



## INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF MIDWIVES

### Glossary of Terms 2011, updated 2017

Term	Definition <sup>i</sup>
<i>Ability</i>	<b>(G)</b> The quality of being able to perform a natural or acquired skill or talent.
<i>Accountability</i>	<b>(G)</b> Being responsible for one's decisions, actions, inactions, and omissions.
<i>Accreditation</i>	<b>(G)</b> A process of review and approval by which an institution, programme or specific service is granted a time-limited recognition of having met certain established standards.
<i>Admitting and discharge rights</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> Authority granted to a midwife by a hospital/birth centre governing board to provide midwifery care to a woman and her baby in the hospital/facility and to access hospital/facility services, including emergency services if needed.
<i>Admission (student)</i>	<b>(E)</b> The criteria and process by which a person gains entry as a student to a recognised programme of study leading to qualification as a midwife.
<i>Adult Learning</i>	<b>(G)</b> Active participation of adults in formal and informal learning activities based on life goals in which they take responsibility for their own learning, building upon/incorporating prior learning and life experience.
<i>Assessment</i>	<b>(G)</b> A systematic process/procedure for collecting qualitative and quantitative data to measure, evaluate or appraise performance against specified standards, outcomes or competencies.
<i>Assessment of midwifery practice</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> The systematic process/procedure for collecting qualitative and quantitative data to assess, measure, or appraise performance, progress or practice decisions/actions in relation to country specific standards and/or competencies.
<i>Assessment of student learning</i>	<b>(E)</b> The systematic process/procedure for collecting qualitative and quantitative data to assess, measure or appraise midwifery student performance and progress in achieving competency-based learning outcomes.
<i>Attitude</i>	<b>(G)</b> A person's views, values, beliefs and feelings about a thing, process or person that often leads to a positive or negative reaction.
<i>Audit {N}</i>	<b>(G)</b> A systematic process to examine whether a service and/or practice reaches a predetermined standard of quality.
<i>Autonomous</i>	<b>(G)</b> Self-governing, self-regulating; taking responsibility for one's

	decisions and actions and their outcomes.
<i>Autonomous midwife</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> A midwife who is able to direct the clinical course of action in partnership with the woman based on agreed midwifery standards, remaining responsible and accountable for all decisions made, the care provided including any omissions, and discloses outcomes in a transparent way.
<i>Autonomous midwifery profession</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> A professional group of midwives granted legal authority to self-govern and self-regulate, thereby publicly holding midwives accountable for meeting professional standards in order to promote the safety of women and newborns in their care.
<i>Autonomy: Midwife's/Woman's</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> The right of a woman and her midwife to make choices about care and for those choices to be respected; implies that individuals have competence to make informed decisions and that they should not be coerced or forced during the decision-making process.
<i>Behaviour</i>	<b>(G)</b> A person's way of acting, relating or responding to the words/actions of others or to an environmental stimulus, based on their cultural, religious, political or educational perspectives, values, practices or beliefs.
<i>Cancellation/removal of midwifery registration (N)</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> Exclusion of a midwife from using the title "midwife" and practising midwifery, following a formal process conducted by a regulatory authority through which a midwife is evaluated as not meeting professional standards and being unfit to practice.
<i>Capacity building (N)</i>	<b>(E)</b> An educational intervention designed to increase the knowledge and enhance the skills of learners in a particular domain of interest who then pass their learning on to others.
<i>Capacity development (N)</i>	<b>(E)</b> A program of activities designed to develop initially, augment, or strengthen an individual's knowledge, skills and professional behaviors in a particular domain of interest.
<i>CBE Capacity Development Workshop (N)</i>	<b>(E)</b> Generally a 5-day workshop led by a team of CBE Master Educators that is intended to prepare a team of midwife teachers and preceptors (CBE Learners) to use CBE strategies and design and implement their own CBE Continuing Education workshops.
<i>CBE Learner (N)</i>	<b>(E)</b> A participant in a planned CBE capacity development workshop during which time s/he is prepared to design, implement and evaluate a CBE Continuing Education workshop in her/his own country using CBE strategies.
<i>CBE Master Educator (N)</i>	<b>(E)</b> An international midwifery educator who has expertise in the design, implementation, and evaluation of competency-based pre-service midwifery education programs meeting ICM standards and competencies.
<i>CBE Master Teacher (N)</i>	<b>(E)</b> A CBE Learner who has demonstrated the ability to design, implement and evaluate a CBE Continuing Education Workshop, having met all the expected CBE teacher competencies.
<i>CBE Teacher (N)</i>	<b>(E)</b> A CBE Learner who has been observed providing a CBE Continuing Education Workshop, and who needs further

	observation and experience to meet all the expected CBE teacher competencies.
<i>Censure</i>	<b>(G)</b> An official rebuke of an individual, a document, or agency.
<i>Character (N)</i>	<b>(G)</b> A personal attribute that is exemplified by a person's conduct, behaviour and attitude.
<i>Code of ethics</i>	<b>(G)</b> The rules, principles or standards governing the moral behaviour of an individual or profession.
<i>Competence</i>	<b>(G)</b> The combination of knowledge, psychomotor, communication and decision-making skills that enable an individual to perform a specific task to a defined level of proficiency.
<i>Competency (pl: competencies)</i>	<b>(G)</b> The successful demonstration of essential knowledge, skills, attitudes and professional behaviour on a specific task, action or function to a defined level of proficiency.
<i>Competency-based education</i>	<b>(E)</b> Teaching, learning, assessment and evaluation activities that are sufficient to enable students to acquire and demonstrate a predetermined set of competencies as the outcome of learning.
<i>Competency component (N)</i>	<b>(E)</b> Exemplars of knowledge, skills or behaviours that are related to and illustrative of the tasks associated with a particular competency.
<i>Competency dimension (N)</i>	<b>(E)</b> A set of competency domains or competencies organised at the highest level of abstraction.
<i>Competency domain (N)</i>	<b>(E)</b> A set of competencies organised around a particular common theme, nested within a dimension.
<i>Conditional</i>	<b>(G)</b> Imposing, depending on, or containing a condition.
<i>Continuing Professional Development (CPD)</i>	<b>(G)</b> A range of learning activities through which health professionals maintain, develop and/or enhance competencies throughout their career in order to retain their capacity to practice safely, effectively and legally within their scope of practice in a rapidly-changing societal and working environment.
<i>Continuity of midwifery care (N)</i>	<b>(G)</b> Provision of midwifery services for a woman and her infant by a known midwife and backup colleagues or a known group of midwives across the continuum of pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period.
<i>Counseling (midwifery) (N)</i>	<b>(G)</b> An informal process of providing information, advice and guidance, and, in some instances, recommending a course of action.
<i>Credential (N)</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> Evidence, usually in written form, of achievement, knowledge, skill or quality indicating suitability for a particular role or task.
<i>Credentialed (N)</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> The distinction of having been awarded or being in possession of evidence of suitability for a particular role or task.
<i>Critical thinking (N)</i>	<b>(E)</b> The intellectually disciplined process of actively and skilfully conceptualizing, applying, analysing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.
<i>Equivalence</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> A relationship of parity between one system, jurisdiction or

	institution and another with respect to the value and significance of courses, diplomas, certificates, licenses and/or degrees, including a determination of formal recognition of credentials earned in another jurisdiction.
<i>Essential competencies for basic midwifery practice (N)</i>	<b>(E - Rg)</b> A minimum set of knowledge, skills and professional behaviours that should be within the domain of practice of individuals who use the title midwife as defined by the ICM; required across all jurisdictions, regardless of credential or degree status.
<i>Essential competency (N)</i>	<b>(E)</b> A single exemplar of knowledge, skill and/or professional behaviour within the comprehensive set of essential competencies for basic midwifery practice.
<i>External review of midwifery programme</i>	<b>(E)</b> An evaluation of a midwifery programme by qualified midwifery reviewers who do not have a direct role, responsibility, or conflict of interest within the programme being evaluated.
<i>Formative Evaluation</i>	<b>(E)</b> Ongoing assessment of learning with feedback to the student to improve while learning is in progress.
<i>Guideline(s)</i>	<b>(G)</b> A detailed plan or explanation intended to advise and guide on recommended best practice for a particular condition/set of circumstances; a series of steps to implement a standard.
<i>Health Professional</i>	<b>(G)</b> An individual who is educated in a health discipline and licensed/regulated to practise that discipline.
<i>Informed choice (N)</i>	<b>(G)</b> A process of decision-making involving a partnership between a woman and her midwife, based on the underlying assumption that women have a right to receive accurate, non-biased information and then make an informed acceptance or refusal, knowing that her choice will be respected by the midwife.
<i>Informed consent (N)</i>	<b>(G)</b> A woman's right to receive accurate, non-biased information and then accept or refuse what is being proposed, knowing that her choice will be respected by her health practitioners.
<i>Knowledge</i>	<b>(G)</b> A fund of information that enables an individual or a group to have confident understanding of a subject with the ability to use it for a specific purpose.
<i>Lay member of midwifery regulatory body</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> A person who is not and never has been registered as a midwife in any jurisdiction, and who is not a member of any other regulated health profession.
<i>Legislation</i>	<b>(G)</b> A law or body of laws developed by a designated authority for inaction.
<i>Midwife</i>	<b>(G)</b> "A person who has successfully completed a midwifery education programme that is based on the ICM Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice and the framework of the ICM Global Standards for Midwifery Education and is recognized in the country where it is located; who has acquired the requisite qualifications to be registered and/or legally licensed to practise midwifery and use the title 'midwife'; and who demonstrates competency in the practice of midwifery.

	<p>The midwife is recognised as a responsible and accountable professional who works in partnership with women to give the necessary support, care and advice during pregnancy, labour and the postpartum period, to conduct births on the midwife’s own responsibility and to provide care for the newborn and the infant. This care includes preventative measures, the promotion of normal birth, the detection of complications in mother and child, the accessing of medical care or other appropriate assistance and the carrying out of emergency measures.</p> <p>The midwife has an important task in health counselling and education, not only for the woman, but also within the family and the community. This work should involve antenatal education and preparation for parenthood and may extend to women’s health, sexual or reproductive health and child care.</p> <p>A midwife may practise in any setting including the home, community, hospitals, clinics or health units.”</p>
<i>Midwife clinical preceptor or clinical teacher</i>	<p><b>(E)</b> An experienced midwife engaged in the practice of midwifery who is deemed competent and is willing to teach, observe, support, and evaluate midwifery students during their practical/clinical learning.</p>
<i>Midwife teacher</i>	<p><b>(E)</b> A qualified, experienced, and competent midwife who has successfully completed a programme of study and/or demonstrated competency in teaching that includes the art and science of curriculum development, methods of theoretical and practical teaching of adult learners, and methods of measurement and evaluation of student learning.</p>
<i>Midwifery</i>	<p><b>(G)</b> “Midwifery is the profession of midwives<sup>1</sup>; only midwives practise midwifery. It has a unique body of knowledge, skills and professional attitudes drawn from disciplines shared by other health professions such as science and sociology, but practised by midwives within a professional framework of autonomy, partnership, ethics and accountability.</p> <p>Midwifery is an approach to care of women and their newborn infants whereby midwives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• optimise the normal biological, psychological, social and cultural processes of childbirth and early life of the newborn;</li> <li>• work in partnership with women, respecting the individual circumstances and views of each woman</li> <li>• promote women’s personal capabilities to care for themselves and their families</li> <li>• collaborate with midwives and other health professionals as</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> As per the ICM International Definition of the Midwife <http://internationalmidwives.org/who-we-are/policy-and-practice/icm-international-definition-of-the-midwife/>

	<p>necessary to provide holistic care that meets each woman's individual needs</p> <p>Midwifery care is provided by an autonomous midwife. Midwifery competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes) are held and practised by midwives, educated through a pre-service/pre-registration midwifery education programme that meets the ICM global standards for midwifery education.</p> <p>In some countries where the title 'midwife' is not yet protected, other health professionals (nurses and doctors) may be involved in providing sexual, reproductive, maternal and newborn health care to women and newborns. As these health professionals are not midwives they do not possess the competencies of a midwife and do not provide midwifery skills, but rather aspects of maternal and newborn care".</p>
<i>Midwifery accountability</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> The obligation of midwives and organisations to accept responsibility for their behaviour and decisions/actions in midwifery practice, research, education, management and regulation, including any omissions, and to disclose the results in a transparent way.
<i>Midwifery censure (N)</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> Official rebuke of a midwife by a Midwifery Regulatory Authority.
<i>Midwifery Code of Conduct</i>	<b>(G)</b> The rules, moral codes or standards governing the professional behaviour of a midwife.
<i>Midwifery Cultural Competence (N)</i>	<b>(G)</b> Ability of a midwife to interact respectfully and effectively with women and families from different backgrounds/cultures, recognizing the impact of one's own personal culture and beliefs on others and being able to provide respectful, individualised midwifery care that meets the woman's cultural needs.
<i>Midwifery Curriculum</i>	<b>(E)</b> A systematic process that defines the theoretical and practical content of a midwifery education programme and its duration, sequence, teaching and evaluation methods.
<i>Midwifery Education (pre-service, pre-registration)</i>	<b>(G -E)</b> The process of preparing midwifery students to meet the educational qualifications and acquire the competencies required for entry to the midwifery profession through midwifery registration/licensure.
<i>Midwifery education institution</i>	<b>(G -E)</b> An organisation, such as a university, polytechnic, college, school, government ministry, or other authorized educational provider, that provides a midwifery education programme.
<i>Midwifery education programme</i>	<b>(E)</b> An organised, systematic, defined entity that includes administrative details, curriculum, and resources needed to prepare competent midwives.
<i>Midwifery faculty/teaching staff</i>	<b>(E)</b> The group of individuals who teach students in a midwifery programme, including midwife teachers, midwife clinical preceptors/clinical teachers, and experts from other disciplines.
<i>Midwifery fitness to practise</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> Evidence that a midwife has the knowledge, skills,

	professional behaviours, character and health status necessary to meet the standards or competencies required for entry to the midwifery profession and for continuing the practice of midwifery.
<i>Midwifery governance</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> The system of leadership, management and administration used by a Midwifery Regulatory Authority or Ministry to exercise its authority to control and guide the profession in the provision of high quality, evidence-based midwifery care.
<i>Midwifery partnership with women</i>	<b>(G)</b> A relationship of trust, equity, reciprocity, shared decision-making and responsibility, negotiation and shared understanding between the woman and the midwife.
<i>Midwifery philosophy</i>	<b>(G)</b> A statement of beliefs and values about the nature of midwifery - whether in practice, education, regulation, management or research.
<i>Midwifery practise standards review</i>	<b>(G)</b> A systematic process that enables the midwife in whatever practice setting to reflect on one's personal midwifery practise in relation to professional standards with midwifery colleagues and consumers of midwifery services.
<i>Midwifery professional and personal attributes (N)</i>	<b>(G)</b> Those personal qualities and characteristics expected by the midwifery profession of those authorised to practice midwifery.
<i>Midwifery regulation</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> The set of criteria and processes arising from legislation, prescribed by the Midwifery Regulatory Authority in alignment with the ICM Definition of Midwife and Scope of Practice, the ICM Definition of Midwifery, and ICM Education and Regulation Standards, that controls the practice of midwifery in a jurisdiction, identifies who can hold the title "midwife" and who can practice midwifery.
<i>Midwifery Regulatory Authority (N)</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> A public or government agency responsible for exercising, in the public interest, autonomous authority over such things as education standards and programs, licensing, practice and the conduct of midwives.
<i>Midwifery stakeholder</i>	<b>(G)</b> Any person(s) or organisation that affect(s) or can be affected by the decisions and actions of a midwife, the midwifery regulatory authority, a midwifery education programme or practice site, or the ICM.
<i>Midwifery student</i>	<b>(E)</b> An individual who has met the criteria for selection and is currently enrolled in a pre-service/pre-registration midwifery education programme.
<i>Midwifery supervision</i>	<b>(Rg -E)</b> A process by which one midwife provides oversight for the practice activities of another, including midwifery students, in order to promote the provision of safe and competent midwifery care. Both midwives remain responsible and accountable for their midwifery care.
<i>Natural justice</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> Procedural fairness which involves decision-makers informing people of the case against them or their interests; giving them a right to be heard; not having a personal interest in the outcome; and acting only on the basis of logically probative evidence.
<i>Practical/clinical experience</i>	<b>(E)</b> Student time in midwifery practice settings for acquiring and

<i>(midwifery)</i>	applying midwifery knowledge, skills and behaviours in order to acquire and demonstrate competency in the practice of midwifery.
<i>Practical/clinical sites (midwifery)</i>	<b>(E)</b> Variety of settings where midwifery care is practised; includes home, community, hospitals, clinic or health units.
<i>Primary health care</i>	<b>(G)</b> First level of universally accessible contact with a health care system in the community that incorporates personal care with health education and promotion, the prevention and treatment of individual health problems and referral as necessary.
<i>Public health</i>	<b>(G)</b> The art and science of protecting and improving the health of populations through the promotion of healthy lifestyles, research for disease and injury prevention and detection and control of infectious diseases.
<i>Professional midwifery association or organization</i>	<b>(G)</b> A formal association of midwives, usually non-profit, seeking to further the profession of midwifery; promote the interests of midwives; promote midwifery standards and the role of the midwife including enhancing the health and wellbeing of childbearing women, their newborns and their families.
<i>Provisional</i>	<b>(G)</b> Temporary; existing only until permanently or properly replaced or disbanded
<i>Quality improvement</i>	<b>(G)</b> A formal ongoing process for analysing performance to determine the need for making changes in the way of practise and for determining the effectiveness of actions taken to implement these changes.
<i>Register of midwives</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> The official and publically available list of qualified /licensed/certified midwives as identified by the midwifery regulatory authority in a given jurisdiction.
<i>Recognition of prior learning</i>	<b>(E)</b> Procedures or processes whereby students are assessed and may be given advanced standing recognition based on past learning and experience relevant to current enrolment in a midwifery programme.
<i>Regulatory authority, body, or agency</i>	<b>(G)</b> The organization, authorized by law or government that holds responsibility for oversight of a specific profession to protect the public against incompetent or unethical practitioners through regulatory mechanisms that promote safe and competent care.
<i>Relicensing, revalidation, or recertification</i>	<b>(G)</b> The process undertaken by a regulatory authority to renew a license or certificate within a specified period of time; generally linked to assessment of the practitioner's continuing competence.
<i>Reliability</i>	<b>(E - Rs)</b> Refers to the ability of a tool to measure the same way each time it is used related to a pre-determined standard.
<i>Reliable assessment measures</i>	<b>(E)</b> Measurement tools or strategies that allow different people to use the same tool and come to the same conclusions about progress in learning related to a given learning outcome.
<i>Regulation</i>	<b>(G - Rg)</b> A law, principle, rule or other order prescribed by an authority, designed to control or govern conduct.
<i>Regulatory purpose (midwifery)</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> The protection of mothers and babies (the public) through regulatory mechanisms that promote safe and competent

	midwifery care.
<i>Research (N)</i>	<b>(G-Rs)</b> A systematic investigation to identify, create and/or confirm existing or new concepts, knowledge, methodologies and understandings.
<i>Research ethical review (N)</i>	<b>(Rs)</b> Deliberation by a board of research experts about a proposed study to assure that participants are safeguarded against harm.
<i>Research - human subjects (N)</i>	<b>(Rs)</b> Any social science, biomedical, behavioural, or epidemiological activity that entails systematic collection or analysis of data with the intent to generate new knowledge, in which human beings are exposed to manipulation, intervention, observation, or other interaction with investigators either directly or through alternation of their environment; or become individually identifiable through an investigator's collection, preparation or use of biological material or medical or other records.
<i>Research informed consent (N)</i>	<b>(Rs)</b> Voluntary and formal agreement given by participants, who are capable of making such decisions, to become the subject of a research study after having been provided a full and comprehensive explanation of the purpose of the research, its risks and benefits, how participation will be protected either by confidentiality or anonymity, and the right of withdrawal from participation.
<i>Secondary education</i>	<b>(G)</b> The completion of 12 years of study from the beginning of primary education, as defined in the majority of global settings.
<i>Self-governing</i>	<b>(G)</b> The capacity of being responsible and accountable for making decisions and accepting responsibility for the outcomes of those decisions, actions and inactions.
<i>Skill</i>	<b>(G)</b> Ability learned through education or acquired by experience to perform specific actions or tasks to a specified level of measurable performance.
<i>Social Sciences</i>	<b>(E)</b> Content in a curriculum that provides the opportunity to learn about society and human relationships and how they influence the world around them as a means of providing a foundation for understanding the human condition/behaviour.
<i>Standard</i>	<b>(G)</b> A norm/uniform reference point that describes the required level of achievement (performance).
<i>Standard (Education)</i>	<b>(E)</b> A norm/uniform reference point that describes the required level of achievement for quality midwifery education.
<i>Standard (Practice)</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> A norm/uniform reference point that describes the desirable and achievable level of performance for quality midwifery practice.
<i>Summative evaluation</i>	<b>(E)</b> Assessment of learning at a given point in time to determine achievement of established learning outcomes.
<i>Suspend or suspended midwife</i>	<b>(Rg)</b> The restriction or barring of a midwife from practice for a period of time.
<i>Task</i>	<b>(G)</b> A specific piece of work to be done or undertaken as a

	component of a larger body of work
<i>Teacher effectiveness</i>	<b>(E)</b> Evidence that a teacher is performing in a quality and timely way that facilitates student learning.
<i>Temporary</i>	<b>(G)</b> Not permanent; provisional.
<i>Validity</i>	<b>(G - Rs)</b> The ability of a tool to measure what it was intended to measure against a pre-determined standard.
<i>Valid assessment methods</i>	<b>(E)</b> Use of measurement tools and strategies that have been demonstrated to have sufficiently robust measurement properties to be capable of determining progress toward a defined learning outcome.

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<sup>i</sup> Please note the following legend for definitions in this revised document:

(G) = General use or generic

(E) = Education use primarily

(Rg) = Regulation use primarily

(Rs) = Research use primarily

(N) = new definition in 2017