

Level 4 Independent Advocacy Practice - Practice Observation Guidance

Level 4 Independent Advocacy Qualification (Optional Units)

Your practice observation is a compulsory part of your qualification. It enables your assessor to confirm that you can apply your knowledge, skills and values whilst carrying out real advocacy work. Rather than using role plays or artificial assessment activities, we believe the best evidence comes from observing you undertaking your normal advocacy role. Our aim is to make this process as supportive, flexible and convenient as possible whilst ensuring sufficient evidence is gathered to demonstrate competence.

Why is a Practice Observation Required?

Every candidate completing an optional unit must successfully complete a practice observation. Alongside your written assignments, Professional Knowledge Assessments, work products and case studies, it provides evidence that you can work safely, professionally and in a person-centred way in real practice.

Our Assessment Philosophy

This is not an examination, and you are not expected to perform differently because your assessor is present. We simply want to observe you carrying out your normal advocacy activities. The assessor is interested in how you communicate, empower people, apply legislation, work ethically, maintain independence and respond professionally to real situations.

Remote Observation – Our Standard Approach

Wherever practicable, observations will normally be undertaken remotely using Microsoft Teams, Zoom, telephone calls or other suitable technology. This approach offers flexibility, reduces travelling time, is easier to arrange around busy workloads, and often enables a wider range of advocacy activities to be observed. If you believe a remote observation is impracticable or unlikely to generate sufficient evidence, simply email your assessor to discuss arranging a face-to-face observation.

Examples of Activities That May Be Observed

- Initial meetings with clients
- Obtaining instructions by telephone or video
- Explaining advocacy, confidentiality and rights
- Best Interests meetings
- Care reviews
- Safeguarding meetings
- Ward rounds
- CPA meetings
- Hospital discharge planning
- IMCA consultations
- Mental Health Tribunal preparation
- Complaints meetings
- Meetings with social workers, nurses or care providers
- Multi-disciplinary meetings
- Supporting a client before or after a formal meeting
- Follow-up reviews
- Closing a case
- Other advocacy activities relevant to your specialist unit

Protecting Client Confidentiality

Client confidentiality always takes priority. Where video technology is used, the camera should normally remain focused on you as the advocate rather than the client. Provided the assessor can observe your practice and hear the interaction where appropriate, it is not normally necessary for the client to appear on camera. Always follow your organisation's confidentiality and information governance procedures.

What Your Assessor Will Be Looking For

- Communication and listening skills
- Person-centred practice
- Professionalism and boundaries
- Independence and empowerment
- Application of relevant legislation
- Ethical decision-making
- Organisation and preparation
- Partnership working
- Professional record keeping where appropriate

How Much Observation Is Required?

There is no fixed duration. Your assessor will observe sufficient practice to make reliable assessment decisions against the relevant learning outcomes and assessment criteria. This may involve one substantial activity or several shorter activities depending upon your advocacy role and specialist unit.

Planning Ahead

Although observations often take place during the latter stages of the qualification, we encourage you to discuss potential opportunities with your assessor early. Early planning helps avoid unnecessary delays and allows the most appropriate advocacy activities to be selected.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will I need to arrange a role play? No. Observations are based on genuine advocacy work.

Can more than one activity be observed? Yes. A combination of activities may be used if this provides the best evidence.

What if a client does not wish to appear on camera? That is entirely acceptable. The focus is normally on observing your professional practice.

Can I request a face-to-face observation? Yes. Contact your assessor if remote observation is impracticable or unsuitable.

Need Advice?

If you are unsure whether a particular activity would be suitable or would like to discuss how your observation could be arranged, please contact your assessor. We will be pleased to help you identify the most appropriate opportunity to demonstrate your practice.