



INFORMATION FOR MIDWIFERY STUDENTS

The Midwifery Council hopes that the following information will assist Bachelor of Midwifery students, particularly those in their final year, to ensure that on completion of their programmes all requirements to be registered as a midwife have been met and that they have sufficient funds to cover the Midwifery Council fees to sit the National Midwifery Examination, to be registered, and to obtain a practising certificate.

Requirements for Entry to the Register of Midwives

You must satisfy the requirements in four broad areas before the Council is able to register you as a midwife:-

- Qualifications. You must complete an approved education programme in midwifery with an accredited education provider. In New Zealand the approved education programme is a three-year bachelor's degree in midwifery. New Standards for the pre-registration programme were published in 2007. As at September 2008, Otago Polytechnic (Dunedin) and Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT) were jointly accredited to offer the new programme from 2009 and new programmes developed by Wintec and AUT are undergoing the accreditation process. Massey University is not offering a new programme in 2010.
- Competencies. You must be able to meet the Competencies for Entry to the Register of Midwives. These competencies provide evidence that you are able to practise within the Midwifery Scope of Practice.
- Fitness for Registration. You must be of good character. You must not have any mental or physical condition that adversely affects your ability to practise as a midwife. You must be able to communicate effectively, and must be fluent in written and spoken English.
- National Midwifery Examination. You must obtain a pass in the National Midwifery Examination.

You must meet the requirements in all four of these areas. It is not sufficient to meet some of them only. For example, you must have completed the requirements of your undergraduate programme prior to sitting the examination and your Head of School is required to supply confirmation of this direct to the Midwifery Council. Occasionally this information is not available until quite close to the examination date but unless such confirmation is received you will not be allowed to sit the examination. In some circumstances, students who have only to facilitate a small number of births to complete their programme may be allowed to sit the examination but will not be registered until the necessary births have been facilitated.

Completion of an application form and your receipt of an examination admission slip is part of the administrative process and is not evidence that the requirements have been met. Similarly, a pass in the National Midwifery Examination does not by itself guarantee registration although the Midwifery Council makes every effort to ensure that all other requirements are met before each candidate sits the examination.

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## **The National Midwifery Examination**

The Midwifery Council conducts the National Midwifery Examination. The examination is held at each of the accredited midwifery education institutions listed above, but their involvement is only to provide a venue. Students may elect to sit the examination at any of these venues. Students may be permitted to sit at a centre other than the midwifery schools but in this situation are required to pay an additional administration fee plus the costs of hire of the venue and supervisors.

The examination is held two times each year in March and November. The majority of students sit in November.

If you fail the first time you are permitted to attempt the examination once more only.

The examination dates are listed at the Midwifery Council website at [www.midwiferycouncil.org.nz](http://www.midwiferycouncil.org.nz). (Look under "For Midwifery Students").

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IELTS Requirement

The ability to communicate in and comprehend the English language is a specific requirement of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003. You will appreciate that there is some risk associated for midwifery practice if communication is poor. The safety of the mother and baby may depend on effective communication with the mother and with other health service providers, in both directions.

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is a world wide and generally accepted system of testing proficiency in the English language. There are fifteen test providers in New Zealand covering most major population centres. Testing is done once or twice each month at each test centre. A list of test centres can be found at the IELTS website (<http://www.ielts.org>), at the Midwifery Council website, or by contacting your local University, Polytechnic, or the Midwifery Council. The IELTS Internet site and individual testing centre sites (links at IELTS) give test dates. The fee for the IELTS test was \$250 at the time these notes were written. You should instruct the testing centre to send a copy of your results direct to the Midwifery Council.

If English is not your first language:

- You will generally be required to demonstrate an average pass in the academic module of 7.5 with no less than 7 in any one band. This is a separate requirement to any requirements imposed by the educational institution at which you have studied.
- However, you may make a case to Council as an individual, either as to why a lower pass mark should be acceptable or why you should not be required to sit an IELTS test prior to registration. Such an application will also require a letter from your Head of School supporting your application. You must have convincing evidence and the Council will need to be certain of your proficiency in English before it would grant an exemption.
- You are exempt from the requirement to sit the IELTS test if at least four years of your secondary schooling and your entire midwifery education

programme was undertaken in New Zealand. You will need to provide the Council with evidence of this secondary schooling in New Zealand. Council will also consider applications for exemption on other grounds.

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## **Time Limit to Complete Your Bachelor's Degree**

Midwifery is not a subject that is suited to part time or broken study. The Council has placed limits on the time you can take to complete your degree.

### **Students who commenced their programme before 2005:**

If you wish to extend your programme to more than four years, for example because of a break from study or a wish to study part-time, you should apply at the earliest opportunity to the Midwifery Council for approval by way of an appropriately presented letter together with a letter of support from your Head of School and a transcript of passes and grades so far. The most important points to be addressed are how your learning is to remain integrated after a break, what arrangements have been made to assess your knowledge when you rejoin the programme, and how you will retain the midwifery body of knowledge if you wish to study part time.

### **Students for whom 2005 was their first year**

The previous five year time limit in which a Bachelor's degree in midwifery could be completed has been reduced to four years. If you require more than four years to complete your programme you must apply for consent by way of an appropriately presented letter to the Midwifery Council. The Council's main priority is to ensure that students extending the programme time retain the body of knowledge that they are developing. You must discuss your proposal with your Head of School whose support is required. Your application should explain the reasons for your request and include a programme re-entry plan to ensure that your learning remains integrated and that you retain your body of midwifery knowledge.

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Fees

Application fees to sit the examination and to be registered as a midwife are payable in late September if you intend to sit the November examination.

The fees are \$245 to sit the examination and \$330 to be registered. Once you are registered you remain registered for life unless you ask to be removed or are struck off following a disciplinary matter.

Before you can work as a midwife you must obtain a practising certificate. This is a separate process from registration. An application form will be supplied with your confirmation of registration. The annual practising certificate year runs from 1 April to 31 March. The fee reduces each quarter of the practising year and depends on the date of your application. If you require a practising certificate for the last quarter of the year immediately after registration, the fee is \$70 (being one quarter of \$280). The fee for your first full year after that is \$280. This is a discounted Rate. Thereafter you will pay the same fee as other midwives. The normal full year fee is currently \$600.

Please note that if you sit the examination in March and then obtain a practising certificate you pay the relevant proportion of \$280 for the rest of that practising certificate year depending on the date of your application, but then the normal fee (\$600) for the next full year.

Students will need to plan their finances so as to be able to cover these necessary expenses.

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## **Convictions**

When you apply to sit the National Midwifery Examination and for Registration you will be asked to disclose any convictions and to consent to Police vetting.

Police vetting is standard procedure for persons responsible for the care of others, particularly those in vulnerable circumstance. The Police check Ministry of Justice court records for any convictions you may have and check their own records for any information they hold about you.

Any convictions you have will not necessarily prevent you from being registered as a midwife but you may be asked to meet Council's Registration Committee before your application is approved. Each case will be considered on its merits taking into account factors such as the nature of the offence and the circumstance surrounding it, the penalty imposed, the time passed, and any discernable pattern of offending. Registration will not be refused without discussing this with you first and you will be given a reasonable opportunity to satisfy the Council of your fitness for registration.

If in doubt you should put your circumstance before the Council for its consideration. Failure to disclose any convictions is in itself grounds to question your honesty and fitness for practise.

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The Midwifery Council wishes you well in your study. Keep an eye on our website at www.midwiferycouncil.org.nz for news and information about the profession.