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## Position Statement

# Basic and Ongoing Education for Midwives

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## Background

Midwifery is a profession in its own right, with a unique body of knowledge, skills, and behaviours as well as shared competencies and knowledge with other health disciplines. Much of the knowledge and competencies are based on evidence resulting from research carried out by midwives and others. Therefore, midwifery knowledge and competencies are consistently reviewed and revised based on the findings from new and high quality studies. Many countries currently lack opportunities for midwives to undertake further midwifery education beyond pre service programmes.

## Position

ICM will work to ensure that midwives lead and define midwifery education and practice within the context and needs of their country or region.

ICM believes that midwifery competence can be achieved through multiple formal educational pathways based on the ICM Global Standards for Midwifery Education, and incorporating the ICM *Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice (2010)*; that all midwifery educators should be competent in theory and practice and that learning is ongoing to ensure continuous professional development.

ICM further believes that it is the ethical duty of each midwife to remain safe and current in practice at all times. Therefore, continuing education should be compulsory for all practising midwives.

In accordance with the above ICM:

- Recognises and requires that competencies for the practice of midwifery, based upon the *ICM Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice (2010)*, are defined locally, in keeping with the needs of individuals/families and the area of the world where the midwife is practising.
- Supports and requires that these essential competencies for midwifery practice be included in the design and implementation of midwifery curricula.

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- Mandates that curricula provide the opportunity for all learners to acquire the knowledge, skills and professional behaviours necessary to enable the midwife to practise to the full extent of her role as identified within the ICM *Definition of the Midwife* (2011).
  - Recognises and supports multiple routes of entry into midwifery that results in a variety of educational programmes, based on *the ICM Global Standards for Midwifery Education* (2011), and accredited.
  - Recognises and requires that midwifery educators be safe and current in their theory and clinical practice according to ICM standards and WHO recommendations.
  - Recognises the vital role that continuing education plays in the safety and currency of an individual's midwifery practice. It urges member associations to require continuing education updates in keeping with the ethical mandate for advancement of midwifery knowledge and practice as stated in the *International Code of Ethics for Midwives* (2014).
  - Recognises that, to strengthen and advance the role of the midwife, a system of continuing professional development should be regulated and implemented.

### **Recommendations**

Member associations are urged to support basic and on-going midwifery education according to ICM standards and competencies. Where midwives do not have control of midwifery education, associations are encouraged to negotiate with their governments and other regulatory bodies with the aim of achieving this.

### **Related ICM Documents**

ICM. 2010. Core Document. Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice. Amended 2013.

ICM. 2010. Global Standards for Midwifery Education. Amended 2013

ICM. 2011. Core Document. International Definition of the Midwife.

ICM. 2011. Global Standards for Midwifery Regulation

ICM. 2014. Core Document. International Code of Ethics for Midwives.

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WHO, ICM, FIGO. 2004. Joint Statement. The Critical Role of the Skilled Attendant.

WHO, ICM, ICN. 2004. Joint Statement. Islamabad Declaration on Strengthening Nursing and Midwifery.

**Other relevant documents**

Forsetlund L, Bjørndal A, Rashidian A, Jamtvedt G, O'Brien MA, Wolf F, Davis D, Odgaard-Jensen, J, Oxman AD. Continuing education meetings and workshops: effects on professional practice and health care outcomes. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2009, Issue 2.

WHO, GHWA. 2008. *Scaling up, Saving Lives*. Task force for scaling up education and training for health workers. Global Health Workforce Alliance.

**Adopted at Glasgow Council meeting, 2008**

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*Due for next review 2020*