



Strengthening Midwifery Globally

## QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES OF MIDWIFERY TEACHERS

### BACKGROUND

When the ICM's document *Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice* was originally adopted by the ICM Council in 2002, it was anticipated that these competencies would be used, as needed, to design and/or strengthen the content of midwifery education programmes throughout the world. This has occurred in several countries. Development of midwifery educational programmes needs to keep pace with the practice of midwives in any given area of the world, hence the close relationship between defined competencies of practice and the content of the educational experience. Likewise, effective midwifery education requires able midwifery teachers who also have maintained clinical competencies. While there are many patterns of midwifery education that result in the preparation of competent midwifery clinicians, there is some disagreement as to the qualifications and competencies needed by those midwives who carry out the role of teaching others to be midwives. ICM supports the need to establish certain principles regarding the preparation of sufficient numbers of midwife teachers with a high level of competence in both practice and education, in order to promote the health and wellbeing of childbearing women and their newborns.

### STATEMENT OF BELIEF

One of the hallmarks of the profession of midwifery is the quality of care offered to women and childbearing families. Midwifery care is first and foremost safe; it is also evidence-based, respectful and supports women and families who wish to participate fully in decisions relating to their health care. In order to implement the midwifery philosophy and model of care, the ICM believes that those learning to be midwives need appropriate role models who are competent midwifery practitioners themselves and who apply the midwifery philosophy and model of care to those whom they teach. The ICM also believes that teaching others to be midwives requires formal preparation and mentoring, as teaching is a learned behaviour. All midwives who aim to become teachers need to have an understanding of how adults learn, and how teaching can support this learning in others. The ICM further believes that midwifery teachers must: be able to foster critical thinking; promote evidence-based clinical judgment; and require accountability in their students as essential attributes of successful midwifery practice.

### POSITION

The minimum qualifications of the midwifery teacher will include:

- Competence in clinical practice - that may require two to five years of clinical practice in a variety of settings before the midwife is ready to assume the additional responsibilities of being a teacher of other midwives.
- A formal preparation for teaching with mentoring by expert teachers.
- A commitment to life-long learning for themselves and for their students
- The competencies of the midwifery teacher will therefore include:
- Knowledge of theories of adult learning
- The ability to use a variety of competency-based teaching methods to facilitate learning, given the range of human behaviour among students
- A solid foundation in organising, implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of the midwifery curriculum, in keeping with local, country and regional needs.

Midwifery teachers should:

- Maintain an up-to-date knowledge base in midwifery theory and practice, and promote evidence-based practice at all times
- Understand their own values and biases related to teaching and learning, and provide an environment for values clarification among learners related to working with a variety of clients
- Provide an environment for values clarification among learners related to working a variety of clients (provision of culturally relevant care)
- Promote the professional/ethical aspects of midwifery care in keeping with the ICM International Code of Ethics for Midwives
- Create a learning environment based on mutual respect and trust
- Be guardians of safe, competent, respectful midwifery care.
- Collaborate with other professionals as members of the health care team.
- Maintain current clinical practice.

#### GUIDING STATEMENT TO MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS:

Member associations are encouraged to take an active role in the education of new midwives. They may use this statement to establish or strengthen their role in setting the standards for midwifery teachers in their country or region.

#### RELATED ICM DOCUMENTS

- ICM International Code of Ethics for Midwives. ICM, 1999.
- ICM Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice. ICM, 2002
- ICM Position statement. Midwifery – an Autonomous Profession. ICM, 2005
- ICM Core document. The Philosophy and Model of Midwifery Care. ICM, 2005.
- ICM/WHO. Strengthening Midwifery Toolkit. WHO, 2008

#### OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

- Thompson JE, Kershbaumer RM, Krisman-Scott MA. *Educating Advanced Practice Nurses and Midwives*. New York, USA: Springer Publishing Company, 2001.

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*Due for next review 2014*