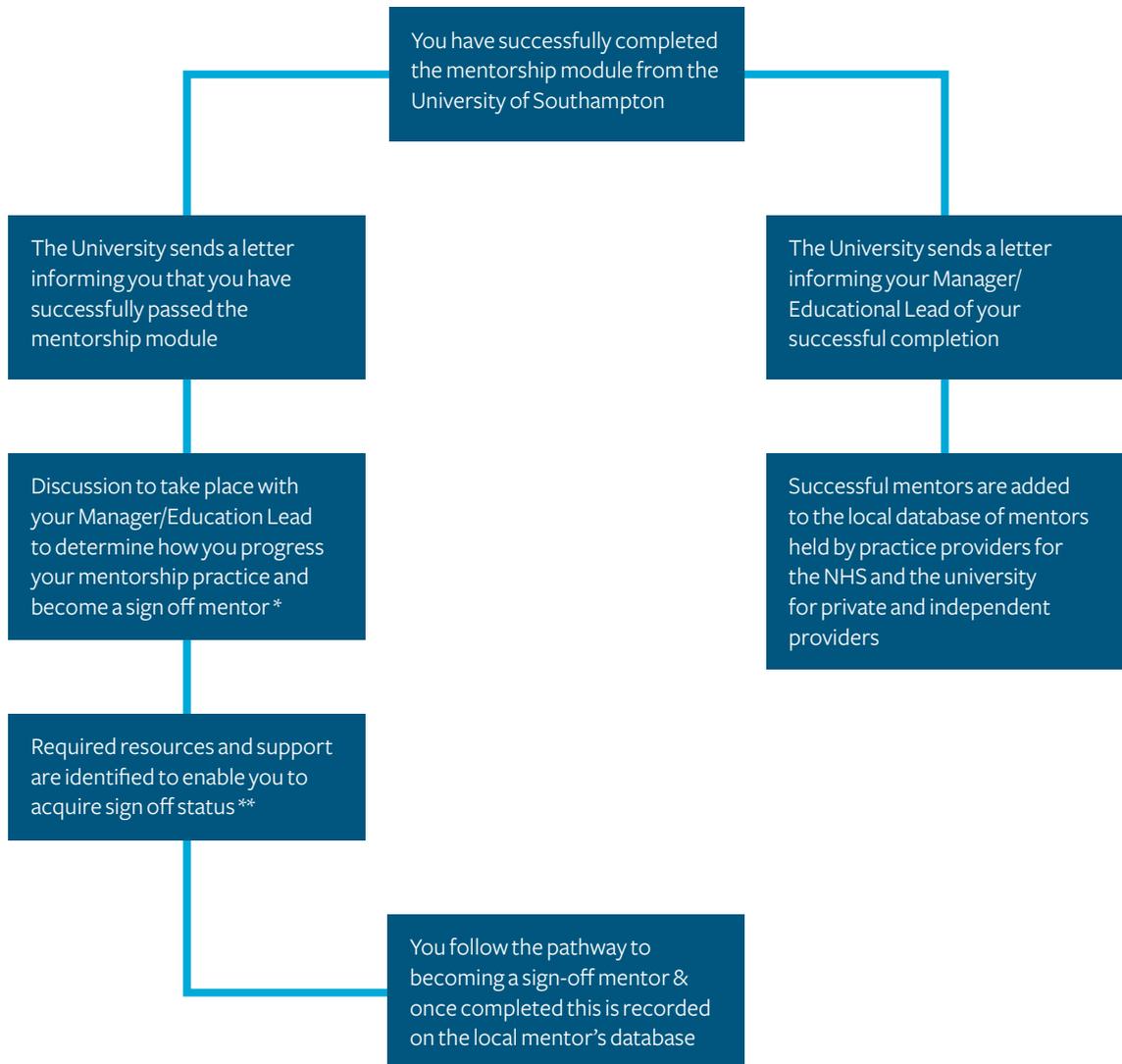


Becoming a sign-off mentor  
Ongoing record of achievement

# Contents

1	Congratulations, you are now a mentor – what happens now?
2	Becoming a sign-off mentor
7	Record of meetings between mentor and supervising sign-off mentor
8	Record of assessing experience
10	Final assessment for becoming a sign-off mentor
11	Maintaining sign-off mentor status
14	Adult branch
16	Child branch
18	Mental health branch
20	Learning disability branch
21	Midwifery

# Congratulations, you are now a mentor – what happens now?



\* The NMC standards (2008) stipulate all midwives are to become sign-off mentors. For Nurses it is to be decided locally and discussed with their Manager.

\*\* Resources and support may include:

- Access to a student on a progression placement (P2, P4, P6)
- A sign-off mentor
- Practice Academic Co-ordinator (PAC)/University link lecturer
- **[www.alps.soton.ac.uk](http://www.alps.soton.ac.uk)**
- Organisational educational resources

# Becoming a sign-off mentor

Congratulations on becoming a qualified mentor. Now that you have gained this qualification you need to ensure that you inform your Manager/Education Lead so that your name can be entered on the local database of mentors.

## Using this handbook

This handbook has been designed to assist you in maintaining your status as a mentor and in developing your skills to become a sign-off mentor. It builds on learning achieved through undertaking the mentorship module.

You will need to identify a sign-off mentor who will assess your knowledge and skills. This document enables you to record any evidence and for the sign-off mentor to sign that you have been supervised **three times** signing off a student's proficiency. This refers to making a judgement as to whether a student has achieved the required standards of proficiency in their practice and for students on their final placement, signing them off for entry onto the NMC register. The students this will include are those on programmes leading to registration with the NMC- pre-registration, return to practice, specialist practice and advanced nursing.

Please refer to the back of the handbook for guidance on mentoring pre-registration students at the University of Southampton.

This handbook has been designed for mentors of University of Southampton nursing and midwifery students. If you predominately support students from another University you may prefer an alternative route to achieving sign off status.

## Maintaining your mentorship status

All nurses and midwives “must facilitate students and others to develop their competence” (NMC, 2008). As a mentor you hold responsibilities and accountability for student learning and assessment in practice. In order to maintain your status as a qualified mentor you must continue to develop your mentoring knowledge and skills.

The NMC (2008) standards for supporting learning and assessment in practice, requires all mentors to maintain their knowledge, skills and competence through annual updating. Mentors should be prepared to demonstrate to their employers and NMC quality assurance agents how they have achieved this. Each mentor will be reviewed every three years (triennial review), usually during an annual appraisal with their Manager to ensure that only those who continue to meet the mentor standards remain on the local database. This handbook has been designed to assist you in identifying how you can do this as well as enabling you to keep a record of this activity for your professional portfolio and appraisal.

More information on annual updating can be found on [www.alps.soton.ac.uk](http://www.alps.soton.ac.uk)

## Becoming a sign-off mentor

Having gained your mentorship qualification, the next stage of the NMC developmental framework is to become a sign-off mentor. Becoming a sign-off mentor is a requirement for all midwives (NMC, 2008). Sign-off status is not necessary for all nurses, but will depend on both individual and service requirements and should be discussed with your manager. The NMC Standards for Supporting Learning and Assessment in Practice (2008) require a sign-off mentor to make a judgement on whether a student has achieved the standards of proficiency for safe and effective practice for students on NMC approved programmes. This is an important aspect of mentoring students and requires that you:

- Have clinical currency and capability in the field of practice in which the student is being assessed.
- Meet the NMC requirements to remain on the local database of mentors.
- Have been supervised on at least three occasions for signing off proficiency at a progression point (or supervised practice placement for Specialist Practice Qualifications) by an existing sign-off mentor or practice teacher. Please consult local guidance on these requirements.
- Have a working knowledge of current programme requirements, practice assessment strategies and relevant changes in education and practice for the student you are assessing.
- Have an understanding of the NMC registration requirements and the contribution you make in helping a student in meeting these requirements.
- Have an in-depth understanding of your accountability to the NMC for the decisions made to pass or fail a student when assessing proficiency requirements at the end of a programme.  
(see page 21 in the NMC standards for supporting learning in practice, 2008)

## Self-Assessment

You need to perform a self assessment which is based on the NMC competencies and outcomes (2008). These assessments assist you in preparing for your annual appraisal and triennial review and provide a record of your professional development.

The NMC standards (2008) require mentors to map their qualifications and experience against the current mentor standards. Please complete this self assessment, identifying the outcomes you feel that you have achieved. You will not be expected to provide evidence as this is aimed at supporting you in identifying areas you feel that you need to develop and there are suggested resources on the final page.

# Self assessment

Domain and Outcomes for mentors	Achieved? Y/N
<b>1 – Establish effective working relationships</b>	
Demonstrate an understanding of the factors that influence how students integrate into practice	
Provide ongoing support to facilitate transition from one learning environment to another	
Comments	
<b>2 - Facilitation of learning</b>	
Use knowledge of the student’s stage of learning to select appropriate learning opportunities to meet their individual needs	
Facilitate selection of appropriate learning strategies to integrate learning from practice and academic experiences	
Support students in critically reflecting upon their learning experiences in order to enhance future learning	
Comments	
<b>3 - Assessment and accountability</b>	
Foster professional growth, personal development and accountability through support of students in practice	
Demonstrate a breadth of understanding of assessment strategies and the ability to contribute to the total assessment process as part of the teaching team	
Provide constructive feedback to students and assist them in identifying future learning needs and actions. Manage failing students so that they may either enhance their performance and capabilities for safe and effective practice or be able to understand their failure and implications of this for the future	
Be accountable for confirming that students have met, or not met, the NMC competencies in practice. Confirm that students have met, or not met the NMC standards of proficiency in practice and are capable of safe and effective practice	
Comments	

Domain and Outcomes for mentors	Achieved? Y/N
<b>4 - Evaluation of learning</b>	
Contribute to evaluation of student learning and assessment experiences; proposing changes resulting from such evaluation	
Participate in self and peer evaluation to facilitate personal development, and contribute to the development of others	
Comments	
<b>5 - Creating an environment for learning</b>	
Enable students to identify learning needs and experiences appropriate to their level of learning	
Use a range of learning experiences, involving service users, carers and the professional team, to meet defined learning needs	
Identify aspects of the learning environment, which could be enhanced - negotiating with others to make appropriate changes	
Facilitate personal and professional development of others	
Comments	
<b>6 - Context of practice</b>	
Contribute to the development of an environment in which effective practice is fostered, implemented, evaluated and disseminated	
Set and maintain professional boundaries that are sufficiently flexible for providing interprofessional care	
Initiate and respond to practice developments to ensure safe and effective care is achieved and an effective learning environment is maintained	
Comments	

Domain and Outcomes for mentors	Achieved? Y/N
<b>7 - Evidence based practice</b>	
Identify and apply research and evidence based practice to area of practice	
Contribute to strategies to increase the evidence base to support practice	
Support students in applying an evidence base to their practice area	
Comments	
<b>8 - Leadership</b>	
Plan a series of learning experiences that will meet students defined learning needs	
Be an advocate for students to support them in accessing learning opportunities and meet their individual needs - involving a range of other professionals, service users and carers	
Prioritise work to accommodate support of students within their practice roles	
Provide feedback about the effectiveness of learning and assessment in practice	
Comments	

When you have completed the self assessment you need to work on developing your knowledge and skills so that you feel confident that you can progress to becoming a sign off mentor.

The next step is to work with your allocated sign-off mentor in developing a plan of action. There is a record sheet to use for this on the next page.

# Record of meetings between mentor and supervising sign-off mentor

The following is an area for you to document any meetings that occur during your pathway to becoming a sign-off mentor.

## Notes of meeting and issues discussed

## Actions to be taken (if required)

**Signature of mentor**

**Name**

**Date**

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**Signature of sign-off mentor**

**Name**

**Date**

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# Record of assessing experience

To achieve sign-off mentor status you must have been observed on at least 3 occasions assessing a student's proficiency by an existing sign-off mentor. Completion of the assessment of learners in practice as part of the mentorship module can count towards one of the three assessments providing this is for a student at a progression point and was signed by the sign-off mentor. There is an example of a completed assessment in the first box.

Date and time	Experience	Comments
01/05/08	EXAMPLE: Discussed management of care with a student at the end of their final practice experience.	EXAMPLE: We explored the impact of the student's experience and how the student had used this in their practice setting.

	<b>Mentor signature</b>	<b>Signature of sign-off mentor</b>
e importance of care management sed her theoretical knowledge in the	SFaulds	EAlmond

# Final assessment for becoming a sign-off mentor

This is to be completed in conjunction with your sign-off mentor.

NMC additional criteria to become a sign-off mentor	Achievement	
	Sign-off mentor initials	Mentor initials
Has clinical currency and capability in the field of practice in which the student is being assessed. Please enter parts of NMC register that you are on: _____		
Has met the NMC requirements to remain on the local database: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mentored at least 2 students within a three year period</li> <li>- Participated in annual updating of mentoring</li> <li>- Explored as a group activity the validity and reliability of judgements made when assessing practice in challenging circumstances. Attendance required a minimum of once in a three year period</li> <li>- Mapped ongoing development in your role against the NMC mentor standards</li> </ul>		
Has been supervised on at least three occasions for signing off proficiency by an existing sign-off mentor or practice teacher.		
Has a working knowledge of current programme requirements, practice assessment strategies and relevant changes in education and practice for the student being assessed.		
Has an understanding of the NMC registration requirements and the contribution they make to meeting these requirements.		
Has an in-depth understanding of their accountability to the NMC for the decision they make to pass or fail a student when assessing proficiency requirements at the end of a programme.		

Date of completion

Name of mentor

Signature of mentor

Name of sign-off mentor

Signature of sign-off mentor

Mentorship qualifications of sign-off mentor

Job title of sign-off mentor

Once successfully completed please inform your Manager/Education Manager and use this as evidence for annotation on the mentor database with regard to you becoming a sign-off mentor.

For more information please see the resources on the final page.

# Maintaining sign-off mentor status

When you have successfully completed the mentorship module it is important that you maintain your knowledge and skills. This is also important when you have achieved sign-off mentor status and to do this you need to ensure that you:

- Mentor at least 2 students on NMC programmes within a 3 year period
- Participate in annual mentor updating - to include an opportunity to meet and explore assessment and supervision issues with other mentors
- Explore as a group activity the validity and reliability of judgements made when assessing practice in challenging circumstances (as above)
- Map ongoing development in your role against the current NMC mentor standards (see page 12 of the NMC Standards to support learning and assessment in practice (2008)).

On the following page there is a blank form for you to photocopy as required which you can use in preparation of your annual and triennial reviews.

Self assessment to evidence maintenance of mentor (and or) sign-off mentor status	
NMC criteria	Initial to say met
<p>Clinical currency and capability in the field of practice in which the student is being assessed.</p> <p>Please enter parts of NMC register that you are on: _____</p>	
<p>Met the NMC requirements to remain on the local database:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mentor at least 2 students within a 3 year period</li> <li>- Participate in annual updating - to include an opportunity to meet and explore assessment and supervision issues with other mentors.</li> <li>- Explored as a group activity the validity and reliability of judgements made when assessing practice in challenging circumstances. Attendance required a minimum of once in a three year period</li> <li>- Mapped ongoing development in your role against the current NMC mentor standards</li> </ul>	

**Comments** (this is an opportunity for you to briefly document experiences and or other evidence of maintaining your mentor status).

Date of completion

Name of mentor

Managers signature

## Resources

There are a few resources here but we would also recommend contacting your local educational provider for information on their programmes.

Nursing and Midwifery Council [www.nmc-uk.org](http://www.nmc-uk.org)

University of Southampton: assessment of learning in practice settings [www.alps.soton.ac.uk](http://www.alps.soton.ac.uk)

## Reference

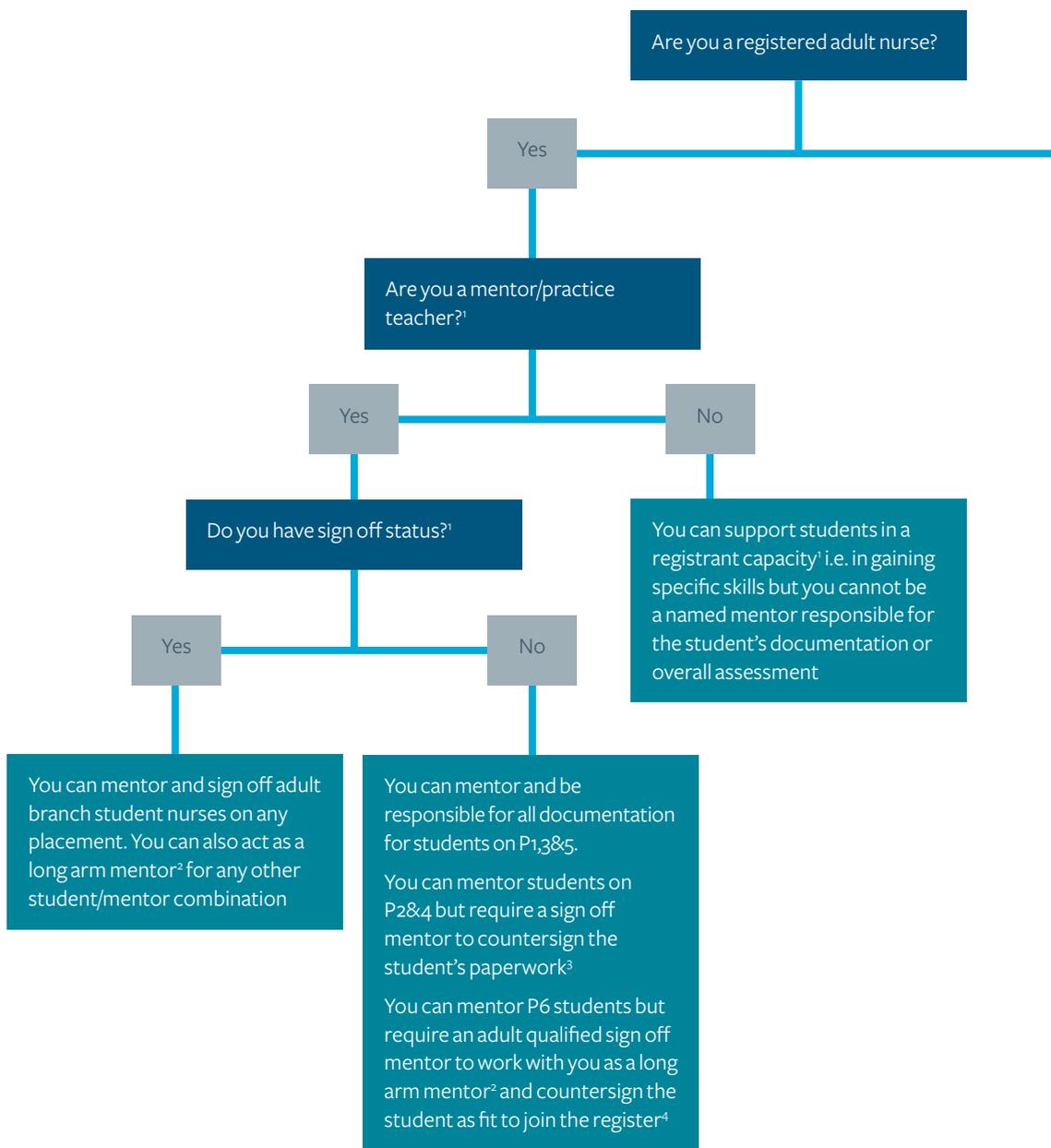
NMC (2008) Standards to support learning and assessment in practice: NMC Standards for mentors, practice teachers and teachers NMC: London second edition

## Notes

You may find some of your own resources or want to write notes about reviews and updates in your local area so we have left you some space for this.

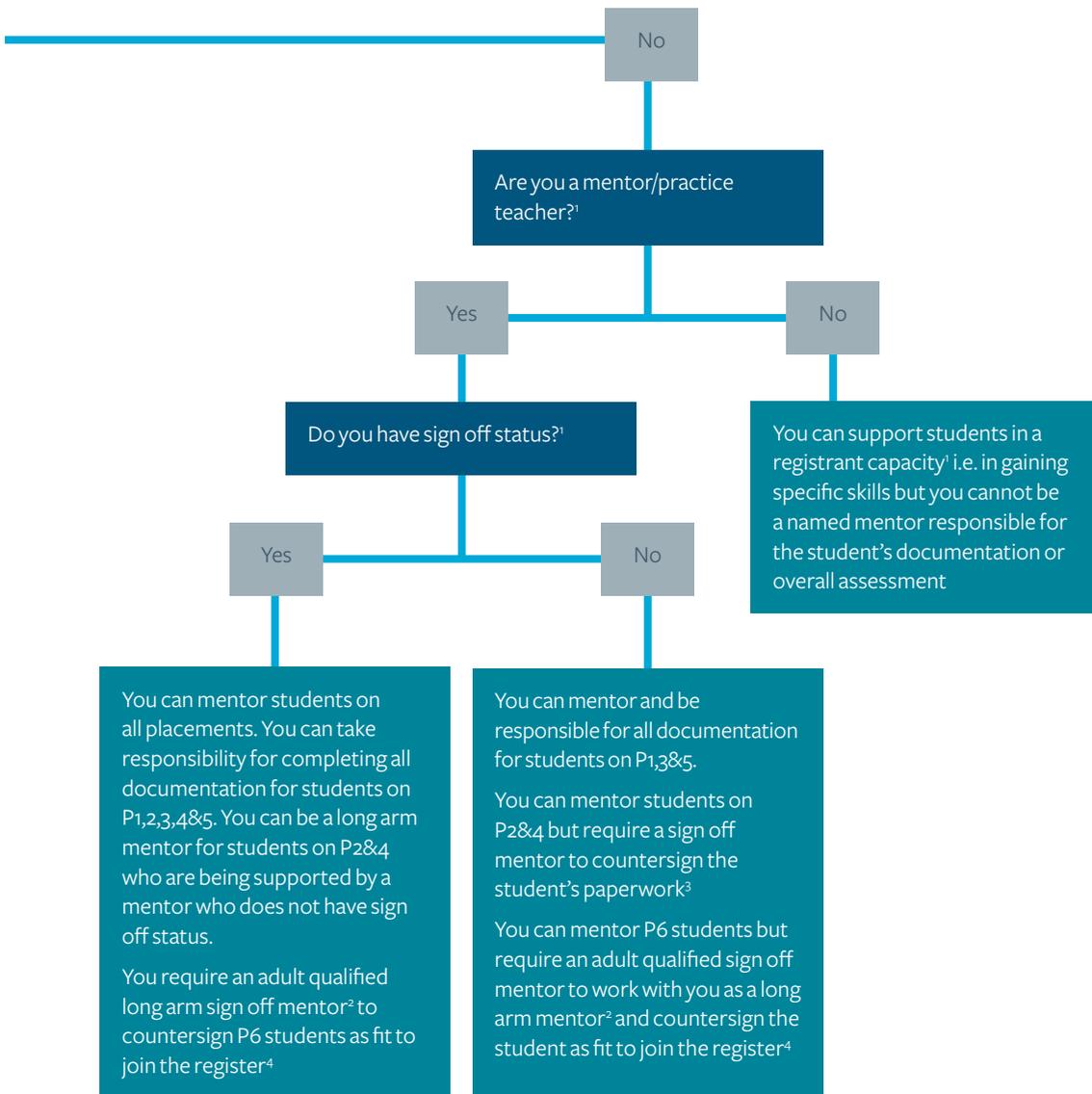
# Adult branch

Supporting University of Southampton pre-registration adult student nurses in practice



<sup>1</sup> Please see NMC Standards to support learning and assessment in practice (2008) for definitions

<sup>2</sup> A long arm mentor is defined as someone who does not see the student on a day by day basis but supports the mentor from a distance and who meets with the mentor and student together to discuss progress/ achievements at the beginning, middle and end of the placement so that (s)he has sufficient knowledge of the student's proficiencies to make a judgement.

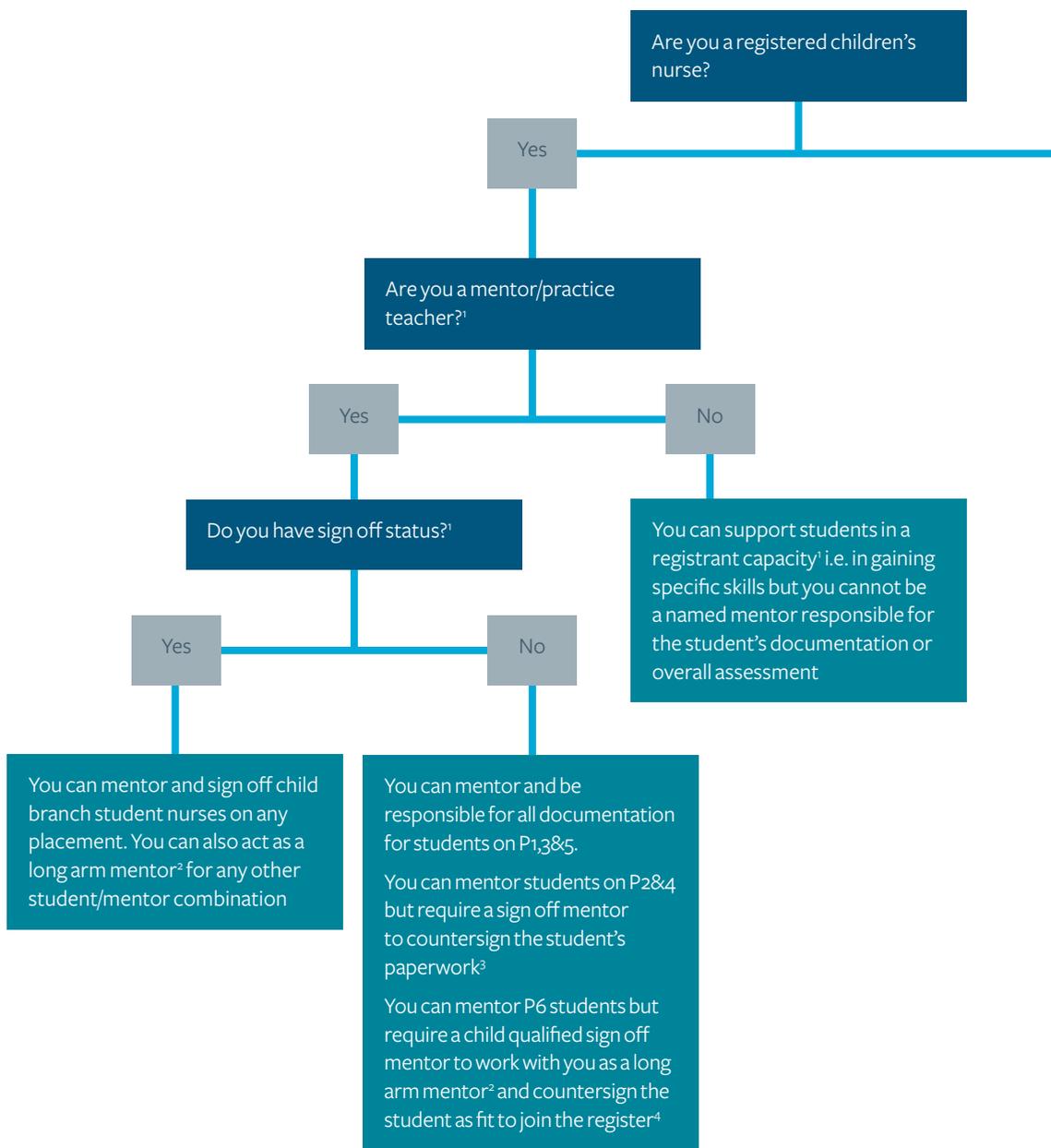


<sup>3</sup> Please see University of Southampton Assessment of Practice: Nursing NMC Proficiencies pages 70 &116

<sup>4</sup> Please see University of Southampton Assessment of Practice: Nursing NMC Proficiencies page 152

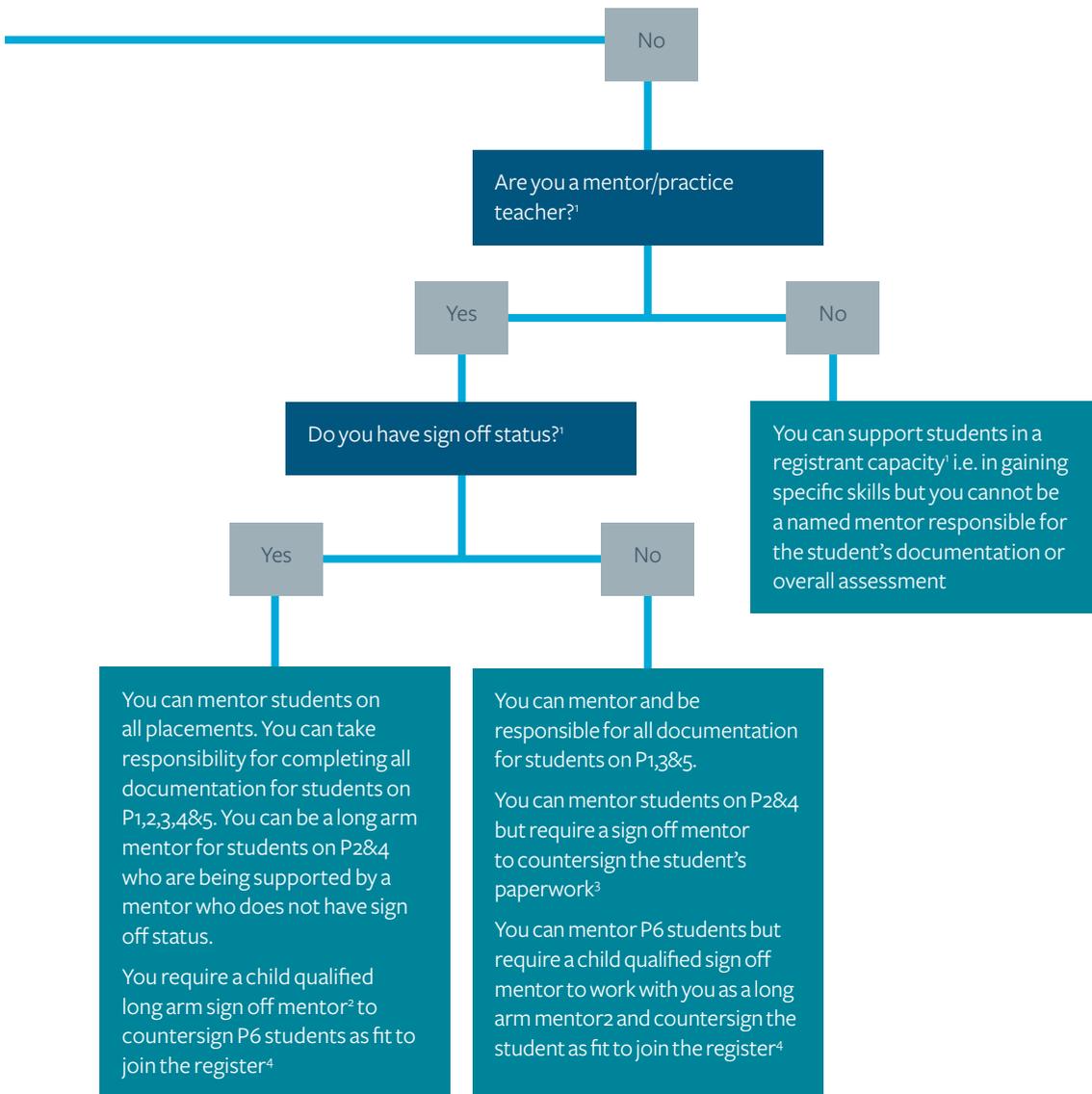
# Child branch

Supporting University of Southampton pre-registration child student nurses in practice



<sup>1</sup> Please see NMC Standards to support learning and assessment in practice (2008) for definitions

<sup>2</sup> A long arm mentor is defined as someone who does not see the student on a day by day basis but supports the mentor from a distance and who meets with the mentor and student together to discuss progress/ achievements at the beginning, middle and end of the placement so that (s)he has sufficient knowledge of the student's proficiencies to make a judgement.

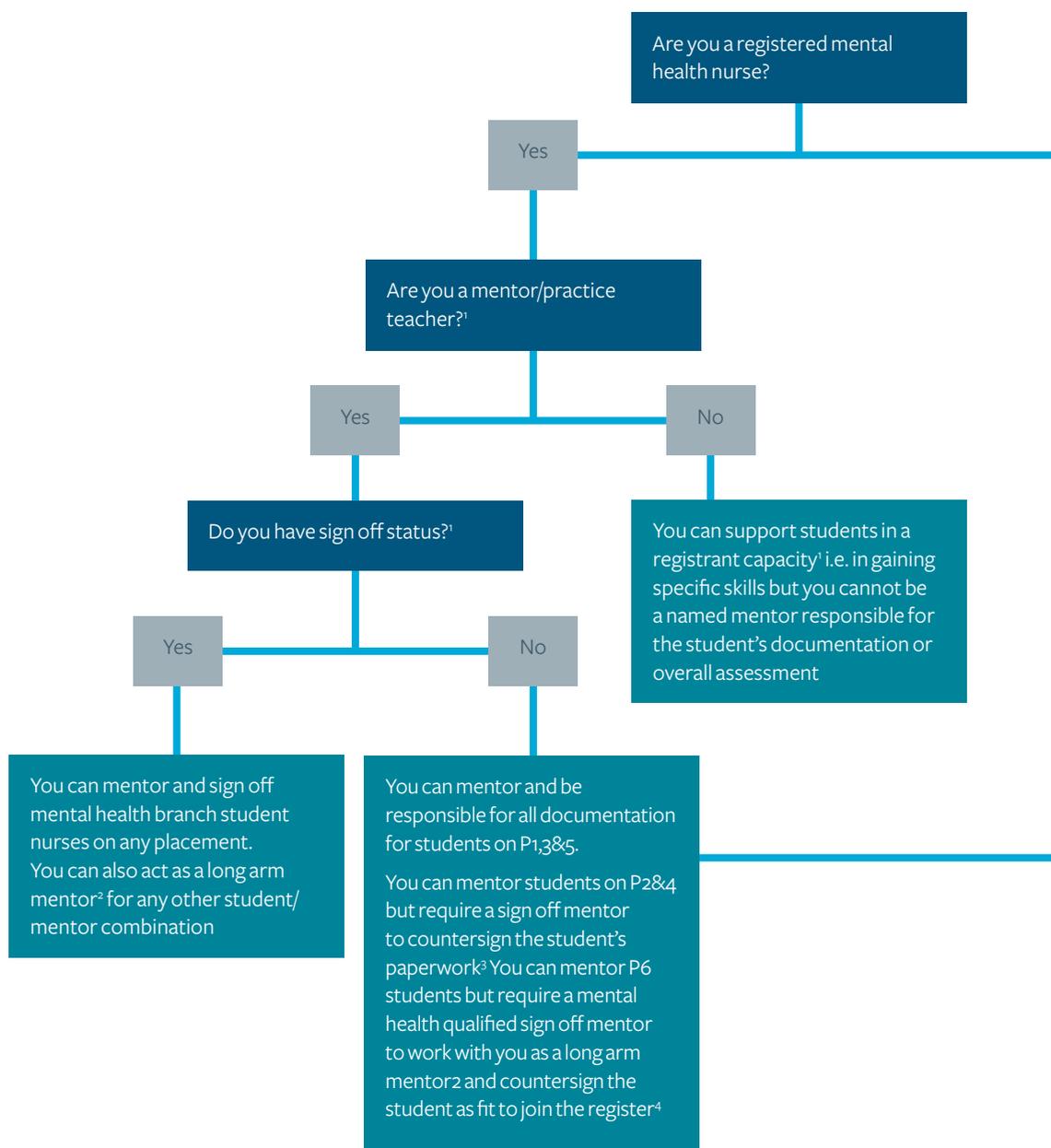


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<sup>4</sup> Please see University of Southampton Assessment of Practice: Nursing NMC Proficiencies page 152

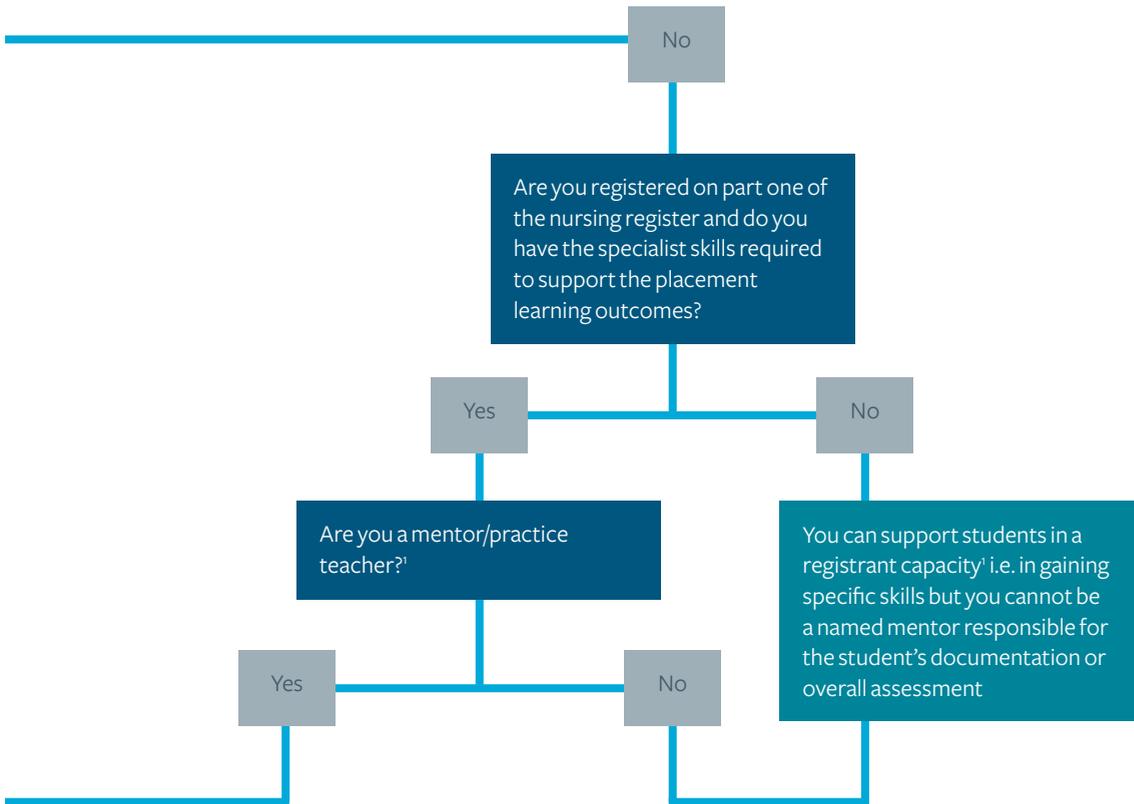
# Mental health branch

Supporting University of Southampton pre-registration mental health student nurses in practice



<sup>1</sup> Please see NMC Standards to support learning and assessment in practice (2008) for definitions

<sup>2</sup> A long arm mentor is defined as someone who does not see the student on a day by day basis but supports the mentor from a distance and who meets with the mentor and student together to discuss progress/ achievements at the beginning, middle and end of the placement so that (s)he has sufficient knowledge of the student's proficiencies to make a judgement.

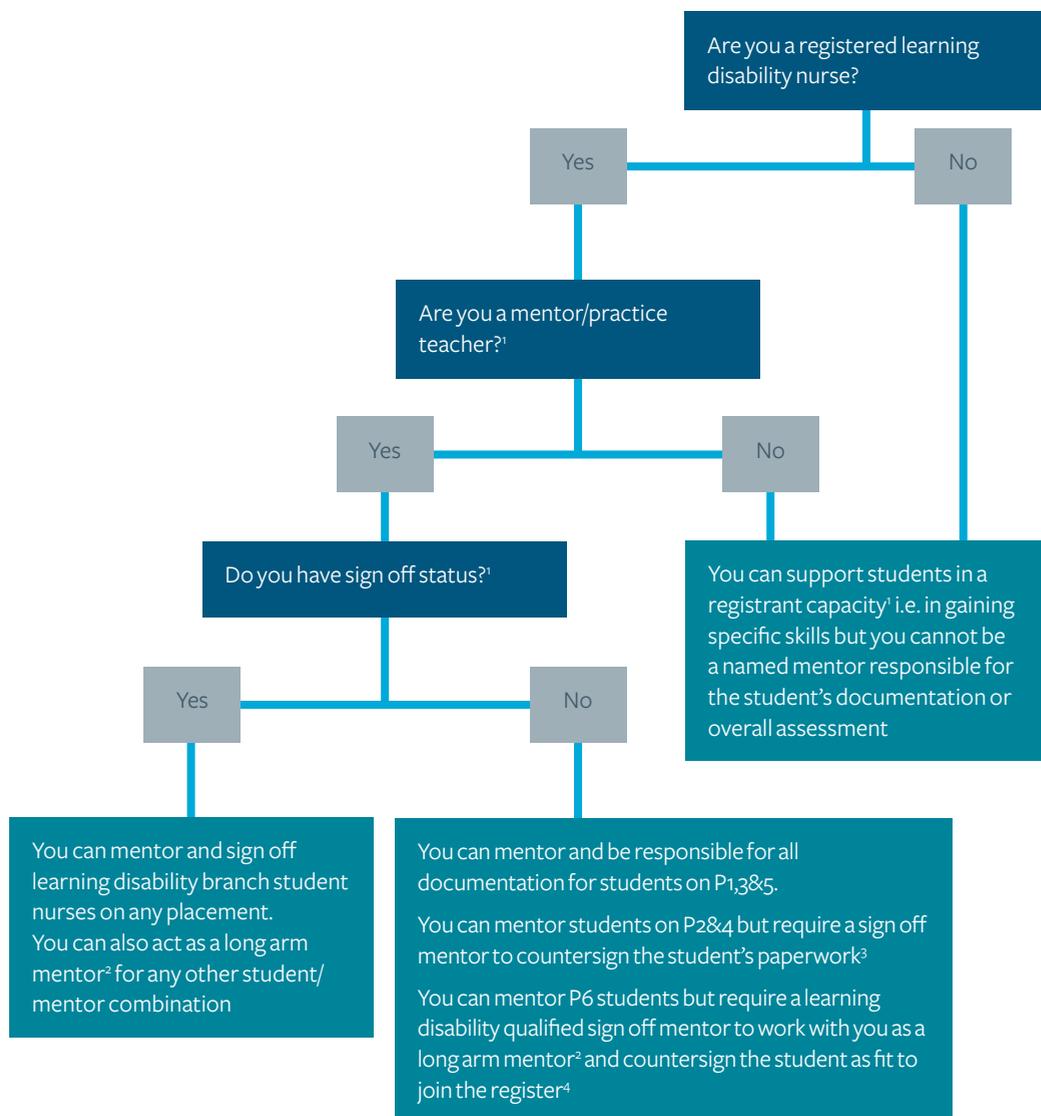


<sup>3</sup> Please see University of Southampton Assessment of Practice: Nursing NMC Proficiencies pages 70 & 116

<sup>4</sup> Please see University of Southampton Assessment of Practice: Nursing NMC Proficiencies page 152

# Learning disability branch

Supporting University of Southampton pre-registration learning disability student nurses in practice



<sup>1</sup> Please see NMC Standards to support learning and assessment in practice (2008) for definitions

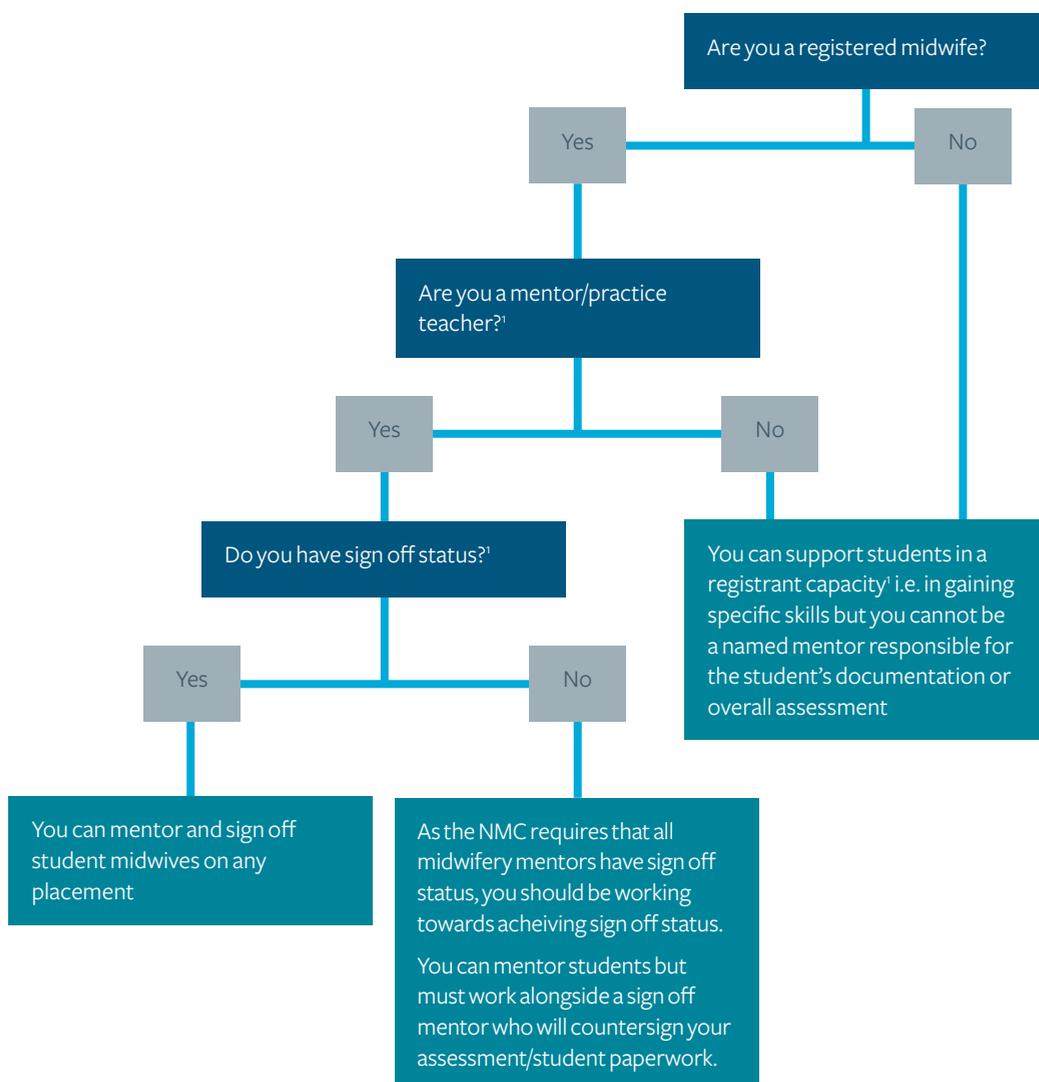
<sup>2</sup> A long arm mentor is defined as someone who does not see the student on a day by day basis but supports the mentor from a distance and who meets with the mentor and student together to discuss progress/achievements at the beginning, middle and end of the placement so that (s)he has sufficient knowledge of the student's proficiencies to make a judgement.

<sup>3</sup> Please see University of Southampton Assessment of Practice: Nursing NMC Proficiencies pages 70 & 116

<sup>4</sup> Please see University of Southampton Assessment of Practice: Nursing NMC Proficiencies page 152

# Midwifery

Supporting University of Southampton pre-registration midwifery students in practice



<sup>1</sup> Please see NMC Standards to support learning and assessment in practice (2008) for definitions

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