



anf policy

# australian nursing federation

## midwifery education: registered midwife

A midwife provides care to a woman across the continuum of care including antenatal, intra partum and postnatal care.

It is the policy of the Australian Nursing Federation that:

1. All midwifery care must be provided by appropriately educated midwives.
2. Government must ensure there are sufficient places in the university sector in all States and Territories to meet the community's needs for a registered midwifery workforce now and into the future.
3. Entry to practice education for registered midwives must be at degree level offered by a recognised university.<sup>1</sup>
4. Entry to practice education for registered midwives should be augmented by flexible and innovative means, such as distance and online modes to provide equitable and optimal access for students wherever they live, study and work.
5. The principles of adult learning and the recognition of prior learning must be incorporated into registered midwife education together with the availability of credit transfer and articulation options.
6. Entry to practice education for registered midwives must prepare students to meet the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's (NMBA) national competency standards for the registered midwife and to function as a safe beginning level midwife in a variety of maternity care settings.
7. Adequate clinical education must be provided to students so they can acquire the clinical experience necessary to meet the competency standards. Staffing levels and skills mix in maternity care services providing clinical placement for students must be adequate to optimise the learning experience.
8. Clinical educators must be available with a scope of practice which meets the needs of students in midwifery, newly graduated midwives and midwives new to the workplace as well as supporting more experienced midwives with their clinical, educational and mentoring responsibilities.
9. Educational curricula for midwives should include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples issues relating to health, culture and history and the social determinants of health.
10. The development of core curriculum elements across disciplines must not compromise the philosophy and integrity of midwifery.

11. Registered midwives require support when making the transition from education to practice. This support includes transition to practice programs, orientation programs, access to clinical educators, access to expert and experienced midwives as preceptors, supervisors or mentors, and access to continuing professional education.
12. Transition to practice programs should be available in all maternity care settings which employ midwives. Transition to practice programs should be available for midwives working in rural, remote and metropolitan settings and in both public and private maternity care settings.
13. Transition to practice programs should be funded by governments at all levels through relevant public, private and community maternity care settings.
14. Clinical placements for registered midwife education, either undergraduate or post registration, require active and positive collaboration between the maternity care and education sectors and sufficient resources to assist education providers and facilities in which clinical education occurs to deliver a quality learning experience.
15. Formal mechanisms to support dialogue, interaction and the development of collaborative arrangements between the maternity care and education sectors should continue to be developed and strengthened. The development of professorial units or similar arrangements which combine academic and practice based education and research are supported.
16. Midwifery educator positions are supported and mechanisms must be in place to assist them to maintain a safe and current level of practice in their areas of expertise.
17. Increased resources are required for post registration courses for registered midwives, at post graduate diploma, masters and doctoral level, to increase availability and access to education.
18. Post registration courses for advanced and/or specialist midwifery practice must be conducted by an agency<sup>2</sup> or combination of agencies that can ensure an appropriate knowledge and skills/practice balance in the student's learning experience.
19. Providers of post registration education for registered midwives should schedule course provision with consideration for the needs of employers and students and with a view to maximising flexibility and access.
20. Appropriate academic recognition for all post registration courses not conducted within the university sector should be available together with nationally consistent nomenclature, award levels and credit transfer arrangements.

21. The offering of scholarships by governments, employers and other maternity care providers to support post registration education for registered midwives is supported, however bonding to a particular employer or agency on completion of studies as a condition for the awarding of scholarships to midwives is not supported.

*endorsed may 2010*

#### references

1. "University" refers here to a self-accrediting institution which meets the requirements of protocols A and D of the National Protocols for Higher Education Processes (2006), and is established by an Australian legislative instrument, as defined in Part 3 of the National Protocols (Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council. 2008. *Position Statement, Registered Nurse and Midwife Education in Australia*. ANMC Website: [www.anmc.org.au](http://www.anmc.org.au)).
2. The term 'agency' includes, but is not limited to: health services, universities, professional organisations and private providers of education and training such as registered training organisations.