

Northern Ireland

**Social**

**Care**

**Council**

**Professional in Practice  
Individual Assessment Route  
(IAR)**

**Method for Submission: Direct  
Observation Handbook**

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## **Direct Observation**

### **Eligibility Criteria**

- Candidates must be enrolled with the Professional in Practice Framework.
- Candidates must be registered with the NISCC (on Part 1 of the Social Care Register).

Candidates should discuss, with their Line Manager and Professional in Practice Representative, the particular focus of work and which Requirements can be met by observation.

**Candidates should discuss with their agency Professional in Practice Representative their particular work focus and which Requirements are best met by the direct observation method. (Add Link to Requirements).**

### **Word Count**

The emphasis of this method of submission is on observed practice therefore the following word limits apply to the preparation and critical evaluation:

#### **Preparation Piece**

##### **Consolidation and Specialist Award:**

- 1 Requirement - maximum of 750
- 2 Requirements - maximum of 1000
- 3 Requirements - maximum of 1500

##### **Leadership and Strategic Award:**

- 1 Requirement - maximum of 1500
- 2 Requirements - maximum of 2000
- 3 requirements - maximum of 3000

#### **Critical Reflection Word Counts**

##### **Consolidation and Specialist:**

- 1 Requirement - maximum of 1000
- 2 Requirements - maximum of 1500
- 3 Requirements - maximum of 2000

##### **Leadership and Strategic:**

- 1 Requirement - maximum of 2000
- 2 Requirements – maximum of 3000
- 3 Requirements – Maximum of 4000

## Guidance for Candidates

### Assessment Process

There are three components to the assessment process; all three must be submitted to the Social Care Council at the relevant submission point:

- Written Preparation piece
- Observed practice with Assessor report
- Written critical evaluation and reflection

**NB: All three elements *must* meet the required standard.**

### Preparatory Statement

Candidates must submit the preparatory statement to the assessor, at least 5 days before the observation is due to take place. It should be analytical and informed by legislation (where relevant), policy, theory and research. The candidate should be clear about the skills and methods to be used and why.

The candidate must indicate within this work, how they have sought consent or permission from relevant stakeholders, e.g. service users, line manager, training participants, supervisees, social work students.

Where the candidate is being observed on more than one occasion, this should be discussed in the piece.

### Direct Observation

The candidate's practice is observed by an assessor, nominated by their employer, who has completed NI Social Care Council PiP Assessor training.

The observation **cannot** be undertaken by a line manager or team member.

The observation must be for a minimum of **ONE HOUR** for Consolidation and Specialist Award submissions and **TWO HOURS** for Leadership and Strategic Award Submissions.

Observations may take place over one or more sessions.

The observation must be recorded and submitted to the Social Care Council for assessment and moderating purposes.

It should be noted that if any candidate wishes to be assessed for academic credits, a recording of the observation will be forwarded to Ulster University.

Any recording must take account of the principles and policies on consent and confidentiality.

It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the recording meets the required technical specification in terms of format and quality.

The assessor completes the Record of Direct Observation Report. This is shared with the candidate as feedback and as part of the final assessment outcome.

### Critical Evaluation/Reflection

The candidate completes the critical evaluation piece and normally submits to their assessor within 4 weeks of receipt of assessor feedback or on a date agreed in advance with the assessor.

### Content of Submission

Each submission must use the Individual Assessment Route Booklet format which is available on the Learning Zone. This booklet contains the: Front Sheet, Candidate Checklist, Statement of Consent, Statement of Confidentiality, your written submission and the Line Manager Verification Report.

Where part of your submission is in a PDF format (for example: evidence in an APL submission or Assessor Report for a Direct Observation), these can be uploaded to the NISCC Portal as a separate document / documents.

Each direct observation submission should contain the following:

	Number of words	Included in word count
IAR Booklet Forms: Front Sheet, Candidate Checklist, Statement of Consent, Statement of Confidentiality, Line Manager Verification Report.		No
<b>Preparation Piece</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidates should provide a short introduction to their work setting, role and responsibilities.</li> <li>Outline of proposed observation: Who? What? Why? When? Where?*</li> <li>Requirements to be claimed? Why? How?*</li> <li>Identify the core knowledge being applied in the work, including any underpinning legislation and policy.</li> <li>Identify the methods and skills to be used and why?</li> <li>Identify the ethical implications of the work and any preparatory action.</li> <li>What issues can be anticipated and how do you propose to deal with them?</li> </ul>	<b>Preparation Piece</b>  <b>Consolidation and Specialist Awards</b>  1 Requirement - maximum of 750 2 Requirements - maximum of 1000 3 Requirements - maximum of 1500  <b>Leadership and Strategic Award</b>  1 Requirement - maximum of 1500 2 Requirements - maximum of 2000	Yes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>References Section (not included in word count)*</li> </ul>	3 requirements - maximum of 3000	
<b>Practice Assessor Report</b> <b>This should include the following</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context</li> <li>Review of candidate's application of knowledge</li> <li>Review of candidate's application of skills</li> <li>Review of candidate's application of values</li> <li>The candidate's strengths</li> <li>The candidate's learning needs</li> <li>In what way were the Requirements claimed evident in the observation?</li> </ul>		No
<b>Critical evaluation and reflection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Briefly describe the observation (NOT in the word count)*</li> <li>Critically review the knowledge applied.</li> <li>Critically evaluate the skills applied.</li> <li>Reflect upon the ethical component/issues in the work.</li> <li>Comment on the strengths/weaknesses of the work.</li> <li>Provide an outline of recommendations as to how the context of the practice could be enhanced.</li> <li>Identify your future learning needs and how you propose to meet them (NOT in the word count).</li> </ul>	<b>Consolidation and Specialist Awards</b>  1 Requirement - maximum of 1000 2 Requirements - maximum of 1500 3 Requirements - maximum of 2000  <b>Leadership and Strategic Award</b>  1 Requirement - maximum of 2000 2 Requirements – maximum of 3000 3 Requirements – Maximum of 4000	Yes
<b>References</b> The references should be up to date and relevant and adhere to the recommended Harvard format.		No
<b>Direct Observation Assessment Summary</b> This summary is completed by the assessor who carried out the observation.		No
<b>Recording</b> <b>1 hour of recorded practice must be included.</b>		No

## Marking Grid

<b>% Range</b>	<b>Content* (must include professional ethics)</b> <b>30</b>	<b>Application of theory and research</b> <b>20</b>	<b>Knowledge and understanding</b> <b>20</b>	<b>Evidence of reading</b> <b>15</b>	<b>Referencing (Harvard)</b> <b>5</b>	<b>Presentation, grammar and spelling</b> <b>10</b>
<b>70 – 100</b>	Critical insightful evaluation and synthesis of complex issues and materials. A high level of originality and reflection. Demonstrates the ability to pursue research at Doctoral level. Originality. (21 – 30)	Extensive evidence of advanced applications and/or empirical data, where applicable, informed extensively by current research and practice in the area. Innovative and original use of knowledge. (14 – 20)	Exceptional knowledge and conceptual understanding of complex and/or specialised principles and concepts and the development and advancement of ideas and practice. High level critical judgement and confident grasp of complex issues. (14 – 20)	Extensive evidence of integrating current supplementary sources. (12 – 15)	Outstanding referencing with current sources. (5)	Outstanding, well-directed presentation, logically and coherently structured, using correct grammar, spelling and referencing. (8 – 10)
<b>60 – 69</b>	Critical evaluation and synthesis of complex issues and materials which includes some originality and a reflective approach. Well argued. (18 –20)	Clear evidence of relevant applications and/or empirical data, where applicable, informed by current research and practice in the area. Critical judgement and a grasp of complex issues. (12 –13)	Wide knowledge and depth of understanding of complex and/or specialised principles and concepts and the development of ideas and practice. (12 –13)	Evidence of extensive reading of current supplementary sources. (9 –10)	Comprehensive referencing with current sources. (4)	Very good presentation, logically structured, using correct grammar, spelling and referencing. (7)
<b>50 – 59</b>	Some critical evaluation and synthesis of key issues and material. Reasonably well argued. Largely descriptive. (15 –17)	Evidence of relevant applications and/or empirical data, where applicable, with some links to current research in the area. (10 – 11)	Good and appropriate knowledge and depth of understanding of key principles and concepts with some understanding of the development of ideas and practice. (10 – 11)	Evidence of reading supplementary sources. (7 – 8)	Adequate referencing. Some current sources. (3)	Orderly presentation, clear structure and acceptable grammar, spelling and referencing. (6)
<b>COMPETENT</b>						
<b>REQUIRING FURTHER WORK</b>						
<b>45 – 49</b>	Some evaluation and synthesis of issues and material. (12 – 14)	Occasional relevant applications and/or empirical data, where applicable. (8 – 9)	Basic knowledge and depth of understanding of key principles and concepts only. (8 – 9)	Limited evidence of current reading. (6)	Limited referencing. Sources not up to date. (2)	Weak presentation and structure, grammar, spelling and referencing. (5)
<b>31 – 44</b>	Limited evaluation and synthesis of issues and material. (11)	Limited applications and/or empirical data, where applicable. (7)	Limited and/or superficial knowledge of key principles and concepts. (7)	Minimal evidence of current reading. (5)	Inadequate referencing. (1)	Poor presentation and structure, grammar, spelling and referencing. (4)
<b>0 – 30</b>	Little or no evaluation and synthesis of issues and material. (0 – 10)	Little or no evidence of relevant application and/or empirical data. (0 – 6)	Virtually devoid of any evidence of knowledge and understanding. (0 – 6)	Little or no evidence of reading. (0 – 4)	Inadequate referencing. (0 – 1)	Inadequate presentation, structure, grammar, spelling and referencing. (0 – 3)