



Sign-off mentor and midwife guide to

OPAL (Online Practice Assessment for Learning)

What is OPAL? A new and innovative online practice assessment tool for Bournemouth University (BU) Health and Social Care students. OPAL replaces the current paper practice assessment documents (PAD) for all student midwife cohorts starting in practice from November 2014.

Who will use OPAL? Student midwives, sign-off mentors, midwives (those working with students but without a mentorship qualification) and BU tutors.

Where can I use OPAL? OPAL can be accessed on any computer, tablet device or smart phone that is linked to the Internet. This may be a hospital or clinic based PC, or students may ask to use their tablet devices/phones in the practice area. It is fine for you to log in as a mentor on a student device, because OPAL recognises you by your sign-in details regardless of what device you are using....but you must remember to sign out at the end of the session.

How do I access OPAL? Search for www.opalbu.com in your search engine. You might want to make the site one of your 'favorites' for easy future access. You can then register for OPAL (more details on next page).

How does OPAL work? Each student, sign-off mentor, midwife and tutor will have a unique profile in OPAL. Your student can generate a 'relationship' between their profile and your profile, enabling you to assess them. Although the webpages that you can see when in your own profile may look similar to that of your student, your pages have a different level of access. OPAL will allow you to compete or sign particular elements depending on whether you are a sign-off mentor or midwife. The student (and other sign-off mentors or midwives attached to their profile) can view all of the comments or marks that you have created, but cannot alter them. Likewise you can see the comments that your student or colleagues have made but cannot amend them. Each action you take will be identified in the system by your username. Some tasks require one of the individuals in the 'relationship' to take an action (such as the student undertaking a self assessment) before the appropriate fields open up for the other person to respond. There is no limit to the number of students that you can have a 'relationship' with in OPAL. BU tutors can view the student's profile at any time.

What happens if I have a problem? OPAL is designed to be an intuitive system and we would suggest you simply explore the webpages to gain familiarity. Your student will understand how to use the basic functions of OPAL, but the aim is that you will gradually learn the different parts of the system together. If required you can find further information and assistance from:

OPAL webpages: <http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/hsc/placements/opal-at-bu.html>

OPAL dedicated helpdesk: opalsupport@bournemouth.ac.uk

It is important to remember that this is a pilot project. The key strength of this is that we can build a system that works for mentors and students by responding to user feedback...as such it will not be 'set in stone' until the pilot project is complete. This is just the start point. However, be assured that the data that you input will keep its integrity even when changes are made to OPAL's software.

THIS LEAFLET WILL GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE STEPS YOU WILL NEED TO TAKE AT EACH POINT IN THE STUDENT'S JOURNEY

What you can do in OPAL...

Our assessment processes have changed for midwifery students as part of our curriculum revalidation. This development has been in response to mentor, student and lecturer comments. As such:

- Skills are now assessed using according to a simple 3 level scale.
- Competencies are now assessed using 5 holistic benchmark statements. Assessment of Competence is undertaken *formatively* at the end of Semesters 1 and 2, and *summatively* in Semester 3 prior to the exam board.
- Placement reviews (initial, mid-point and final interviews) are similar to those in the PAD document

The table below describes when each assessment/action needs to be undertaken.

What	When	Where	Who
Register as a sign-off mentor or midwife Students need to activate their registration and link to tutor	ASAP	Home page	Sign-off mentors and midwives Students
Create a 'relationship' between student and mentor	If working 'ad hoc', not as a named mentor	Level 4, 5 or 6 tab* The current year is identified by the *	Student
Placement Details	Beginning of placement	Level 4, 5 or 6 tab	Student
Initial Interview	Beginning of placement	Level 4, 5 or 6 tab	Student, Sign-off mentors and midwives
Mid-placement Interview	Mid placement if relevant	Level 4, 5 or 6 tab	Sign-off mentors and midwives
Final Interview	End of placement	Level 4, 5 or 6 tab	Student, Sign-off mentors and midwives
Development Plans	If there is a development need	Level 4, 5 or 6 tab	Sign-off mentors
Assessment of Skills	Throughout placements	Continuous Assessment tab	Sign-off mentors
Verification of EU and other clinical experiences	Throughout programme	Continuous Assessment tab	Sign-off mentors and midwives
Communication with the student/tutor	As required	Continuous Assessment tab	Sign-off mentors and midwives
Formative Assessment of Competence (RAG marking)	End of Semesters 1 and 2	Semester tab	Student and Sign-off mentors
Summative Assessment of Competence (RAG marking)	Before 'hand in' date in Semester 3	Semester tab	Student and Sign-off mentors
Hours	Throughout Semester	Semester tab	Student
Spoke placements	Not used by midwifery		
User feedback	Not currently used by midwifery		
End of year Final Sign Off	Once all elements of the year are completed	Once Semester 3 is closed	Student and Sign-off mentors

*Year 1 students are in Level 4, Year 2 students are in Level 5 and Year 3 students are Level 6

When and how to do it....

PLEASE NOTE: YOU SHOULD NOT TRY TO RUN TWO PROFILES (eg A STUDENT AND MENTOR) AS BY OPENING TWO WINDOWS ON THE SAME COMPUTER OR DEVICE AT THE SAME TIME

As soon as possible:

Register as a user

- Search online for www.opalbu.com and click on opalBU.com – Home.
- You may want to save this site in your ‘favorites’ for future use.
- Once in OPAL click on ‘Mentor registration’ in the left hand margin.
- Complete the mentor registration form.
- Your username should be your first and last name together (for example jeanjones), whatever you would prefer. It is not upper or lower case specific.
- You can choose whatever password you would like, providing it is not easily guessable and your students do not know what it is.
- Please always register using your NHS email address if you have one (if you need to register a non NHS email address please be aware that we will audit this and email non NHS emails to confirm user identify)
- Please register as either a ‘Registered Midwife and a Sign-off Midwifery Mentor’ if you have completed and passed an approved NMC mentorship programme or as a ‘Registered Midwife and NOT a Sign-off Mentor’.
- The option chosen should match the level of qualification recorded by your Trust. Your level of access will vary depending on the status you enter at registration. If you subsequently undertake/pass a mentorship qualification your mentorship status can be changed.

Type of profession:

Midwifery

- I am a registered **Midwife** and a sign-off mentor
- I am a registered **Midwife** and am NOT a sign off mentor
- I am a registered **Midwife** completing learning and assessing in practice course

Nursing

- I am a registered **Nurse** and an approved Nursing mentor
- I am a registered **Nurse** and an approved sign-off Nursing mentor
- I am a registered **Nurse** (non mentor)
- I am a registered **professional** (non nurse) and involved in supervision of students on placement
- I am a registered **Nurse** completing learning and assessing in practice course

Social Work

- I am a registered social work **practice educator**
- I am a registered social work **placement supervisor**

NMC/HCPC/Professional Registration Number

Place of Work (e.g. Name of Hospital) *

Department (e.g. Ward name/number)

Register

- You need to enter your NMC number, because signing students work, skills or competencies requires you to be an RM in order to do so. You do not need to add your staff number.
- Your ‘Location’ is your Trust’s name
- You can now work as a sign-off mentor or midwife with any student midwife in your Trust who creates a ‘relationship’ with you so you will not need to register again.
- Next time you enter OPAL you can log-in in the top right corner of the screen.

At the beginning of a placement:

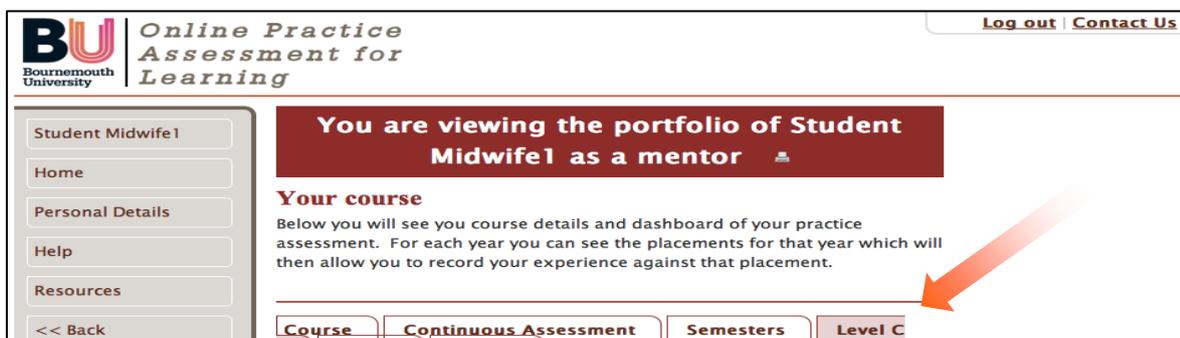
Please note: We recommend that if you want to type a length of text that you/the student write it out in a Word document first and copy/paste it into OPAL. This means you will not lose your writing if the Internet connection drops out.

Fill in the placement details page

- The student will need to 'populate' the details about her placement first.
- She will ask you to discuss some 'housekeeping' issues with her as part of this. She will have received Moving and Handling training, but please discuss any particular issues around this in the clinical area, and ensure she understands where equipment is kept and what the procedures are for resuscitation, fire and emergencies in the area.
- At this point the student needs to create a 'relationship' with you. You will need to have registered for OPAL first so that she can do this.
- You can be linked as the student's named mentor, and complete the initial interview with her if you are either a sign-off mentor or a midwife without a sign-off qualification.

Initial Interview

- If you are the student's named mentor (either a sign-off mentor or a midwife without a mentorship qualification) you need to have an Initial Interview with the student to discuss the aims and objectives of the placement and write these into OPAL.
- The student should write up her plans for the placement either before or during your discussion so that you can then agree them.
- To agree the plans and complete the initial interview page this you need to sign in to your OPAL account and locate the student from your list of learners in the home page (as above).



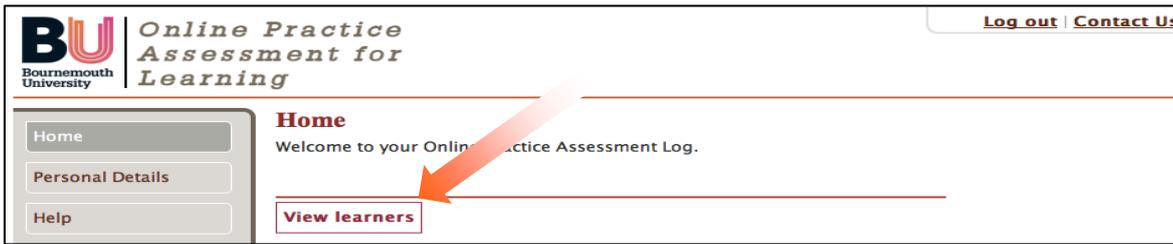
- Click on the Level tab.
- You will see the details of the current placement.
- Click on the Initial Interview and amend/sign.
- Your student will see your comments when she goes into OPAL in her own profile. She will be able to add comments and sign to confirm that she agrees with what has been written.
- You can view the details you have typed in by clicking on the little printer icon in the rust coloured bar at the top (this will be made far more obvious shortly).

During the placement:

If you start working with a new student midwife:

- A student can add you to their profile if you are working with them on an 'ad hoc' basis.
- Go to your Home page

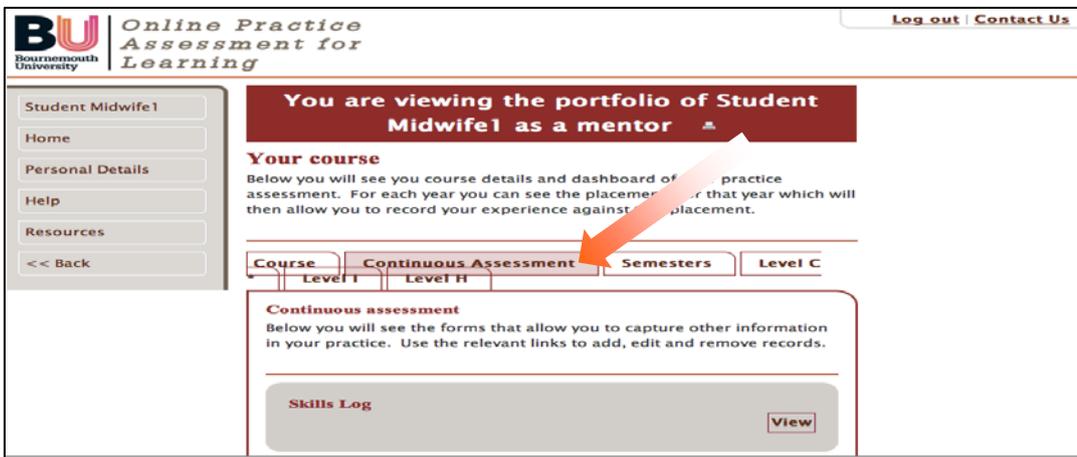
- When you then click on the 'my learners' button you will see a list of students who have linked to you. Their names will appear under different headings depending on whether you are their named mentor.



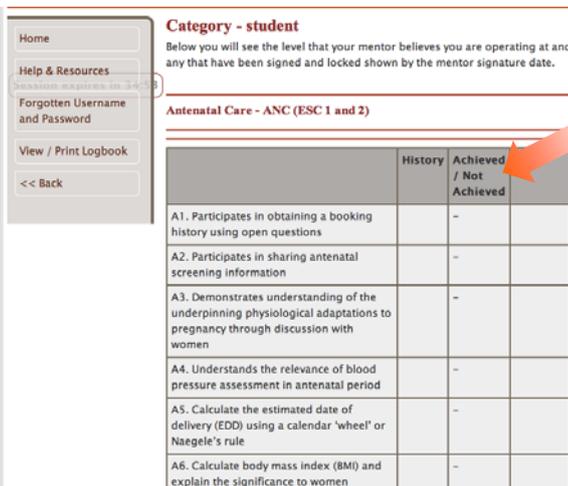
- Click on the individual student name to access their profile.

Assessment of Skills

- Skills can be assessed at any time by a sign-off mentor. We recommend you review the skills pages frequently with your student. Those midwives who are not sign-off mentors will need to liaise with a sign-off mentor so that they can sign these areas.
- To assess a skill go to the Continuous Assessment tab



- Go to the Skills Log section and press the 'view' button
- The skills are arranged in sections, so click on the title that you require
- The skills appear in a table.
- The level that the student must achieve is 'Achieved'.
- If you assess a student who has previously been Achieving, and she is no longer able to undertake the skill effectively you can remark it as 'Not achieved'.



- After marking the skills in this section **go to the Save button** at the bottom of the screen.
- Your name and the date the skill was assessed will appear in the final column. A history of previous assessment of this skill is viewed in the 2rd column.

Verifying EU and other clinical experiences

- Currently students will still be keeping a paper Experience Log (little yellow books) as well as inputting data into OPAL. This will enable us to ascertain the most effective and secure way to maintain these records electronically.
- All sign-off mentors and midwives can verify experiences (eg births) in OPAL.
- In the Continuous Assessment tab go to the Experiences section and click on the 'View' button
- The student will have input experiences listed in her paper Experience Log. You need to verify these, and can do this in batches if required.
- You will see the experiences presented on screen with a small box to the right of each.
- Choose the items you wish to verify by clicking/declicking on the little blue box to create a tick.
- At the bottom click on the sign box. Your name and the date will appear next to the experience.
- Please note you should not input Experiences in OPAL for the student (they must do it themselves) because this may result in double counting.

Communication

- All sign-off mentors and midwives can write communications for the student, colleagues and tutors to read. This may be particularly helpful if you only work on an 'ad hoc' basis with a student and wish to comment.
- To make a comment or observation relating to your student go to the Continuous Assessment tab.
- Scroll down to the Communication section and click the 'View' button.
- Use the Title box to clearly identify the headline of your comment.
- Write your comment, you can 'quick save' at any time. This is useful because the system will time out 30 minutes after you last logged in or saved work.
- When you have finished you click 'save and next'. This will take you back to the list of comments.
- If you want to add to your comment press the pen icon. If you wish to delete press the bin icon.
- When you are happy with your comment you need to press 'save and next' AND you need to press the sign button on the table of comments. Your comment is now locked.
- You can review the comment by clicking the printer icon. Be aware that this opens a separate window, so when you have read the comment just close the window to return to the main screen...you will not see a 'back' button.

Mid placement reviews

- These only need to be completed for longer placements (4 weeks and more). However, for all placements, regardless of length, you still need to document in OPAL if a Mid-placement review is not required or not undertaken. You might find you do this task at the same time as undertaking the Final Interview in a short placement.
- Go to the Level tab.
- Identify the correct placement.
- Click on the Mid placement review.
- If appropriate click on the 'not required' or 'not undertaken' box, and skip the assessment.

Development Plan

- This is only required if the student/mentor/tutor identify a particular issue that needs action

At the end of the placement:

Final Interview

- You and your student both need to complete a review of the placement following your Final Interview.
- Go to the Level tab
- Click on the Final Interview button
- Please provide this formative feedback for students with reference to the assessment of skills and in relation to the five benchmark competences;
 1. Clinical skills
 2. Underpinning knowledge
 3. Communication
 4. Professional behavior and attitude
 5. Professional accountability
- Save your entry.
- *This review is vital because it will be used by sign-off mentors at the end of the last placement in each semester and prior to the exam board to inform their formative and summative assessments.*

At the end of semesters 1 and 2:

Formative Assessment of Competence

- In addition to the Final Interview there is a formal Assessment of Competence.
- The multiple competencies in the previous PAD document have been replaced with 5 Benchmark Statements that aim to holistically assess the student's competence.
- A *formative* Assessment of Competence is completed by a sign-off mentor at the ends of Semesters 1 and 2.
- To access the Assessment of Competence go to the Semester tab



- Scroll down to the Semester Competence section and click 'View'
- You will see an explanation of the Assessment of Competence and RAG (red/amber/green) marking
- As you scroll further the Semester assessment appears.
- The student has to complete a self-assessment first in order for the appropriate fields to open for you.
- You will find an area to fill in your comments about the student's competence during the semester. Follow the on screen instructions.

- Remember to save your work. We would recommend writing your review in a Word document and copying and pasting this in case you get 'timed out'.
- You will need to use the comments of all the sign-off mentors from the placements in the semester to help you with your assessment. You can find these by going to Level tab and clicking on the printer icon at the top of the page.
- After you have saved the assessment marks they will appear in the marking box.
- PLEASE NOTE information in the text on this page can be related to generating a Development Plan and for advising the student's Academic Advisor when students are not demonstrating competence.

Prior to the 'hand in' date:

Summative Assessment of Competence

- This *summative* Assessment of Competence provides the mark for the year that will be taken to the exam board. This is the average of the marks for the five benchmark competencies. If any of the benchmark competencies has been marked at 39 or below then the Assessment of Competence will be a fail.
- The assessment should only be completed if all of the Skills have been assessed. If any Skills have not been achieved then the Assessment of Competence must still be completed but will result in a fail (because by definition at least one of the Benchmark Statements will be a fail as a result of the required skills not being achieved).
- The summative Assessment of Competence is found in the same area as the previous Assessments of Competence, and is completed in the same way (see above).
- If you have concerns about completing this Assessment of Competence please do not hesitate to get in contact with the students' Academic Advisor, who can offer support and guidance on any aspects of the assessment.

On the published 'hand in' date the Skills and Assessment of Competence areas of OPAL will be automatically locked. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that she and her sign off mentor have completed all of the required sections prior to the 'hand in' date. A mark of 0% will be presented to the exam board for an incomplete submission.

The End Of Year and Final Sign Off

This is final action and will close any access to the student's records eg EU experiences, clinical hours records or placements attended after the 'hand-in' date.

Level 4: The 'hand in' date will co-inside with the end of their final placement. Therefore the Final Sign Off should be completed before submission.

Level 5: The 'hand in' date will be before their last placement. Therefore we recommend that you only complete the Final Sign Off after this further placement is completed on the last week of year 2.

Level 6: The 'hand in' date will be during the later weeks of their elective placement. Therefore we recommend that the Final Sign Off should be completed before submission. EU experiences can continue to be recorded in your Clinical Experience Log if required.

Final Sign Off

- A final sign-off page will appear to confirm that the student has achieved the skills and competence to complete the unit.
- Once the student has invited you to complete their progression, follow the onscreen instructions.

Leave new comment View existing comments

You are viewing the portfolio of Sophie Sophie Midwifery Student as a mentor [View Logbook](#)

Logbook for Sophie Sophie Midwifery Student
Sign Off
 You should review the portfolio carefully ensuring items have been completed.
 Once you have made your assessment decision will find a link at the bottom of this page that will allow you to make you assessment.

Midwifery - BSMWF

Level C +

Level I

Level H

Continuous Assessment

Complete assessment

- You will be required to confirm you are a sign-off mentor and that the student has met the criteria to progress to the subsequent year. In the mentor position held box, please enter your name and position eg: MMidwife, Integrated Team Midwife.

Leave new comment View existing comments

You are viewing the portfolio of Sophie Sophie Midwifery Student as a mentor [View Logbook](#)

FINAL ASSESSMENT OF PRACTICE FOR LEVEL C
 (to be completed by a sign-off mentor)

Criteria for Sign-off Mentors

The mentor:

- Is identified on the local register as a sign-off mentor
- Is registered with the NMC on the same part of the register and working in the same field of practice (branch) as that in which the student intends to qualify
- Is clinically current and capable in the field of practice in which the student is being assessed
- Has met the NMC requirements to remain on the local register Has a working knowledge of current programme requirements, practice assessment strategies and relevant changes in education and practice for the student they are assessing
- 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 competency requirements at the end of a programme. (Standards to support learning and assessment in practice NMC 2008)

Mentor Sign Date 19/09/2015

Mentor Decision Pass Fail

Mentor Position Held MMidwife Integrated Te

Save

- Please ensure you press save, and the following screen will display. OPAL is now complete and ready for submission and/or final end of year confirmation.

Leave new comment View existing comments

You are viewing the portfolio of Sophie Sophie Midwifery Student as a mentor [View Logbook](#)

Logbook for Sophie Sophie Midwifery Student
 Midwifery - BSMWF

Level C +

Mentor Sign Date 19/09/2015

Mentor Decision Pass

Mentor Position Held MMidwife Integrated Team