

## Educational Audit of Practice Placements

The University of Nottingham has a responsibility to produce educational programmes and services of a high standard, which meets the needs of students. The educational audit of practice placements – as part of the quality assurance procedures within the University of Nottingham, School of Nursing and Academic Division of Midwifery – has an important part to play in this process, in collaboration with service providers. Collaborative work with other HEI's is also needed to ensure the needs of all students, in respect of their practice placements, are accommodated.

It is envisaged that the audit information will assist in:

- a)** Enabling students to have appropriate educational opportunities
- b)** Maintaining/improving the students practice placement experience
- c)** Giving recognition to the staff working in areas of excellence
- d)** Improving the quality of the practice learning environment
- e)** Identifying those areas in which staff need help and support to maintain, improve and develop the quality of the learning environment.

The educational audit of placements is based on a number of documents relating to placement e.g.

- a)** Placements in Focus
- b)** QAA Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education
- c)** QAA Benchmarking Statements
- d)** The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The educational audit of practice follows a two-year cycle (see flow chart).

In the first year a full formal audit of the placement is undertaken – usually by 2 auditors (one educational and one service auditor). Placement staff are sent a full audit document to complete prior to the formal audit visit. At the time of the planned full formal audit, the auditors will be looking for verification of the statements you have made within the audit document. This may be by looking at aspects of the placement, discussing placement issues with students and staff on the placement and, looking at documentation. It is suggested that placement staff keep a folder that includes any evidence that they need to present at audit – for example, students' evaluations of practice, learning opportunities and orientation/welcome packs. Auditors will discuss your normal range of student numbers at any one time in practice and ask you how you meet the needs of allocated students. The auditors are not in a position to negotiate student numbers with you – but can report back any concerns. An often-incomplete section of the audit document is the mentor profile. It is important that this section is completed and includes details of mentor preparation courses and annual updates – in order to input data onto the mentor register. (Held by practice learning units or practice learning leads – details on Page 15) This provides a live register of mentors and is an NMC requirement. Mentors must have an annual update, which every 3 years must be a face-to-face update. (Details on page 14)

On completion of the full formal audit, the auditors will note and discuss any recommendations that require action, as well as highlighting examples of good/innovative practice. If an action plan is required, please ask your Educational and Practice PLT

representatives to assist you in this process, if necessary. If significant action needs to be taken, the auditors will set a review date with you. In the unlikely event that students need to be withdrawn from placement, you will be informed of this and relevant service, education staff and practice learning units will be notified to action this process.

In the second year of the audit cycle, you will be asked to complete and return an interim self-audit. If feedback from this is satisfactory, no further action is required until the next full formal audit the following year. However, if there have been significant changes to the placement or there are issues that need to be addressed, you may be advised by the District Audit Team that a full formal audit is required, which will then be arranged with you.

In some instances, where placements are going through a fundamental, permanent change process, such as reconfiguration of services, a support visit may be suggested, as an interim audit is insufficient and a full formal audit is inappropriate. In such instances, auditors will visit the placement and discuss how current or planned changes may impact on the students and mentors in practice. During this process, interim audit data will be completed, as well as discussing what action could be taken to meet the needs of students and mentors in practice – currently and in the future. Feedback to allocation staff will ensure appropriate allocation of students to the placement. Once the placement staff have had the opportunity to adjust to the changes, a full formal audit should be undertaken, usually about 3 months later.

Audit documentation can be sent to you via e-mail or as a paper copy. The advantage of an e-mail copy of the audit documentation is that it will enable placement staff to amend documentation from year to year, rather than starting from scratch each time, which may save valuable staff time.

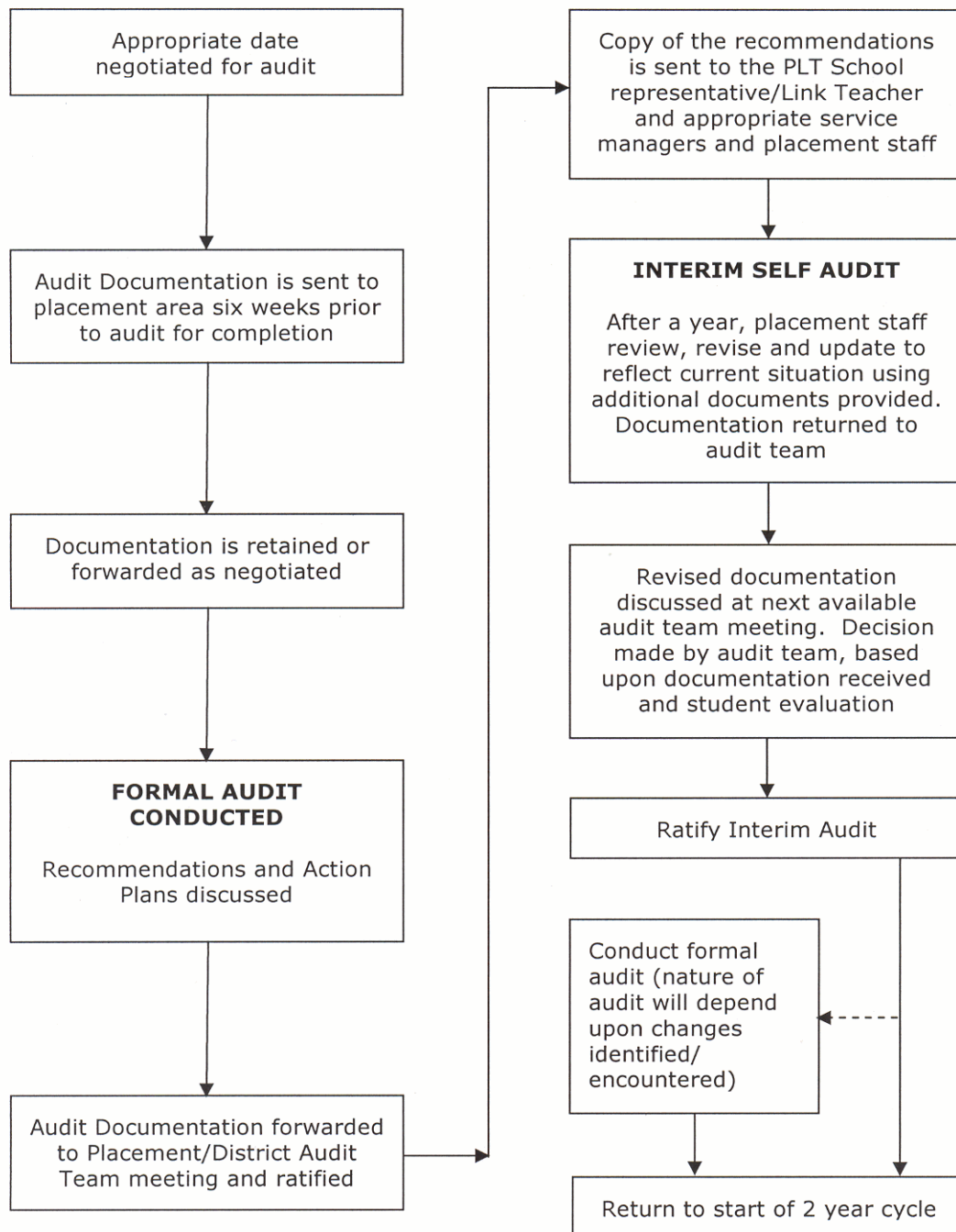
If you have members of staff that would like to become auditors for the educational audit of practice placements, please contact the Chairman of the District Audit Team for your local Centre and they will ensure a preparation programme is put in place.

If you have any queries regarding this information, please contact the Chairman of the District Audit Team at your Centre. Further information on the educational audit of practice placements may be obtained at the following website:

[www.nottingham.ac.uk/nursing/practice/audit/index.php](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/nursing/practice/audit/index.php)

K. Lewis  
Chairman of the Central Audit Group  
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## Two-year Cycle of Educational Audits of Practice Placements



Following audit, mentor data will be forwarded to the appropriate Practice Learning Unit or Practice Learning Leads to update their mentor register. Recommendations from full audits will also be sent.