

## Student Clinical Placement and Registration Policy

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College of  
**Midwives**  
of Alberta

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The College of Midwives of Alberta (CMA) supports learning, growth and development of midwifery students in Alberta. Based on the *CMA Standards of Practice*, this policy provides direction and is applicable to midwifery students, their preceptors and midwifery education programs that arrange clinical placements in the province of Alberta. Adherence to this policy is expected by the CMA, to enhance public safety and confidence in midwives and midwifery care.

### Purpose

All students intending to conduct clinical placements in Alberta are registered with the CMA, in accordance with the *CMA Standards of Practice*. This contributes to a safe learning environment for students.

Midwifery student clinical experiences are aimed at attainment of the Canadian Midwifery Regulators Council (CMRC) *Competencies* (non-clinical), the *Competencies for Alberta Midwives* (clinical), and the *CMA Standards of Practice*. These documents all represent entry-to-practice level knowledge, skills, judgement, behaviour and attitudes for registered midwives in Alberta. Learning from experience is a fundamental component to Midwives education in Alberta. Student practice in midwifery care supports the profession and enhances the care that is delivered. In a continual care model, clients and student have opportunity to develop meaningfully supportive relationships.

Midwifery students learn in both Alberta Health Services (AHS) facilities and in community settings outside of AHS jurisdictions, and therefore, adhere to the criteria and requirements of both organizations.

All undergraduate student experiences, unless otherwise arranged with the midwifery education program or CMA will take place with midwives and midwifery practices who provide

full-scope midwifery services, according to *Schedule 13* of the *HPA* and the Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM) continuity of care model of practice.

The CMA regularly considers the capacity within Alberta to accommodate students among the total number of preceptor midwives in the province. Priority will be given to students enrolled in the Mount Royal University (MRU) Bachelor of Midwifery (BMid) Program, and all other students will be accommodated on a case-by-case agreement basis with the CMA.

## Definitions

**Advanced Authorizations:** Those clinical activities and procedures registered midwives can perform after successful application to CMA and completion of CMA-approved coursework, experience and continuing competence processes.

**Affiliate Agreement:** A formal arrangement signed between a midwifery education program and the CMA, to have students undertake clinical placements in Alberta.

**Clerkship I Placement:** A senior MRU midwifery student who is in their final year of the midwifery education program. This student has successfully completed all pre-practice requirements including but not limited to: certification on Emergency Skills (ES), Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP), Fetal Health Surveillance (FHS), and the program has assessed the student to be competent to provide primary care under direct and indirect supervision (as specified).

**Clerkship II Placement:** A senior MRU midwifery student who is in the final year of the midwifery education program and is in the last semester of their program. This student has successfully completed all pre-practice requirements including but not limited to: certification in ES, NRP and FHS, and the program has assessed the student to be competent to provide primary care under direct and indirect supervision as specified.

**Community Birth:** Any birth that occurs outside of a hospital. This can include birth centres, birth suites, and home settings.

**Conflict of Interest:** Refers to a situation in which personal, occupational, or financial considerations may affect or appear to affect the objectivity, transparency, fairness and/or impartiality of decisions related to the clinical placement, according to the CMA *Code of Ethics* and *Standards of Practice*. This accountability for student placements is held by the student, preceptor, the Midwifery Education Program (MEP), and the CMA.

**Continuity of Care:** A model of care and a process that facilitates continuous midwifery support throughout pregnancy, labor, birth and postpartum, with the goal of building understanding, support and trust between the client and the midwives involved in the care (CAM, September 2015).

**Direct Supervision:** The process by which the preceptor takes on an assessment and facilitation role for midwifery care provided. This preceptor must be physically present at the workplace, assessing and always observing when clinical care is provided by the student. With direct supervision, the student must plan the midwifery care with the preceptor before delivering the care.

**Formal Clinical Placement Agreement:** an arrangement signed between a student (usually a graduate student) detailing the nature the nature of the clinical Placement.

**Full Scope Midwifery Care:** *As per Schedule 13 of the HPA , midwives do the following: provide comprehensive prenatal, labor, birth and postpartum care to clients experiencing normal pregnancy, provide preventative monitoring, health education and advice to clients, provide counselling, education and emotional support related to clients' physical, psychological and social needs, provide restricted activities authorized by the regulations, and teach, manage and conduct research in the science, techniques and practice of midwifery.*

**Graduate Student:** A person enrolled in a midwifery education program at the Masters or Doctoral level who is seeking a clinical placement or a learning experience e.g., Education, Administration and Research directly involving midwifery clients.

**Indirect Supervision:** An arrangement whereby the preceptor and the student share the responsibility for individual clients. The preceptor can be easily contacted and is available to observe and discuss the midwifery care provided by the student. The preceptor must be

physically present at the workplace with the exception of certain pre and postnatal visits as outlined below, when the student is providing clinical care. The student must inform the preceptor at agreed upon intervals about the management of each client and discussions must happen regarding the care provided.

**Midwifery Education Program (MEP):** An education program for midwifery students, including classroom curriculum and objectives outlined for student placement in clinical situations, within Canada or outside of Canada. Canadian-based programs will achieve national accreditation through the CAM-Ed accreditation Council. Other programs have formal signed agreements with the CMA.

**Most Responsible Provider:** The midwife who holds overall responsibility for leading and coordinating the delivery and organization of a client's care at a specific moment in time.

**Practicum Agreement:** A formal arrangement between preceptors and the CMA- approved midwifery education programs.

**Preceptor:** A regulated health care provider approved by the midwifery education program and/or CMA to be responsible for the overseeing the performance of an individual undertaking a period of student clinical practice. The preceptor instructs, monitors, supports and provides student feedback and reports to the midwifery education program and the CMA (as appropriate) on student progress.

**Primary Midwife:** A Registered Midwife (RM) with a valid practice permit from the CMA, who is the most responsible provider for the client labour, birth, and immediate postpartum period.

**Restricted Activities:** Specified risk-related health services and activities identified by CMA, derived from *Schedule 7.1 of the Government Organization Act and Section 16 of the Midwives Profession Regulation*. These activities provide the CMA with a list of entry-to-practice additional activities allowed for Registered Midwives.

**Second Midwife:** A Registered Midwife with a valid practice permit from the CMA, who provides collaboration and support to the Primary Midwife for the client labour, birth, and

immediate postpartum period, in accordance with the CMA Second Birth Attendant policy. A student midwife who meets the criteria within this policy may act in the Second Midwife role.

**Student:** A person enrolled in a CMA-recognized midwifery education program (see below) involved in required clinical learning. Clinical students' complete skills-based learning in practicum settings. The student practices under the oversight and direction of a preceptor to meet the objectives of the clinical course.

## Expectations of Midwifery Education Programs

### a. Undergraduate Programs

Midwifery Education Programs (MEP) expecting to have placement in the province of Alberta will be approved by the CMA and /or meet current CAM-Ed accreditation status. A formal practicum agreement with the MEP must be current and in place before students start clinical placement.

MEP faculty will work with students and preceptors during clinical placements mainly through the role of the clinical instructor, who is the liaison between the MEP and the student/preceptor. The clinical instructor also participates in the student evaluation for a clinical course. MEP faculty will provide initial and ongoing preceptor training, may conduct site visits, and may facilitate challenging situations as they arise.

#### MEPs:

- 1) Approve preceptors for student clinical placements, based on program clinical placement requirements, including ability for preceptors to facilitate clinical restricted activities and work within a full scope model of midwifery care unless otherwise approved by either the MEP and/or the CMA.
- 2) Ensure all preceptors have active practicum agreements with the MEP. Any additional secondary preceptor names must also have an active practicum agreement with the MEP. For additional information regarding AHS facilities, please consult the *Student Placement Policy* for AHS or the individual AHS facilities.

## b. Graduate programs

For graduate programs, a formal clinical placement agreement with the CMA needs to be in place prior to the student starting clinical placement, or for learning experiences directly involving clients, e.g., education, administration and research. The agreement will be individualized according to the clinical needs of the student, the education pathway they are taking and appropriate CMA guidelines.

## Student Registration and Responsibilities

All midwifery students in Alberta are registered with the CMA in order to undertake any part of their clinical educational experience. Student registration entitles the student to perform the Entry to Practice Competencies (both CMRC and Alberta) within the clinical practice of midwifery under the supervision of a qualified preceptor.

The undergraduate student midwife registration year is from September 1 to August 31 of the following year. Submission for student registration will begin July 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.

To qualify as a student, a person is:

- a. Enrolled in a midwifery undergraduate/graduate program or a midwifery bridging program approved by the CMA, and/or under the CAM-Ed Accreditation Council.
- b. Enrolled in a midwifery education program for Indigenous people in Canada. This will be addressed through registration collaboration on a case-by-case basis by the CMA.
- c. Enrolled in a midwifery education program internationally, where there is an affiliate agreement between CMA and the program

To register as a student, a person provides the CMA with the following:

- a. Confirmation of registration in an undergraduate/graduate education or bridging program approved by the CMA;
- b. A completed application form – Please see CMA website- Registration.
- c. Current police information check (valid for up to 5 years).
- d. The applicable fees. Student registration fee is set by the CMA and is posted on the CMA Website.

Students enrolled in MEPs that are not approved by the CMA, or in the process of recognition, are not eligible for student registration in Alberta. To initiate CMA approval, the MEP is directed to contact CMA for a CMA affiliate agreement.

Additional areas such as Restricted Activities and Advanced Authorizations will be determined via formal clinical placement agreements with CMA.

Students may not receive payment for any activity which is required for course credit.

As part of informed choice discussions, the CMA expects that the client's permission is obtained to allow for any student involvement.

### **Undergraduate Students as Primary and Secondary Midwife at Births**

In clinical education it is expected that students will move through an appropriate series of steps in achieving clinical competence. These steps should progress through observation only, then assistance, followed by performance under direct supervision and at last, performance to attain competence with the preceptor observing.

Students in their MRU midwifery Clerkship 1 or Clerkship 2 placement, or equivalent may act in the role of primary and secondary midwife, after careful consideration by their preceptor and consent from the client.

The CMA recognizes the increased level of knowledge, skill and judgment acquired by senior level students and therefore allows students to participate as follows, at the discretion of the preceptor, unless other arrangements have been made with the CMA.

- a. Midwifery students enrolled in MRU *Clerkship 1 or equivalent*<sup>ii</sup> may provide care in the role of one of the two midwives at a hospital birth, provided that the preceptor midwife is on site supervising and taking full responsibility for clinical care throughout the assessment and duration of labor, birth and immediate postpartum. The student may provide care in the capacity of either primary or second midwife for any midwifery client, so long as client consent is obtained and their preceptor is physically present with them at all times.

- b. Midwifery students enrolled in MRU *Clerkship II* or equivalent may provide care in the role of one of the two midwives at a hospital or at a community birth, provided that the preceptor midwife is on site supervising and taking full responsibility for clinical care throughout the assessment and duration of labour, birth and immediate postpartum. The student may provide care in the capacity of either primary or second midwife for any midwifery client so long as client consent is obtained, and their preceptor is physically present with them at all times.

### Undergraduate Students at Prenatal and Postpartum Visits

Unless other arrangements are made with the CMA,

- a. Midwifery students enrolled in MRU *Clerkship I* or equivalent may attend up to two routine postpartum visits per client under *indirect supervision*, providing that the visits are not within the first three days (72 hours from birth) and is not the final discharge visit (typically at six weeks postpartum). These students may attend prenatal and postpartum visits under *indirect supervision* at the discretion of the preceptor midwife. Preceptors are accountable for the care their students provide and must be fully informed of any assessments, concerns, recommendations, and follow-up plans provided to the client prior to the student midwife concluding the visit.
- b. Midwifery students enrolled in MRU *Clerkship II* or equivalent may attend up to three routine postpartum visits per client under *indirect supervision*, providing that the visits do not include the first visit after the birth or the final discharge visit (typically at six weeks postpartum). These students may attend additional prenatal and postpartum visits under *indirect supervision* at the discretion of the preceptor. Preceptors are accountable for the care their students provide and must be fully informed of any assessments, concerns, recommendations, and follow-up plans provided to the client prior to the student midwife concluding the visit.



MRU Students in their third year and fourth years are allowed to answer client calls and/or pagers.

All student-client communications must be immediately recorded and reported to the preceptor to confirm appropriate student response.

## Termination of Student Registration

Student registration will be terminated:

- a. Upon graduation from the current MEP.
- b. Upon a leave of absence or dismissal from their MEP.
- c. If the student is no longer enrolled in an approved MEP.
- d. If the student has findings of unprofessional conduct during their placement and or allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct regarding a client.

## Eligibility for New Registrant (New Graduates) Status of the CMA

Students should present the following birth numbers upon completion of their MEP to register as a New Registrant (New Graduate) with the CMA:

- a. Attended Total: minimum of 60 births
- b. Primary Birth Role: minimum of 40 births
- c. Continuity of Care: minimum of 30 births
- d. Primary Midwife in Community Birth: minimum of 10 births
- e. Primary Midwife in Hospital: minimum of 10 births

Please refer to the CMA [New Registrants \(New Graduates\) Policy](#) for more information.

## Expectations and Requirements of Preceptors of Undergraduate Students

The preceptor for clinical placement may be one of the following as determined by the midwifery education program: a Registered Midwife, a Registered Nurse, a Nurse Practitioner, a

Licensed Practical Nurse, or a Physician registered within their respective Alberta regulatory colleges and actively practicing.

NOTE: Additional health professionals may act as preceptors during a community practicum (e.g., Social Workers, Registered Dietitians, Lactation Consultants).

A Registered Midwife preceptor is a general registrant midwife who is fully responsible for all clinical care provided by the student for the duration of the clinical placement and have:

- a. Forty births as a Primary Midwife beyond their New Registrant program
- b. Met all of the requirements of the CMA Continuing Competence Program
- c. Current liability insurance to cover student preceptorship
- d. No findings of unprofessional conduct for any CMA Hearings or Investigations that have led to a cancellation or suspension of Practice Permit, in the past two years.
- e. Practice permit without conditions; current work as a full scope midwife/not be enrolled in the CMA Alternate Practice Program (unless deemed appropriate by the MEP and/or the CMA.
- f. Competence in CMA Restricted Activities to enable appropriate facilitation of undergraduate student education in these Entry-to-Practice areas
- g. Approval by the student's education program (see definitions above).
- h. Been sufficiently oriented and trained by the MEP to mentor and evaluate students, according to a plan and criteria set by the appropriate MEP, and this policy.

Preceptors may provide indirect supervision during the first stage of labour. Please also see the *Students at Prenatal and Postpartum Visits* section above.

There must also be consideration of conflict of interest between the following: the preceptor and the student, and the MEP. If such a conflict is identified, a declaration must be made and, if appropriate, another preceptor should be considered.

During the clinical placement, the preceptor is responsible for the following record-keeping elements:

- 1) Assisting the student in obtaining their own login username for Electronic Health Records within their midwifery practice.
- 2) Verifying accuracy of information and co-sign all entries made by the student into the client record.

Adjunct preceptors for the students in clinical placements must be approved and contracted by MEPs. If the primary preceptor is expected to be temporarily absent during *any* time, they must arrange for a secondary preceptor. The secondary preceptor must have an active practicum agreement with the MEP to provide such oversight.

### **Expectations for Preceptors of Graduate Students**

The same expectations exist for graduate students. Exemptions and additional considerations will be contained and managed in the signed formal clinical placement agreement with the graduate student, the MEP and the CMA.

### **Quality Assurance and Improvement Activities of the CMA**

The CMA may request curriculum and clinical placement objectives, clinical placement capacity assessment, preceptor qualifications, MEP training criteria for preceptors, conflict of interest acknowledgement, and other documents related to clinical placements for the purposes of Quality Assurance and Improvement and Annual regulatory reporting. The CMA will also conduct regular review of the affiliate agreements and may review the formal clinical practicum agreements.

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## Appendix: A

Note: this is exclusively for student registration/placement, not for PLEA (Prior Learning and Experience Assessment) the PLEA process for international applicants is a separate process- Please contact CMA for more information.

### **CMA Affiliate agreement with Midwifery Education Programs**

#### **Undergraduate Programs (Canadian)**

1. Mount Royal University (Alberta)
2. Ryerson University/Toronto Metropolitan University (Ontario)
3. University of Manitoba (Manitoba)
4. McMaster University (Ontario)
5. University of British Columbia (BC)
6. University' du Quebec a Trois Rivieres (Quebec)

#### **Graduate Programs (Canadian)**

1. McMaster University (Ontario)

#### **Graduate Programs (International)**

1. Frontier Nursing University – Master of Midwifery (Kentucky, USA, March 18, 2021)

#### **Bridging Programs (Canadian)**

1. Internationally Educated Midwifery Bridging Program (UBC, British Columbia)