

## Education Seminars 2011 – Case Study 6

### Practice Placements

#### **Situation**

As a result of consistently poor feedback from students about their practice placements, an education provider has decided to alter the way students undertake their placement experience. The main area criticism of the feedback was that they were expected to act as professionals as soon as they arrived and were often treated simply as 'another pair of hands' throughout their time on placement. This led to many students getting consistently low marks as they went out on placement after the first three weeks and were often unsure of what they should be doing. Further criticism was that the practice placement educators simply did not know what their role was in regards to the students.

Instead of 2 'long blocks' of placement experience, lasting 8 weeks each, the programme team have decided that students will now take 4 small 'blocks' lasting three weeks each interspersed with the academic sessions. These smaller blocks will allow students to 'rotate' more amongst the placements that the programme team have in their database. The programme team also feel that this format allows them to take on the pastoral role in the placement setting negating the need for practice placement educators to do this.

#### **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 practice placement educator in this situation would you prefer to have students for eight weeks or four weeks? Would you be happy that the programme team seem to have made these changes based primarily on student feedback?