**CPD@RCOT Reflective scenario**

**Supporting an underperforming learner**

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| Your name: Click or tap here to enter text.  Date: Click or tap here to enter text. |

About this learning resource

This Reflective Scenario is designed to help you consider the difficult topic of potentially failing a practice education learner, through a structured reflective process. It will help you to clarify your thoughts, deepen your understanding and support you to plan what actions and further learning you may want to take as you consider whether a learner is meeting the criteria to pass a placement.

You can use this resource in different ways. You can complete it on your own. You may want to make use of it as part of your supervision or in a group setting. You can also adopt a blended learning approach. This means you first complete the reflection on your own, and then meet with a group to share each other’s outcomes, enriching your learning experiences.

As you work through the Reflective Scenario, keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers. The aim of this learning resource is to support you to reflect, learn and apply your learning within your own professional context. That is why there are no answers provided. Don’t rush through – you do not need to get through the resource at one sitting. You might want to return to some sections several times before going on to the next. There is no set time this should take you to complete.

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| **The CPD@RCOT Reflective Scenario resource is based on materials developed by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. We are grateful to them for sharing with us.** |

Scenario

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| You are a practice educator supporting a learner on placement. You go through the (formative) half-way assessment and confirm your concerns that the learner is not, at this point, meeting the criteria to pass, and is significantly below the level required. You feel mixed emotions about this situation as you worry about the impact on them, their programme progression and career, while you are conscious of your responsibility to honestly reflect the learner’s progress. |

Initial thoughts

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| Capture your initial thoughts on this scenario. What is your first reaction? Do you have ideas about what you should do? Remember, there are no right or wrong answers, just record what occurs to you. |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

Reflective questions

Consider the following questions and record your answers on the following page. Refer to the resources on pages 9-10 if you need to. If you are working through this on paper, add as many extra sheets as you need. You might want to come back to these questions more than once before going on to the next stage. Remember that the list is not exhaustive.

1. What are the signs that may indicate the learner is not meeting the placement expectations?
2. How will I share this with the learner?
3. Might there be complex reasons that affect their ability to learn and do well? For example, a learning difficulty such as dyslexia, home situation etc.
4. What level of insight does the learner have? Are they aware they are not currently meeting the standards required? What feedback mechanisms are in place?
5. Is the learner fully aware of the placement expectations? Have I been clear about them from the outset?
6. If I were that learner, what would I want to know?
7. Is my supervision style complimenting my student’s learning style? Are there ways I could adapt or change to facilitate their development?
8. What do I need to consider about the power relationship between me as a practice educator and the learner in this situation?
9. When should I make the university aware of the situation?
10. In what ways can the university support me and the learner?
11. What support do I need and how can I get that?
12. What support could the wider team offer (a) to me and (b) to the learner?
13. What strategies will we put in place immediately and for the remainder of the placement to support the learner to meet the requirements?
14. How will we review if these strategies are working?
15. What are the next steps to take if the learner is not making improvements following the actions I have now identified?

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| My answers |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

Revisiting your initial thoughts

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| Now look at your initial response in relation to your answers to the reflective questions. What gaps have you identified? Have your thoughts changed on what you feel are the priorities? What have you learned through reflection about your practice? You will have a chance to record a scenario action plan on the following page. |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

Action planning

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| If you were involved in such a scenario, what would you do? |
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Plan your learning

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| As a result of your reflection, have you identified any knowledge gaps? How will you go on to develop your knowledge and skills? When will you do it? What support will you need?  See pages 9-10 for suggestions on further information and support. |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

Further thoughts and actions

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| Use this page if you have further thoughts or to take discussion notes. |
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**Reflective scenario:**

**Supporting an underperforming learner**

Recommended: Review your learning

Set a date when you will come back to this resource and think about the impact it has had on your practice. Set enough time to allow you to engage in any further learning you have identified that you want to take, and to give you time to apply your reflections into your practice. When completed, you may wish to store this page in your CPD Portfolio.

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| Date that I am reviewing my learning: |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

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| Further learning I have engaged in to deepen my skills and knowledge on this professional topic: |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

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| Situations and ways in which I have applied my learning in practice: |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

Feedback

**Found broken links? Let us know and we’ll fix them: prof.dev@rcot.co.uk**

Your views are important to us! Please send us your feedback about this Reflective Scenario so that we can make improvements for future participants. Or, tell us this resource worked well for you! Get in touch in any of the following ways -

* Qr code

  Description automatically generatedClick to fill out our [feedback form](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=7-ghQ1rN2Eadr3VQBbQNOS0NYIramYdIkgmDOs0DjRVUMTRIMVZQMzE3VU1YNjROMDc5UTBRSEdOUy4u)

* Find the feedback form at <https://bit.ly/3yC3e26>

* Get to the feedback form through the QR Code.
* Email your suggestions, or any problems you encountered, to [Prof.Dev@rcot.co.uk](mailto:Prof.Dev@rcot.co.uk).

Further information and support

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

Beveridge J, Pentland D (2020) A mapping review of models of practice education in allied health and social care professions. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 83(8),* 488–513.   
doi: [https://doi.org/10.1177/0308022620904325](https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0308022620904325)

Broughton W, Harris G eds (2019) *Principles for continuing professional development and lifelong learning in health and social care,* The Interprofessional CPD and Lifelong Learning UK Working Group. Bridgwater: College of Paramedics. Available at: <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2019/01/14.12.18_CPD_Principles_FINAL_Jan_2019-1.pdf> Accessed on 29.06.21

Cardell B, Koski J, Wahl J, Rock W, Kirby A (2017) Underperforming students: Factors and decision-making in occupational therapy programs. Journal of Occupational Therapy Education, 1*(3),* <https://doi.org/10.26681/jote.2017.010301>

College of Occupational Therapists (2015b) *Supervision: guidance for occupational therapists and their managers*, London: COT.   
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Faculty Focus (2019) *What to do when a student is failing: A guide for mentors*, Available at: <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-and-learning/failing-student/> Accessed on 10.11.21

Grant, T (2021) *Occupational therapy placements. A pocket guide* [ebook]. London: Lantern Publishing. Available through the RCOT website at: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/library-resources/search-library-catalogue>

# Health and Care Professions Council (2021) *Supervision*. Available at: <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/meeting-our-standards/supervision-leadership-and-culture/supervision/>

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Healey J, Spencer M (2007) Surviving your placement in health and social care: A student handbook. Oxford: University Press.

# Heaslip V, Scammell J (2012) Failing underperforming students: The role of grading in practice assessment. *Nurse Education in Practice* *12(2)*, 95-100. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Vanessa-Heaslip/publication/51639096_Failing_underperforming_students_The_role_of_grading_in_practice_assessment/links/5c2c88ee458515a4c706a301/Failing-underperforming-students-The-role-of-grading-in-practice-assessment.pdf> Accessed on 10.11.21

Nicola-Richmond K, Butterworth B, Hitch D (2017) What factors contribute to failure of fieldwork placement? Perspectives of supervisors and university fieldwork educators. *World Federation of Occupational Therapists Bulletin, 73(2),* 117-124. doi: [10.1080/14473828.2016.1149981](https://doi.org/10.1080/14473828.2016.1149981) Available through the RCOT website at: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/library-resources/search-library-catalogue>

Royal College of Occupational Therapists (2020a) *Learning and development standards for pre-registration education*, London: RCOT. Available through the RCOT website at: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/node/2311> Accessed on 27.06.21

Royal College of Occupational Therapists (2020b) *Supporting occupational therapists & students with disabilities through reasonable adjustments*, London: RCOT. Available through the RCOT website at: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/sites/default/files/Supporting_occupational_therapists_and_students_with_disabilitis_through_reasonble_adjustments_%28revised_Aug_2020%29.pdf> Accessed on 10.11.21

Royal College of Occupational Therapists (2021a) *Career Development Framework*, London: RCOT. Available through the RCOT website at: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/publications/career-development-framework> Accessed on 28.06.21

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**SOURCES OF SUPPORT**

Your university contact should be your first source of support. They will be able to offer advice, assistance and possibly practical action to support both you and the learner.

Use your supervisions with your own supervisor and link with your network of occupational therapists and other practice educator AHPs if possible to seek advice from those who have been in a similar situation.

Health Education England E-Learning Hub: [Educator Training Resources](https://portal.e-lfh.org.uk/Catalogue/Index?HierarchyId=0_36974&programmeId=36974)

NB: some resources on this site are open access for all and others require registration

NHS Education for Scotland: [Facilitation of Learning](https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/ahp-practice-education/)

These well-regarded free courses are hosted by FutureLearn and produced by UK universities:

[Clinical Supervision: Assessing and Providing Feedback](https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/clinical-supervision-assessment-feedback)

[Clinical Supervision: Planning your Professional Development](https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/clinical-supervision-professional-development)

[Clinical Supervision: Teaching and Facilitating Learning](https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/clinical-supervision-teaching-facilitating)

[Developing Expert Educators for Healthcare Professions](https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/from-philosophy-to-practice)