the good things about working with Judy, she always seems cheerful and was soon chatting about what she would be doing at the weekend.

Judy is working a long shift with her Practice Supervisor and she asked you to complete the grading of her complex needs antenatal care skills during her last day.

How will you grade this student? (Think about the process for deciding the grade, what feedback might you want to give and look at the grading criteria to select a possible grade for Judy)

Notes for facilitators

Grade these students yourself first before giving this activity to Practice Assessors –discuss it with other lecturers to ensure you are in agreement about the feedback and possible grade.

These two scenarios are designed to help Practice Assessors practice the grading process and discuss it with their colleagues and with you.

As well as these scenarios, you will need copies of the grading sheets for year 1 Midwifery care following birth and infant feeding unit and for year 2 midwifery care-complex needs antenatal.

Points for discussion

Roxanna

I would expect the 1st year scenario to lead to discussion about whether a first year student can be given a high grade or not – given that her knowledge is clearly not yet complete.

I would also expect there to be some discussion about the fact that she is a bit slow – again this is normal for a first year

Conclusion – she is demonstrating many attributes that will enable her to develop her knowledge and skills to a high level – as a first year she is performing at a high level and so can be awarded a high mark – we don't expect first years to know much about complex care situations.

Judy

I would expect this scenario to bring out a contrast between how easy she is to work with and her confidence compared with her more limited depth of knowledge and her main methods of learning (copying rather than questioning/reading/investigating/reflecting/taking feedback on board)

Questions

I would ask the Practice Assessors if both these students will end up as good midwives.

Which might be the better/safer midwife?

Who deserves the higher grade even though they are at different stages of their education?

How could you use the grading process to give encouragement and pointers for future development?

How might you help Judy to do even better?