



**QQI**

Quality and Qualifications Ireland  
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

# AWARD STANDARDS - NURSING AND MIDWIFERY

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## FOREWORD

The Qualifications (Education & Training) Act 1999 required the Higher Education and Training Awards Council to determine standards of knowledge, skill or competence to be acquired by learners “before a higher education and training award may be made”. These standards are based on the level indicators and award-type descriptors of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ, Appendix 2).

Standards for certain broad fields of learning were developed for awards at level 6 to level 9 on the NFQ. These standards represent an elaboration of the generic descriptors of the Framework. They should facilitate experts in particular fields of learning to create the link between their programmes’ intended learning outcomes and the NFQ. These standards are not programme specifications. It is through these, however, that the relationship between a programme, its component parts and the NFQ should be evident. The standards are a reference point and a point of comparison against which individual programmes may be justified.

They are intended to provide general guidance for articulating the learning outcomes associated with a particular field of learning. In designing programmes, providers must take cognisance of the standards for specific fields of learning where they generally relate to the programme being developed. It is, however, recognised that there is a significant growth in multi-disciplinary/inter-disciplinary programmes; there are emerging fields of learning; and in addition, within each field there is the vast spectrum of programmes possible, which range from highly practical to very theoretical.

In this context, it is not possible to have a standard, or multiple standards, that cater for the complete range of programmes possible. It is therefore expected that the standards for specific fields of learning will be used as reference points for the design of programmes.

In drafting the standards every effort has been made to ensure that they will provide for flexibility and variety in the design of programmes and therefore encourage innovation within an overall agreed framework. It is not expected that all programmes will include every learning outcome identified in a standard. It is, however, expected that many programmes will include learning outcomes that are not included in the relevant standard. When designing a programme, each learning outcome in the standard should be considered. Where departure from these is necessary, it should be justified in the context of the specific orientation of the programme and other facts pertaining to it. Each programme provider should be able to demonstrate how the design and content of its own programmes has been informed by the standard.

The level descriptors of the Framework, the award type descriptors and consequently the standards for the specific fields of learning are divided into three different types of learning outcomes - knowledge, skill and competence.

These strands are further subdivided (sub-strands). Each strand/sub-strand is important. The relative weighting of each strand in a programme will vary from programme to programme. The weighting will be determined by many factors, including for example, the practical nature of a programme, or otherwise. Each strand/sub-strand should be addressed appropriately in every programme. Where a programme is multi-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary in nature, the use of more than one standard may be necessary. In such cases, the scope, depth and balance of concepts and application should not result in the neglect of either the theoretical, or applied, at the expense of the other.

The standards developed for Nursing and Midwifery for awards on the National Framework of Qualifications have been developed in partnership with An Bord Altranais and the National Council for the Professional development of Nursing and Midwifery. These standards should be used in conjunction with the requirements of both bodies.

These standards were originally determined by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council in November 2005 and reissued with a new foreword by QQI in July 2014. They are QQI awards standards under section 84 (10) of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 2012.

# Award Standards - Nursing and Midwifery

## NURSING

Knowledge				
	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Level 9
	The graduate should be able to demonstrate:	The graduate should be able to demonstrate:	The graduate should be able to demonstrate:	The graduate should be able to demonstrate:
Knowledge-Breadth	<i>Specialised knowledge of a broad area</i>	<i>Specialised knowledge across a variety of areas</i>	<i>An understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to a field (or fields) of learning</i>	<i>A systematic understanding of knowledge, at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning</i>
	The graduate should be able to:  demonstrate a basic knowledge of a systematic approach to care and a specified range of nursing interventions, and of health ethics, interpersonal communication, management, information technology, numeracy and literacy as applied to health care.	The graduate should be able to:  demonstrate an integration of knowledge and an understanding of a systematic approach to care and a specified range of nursing interventions, and of health ethics, interpersonal communication, management, information technology, numeracy and literacy as applied to health care within a health care team.	The graduate should be able to:  1. demonstrate an understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to relevant clinical practice skills, essential for safe and effective nursing practice.  2. <i>articulate and demonstrate an understanding of the concept of care in a specialised area.</i>	The graduate should:  1. know how knowledge is created and changed within the profession.  2. be able to demonstrate a knowledge base that exercises higher levels of judgement, discretion and decision making within nursing practice.  3. be able to demonstrate the value of nursing through the generation of nursing knowledge and innovative clinical practice, nursing education and management.
Knowledge-Kind	<i>Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant underpinning theory</i>	<i>Recognition of limitations of current knowledge and familiarity with sources of new knowledge; integration of concepts across a variety of areas</i>	<i>Detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialised areas, some of it at the current boundaries of the field(s)</i>	<i>A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning</i>
	The graduate should be able to:  1. demonstrate a basic knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of nursing care;</li><li>concepts that underpin nursing practice and health care, including social, biological and related sciences.</li></ul>	The graduate should be able to:  1. demonstrate an integration of knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of nursing care;</li><li>concepts that underpin nursing practice and health care, including social, biological and related sciences.</li></ul> 2. recognise the limitations to current competence.	The graduate should:  1. know and demonstrate an understanding of relevant biological and related sciences as they apply to nursing practice.  2. know and demonstrate an understanding of the social sciences as they apply to nursing practice.  3. critically analyse and evaluate relevant knowledge in nursing science.  4. critically analyse and evaluate relevant knowledge in health promotion and health care policy.  5. demonstrate relevant knowledge to adopt systematic approaches to nursing practice based on best available evidence.  6. <i>possess focused knowledge and skills in a defined area of nursing practice.</i>	The graduate should:  1. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of knowledge from various domains, showing a breadth and depth of knowledge of their discipline.  2. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of knowledge from a broad range of disciplines that inform and develop nursing practice.  3. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of the major research methodologies appropriate to their professional domain.

1. All standards must be considered in conjunction with the requirements of An Bord Altranais and the National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery  
2. Learning outcomes in italics relate to competencies identified by the National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery

# Award Standards - Nursing and Midwifery

Know-How & Skill-Range	<i>Demonstrate comprehensive range of specialised skills and tools</i>	<i>Demonstrate specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills and tools across an area of study</i>	<i>Demonstrate mastery of a complex and specialised area of skills and tools; use and modify advanced skills and tools to conduct closely guided research, professional or advanced technical activity</i>	<i>Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools and techniques of enquiry</i>
	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. demonstrate a defined range of nursing activities to practice safely with supervision, as appropriate.</li> <li>2. take responsibility for actions and omissions.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. demonstrate defined specialised technical, creative or conceptual nursing skills and tools, with supervision as appropriate.</li> <li>2. take responsibility for actions and omissions.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. assist individuals, families and groups achieve optimum health, independence, recovery, or a peaceful death, in a professional caring manner.</li> <li>2. provide and manage direct practical nursing whether health promotional, preventive, curative, rehabilitative or supportive to individuals, families or groups.</li> <li>3. demonstrate evidence based clinical practice skills essential for safe nursing practice.</li> <li>4. <i>perform a nursing assessment; plan and initiate care and treatment modalities within agreed interdisciplinary protocols to achieve patient/client centred outcomes and evaluate their effectiveness.</i></li> <li>5. <i>identify and implement health promotion priorities in an area of specialist practice.</i></li> <li>6. <i>implement health promotion strategies for patient/client groups in accordance with the public health agenda.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. make critical choices in the selection of approaches to research problems.</li> <li>2. synthesise different approaches to research and justify their use in practice.</li> <li>3. systematically gather, interpret and evaluate evidence drawn from a diverse range of sources that are chosen independently.</li> <li>4. conduct a comprehensive health needs assessment as the basis for independent nursing practice within a specified area.</li> <li>5. demonstrate expert skill in providing care for individuals and groups in communities, within the scope of practice framework and multidisciplinary teams.</li> <li>6. demonstrate advanced clinical decision-making skills to manage a patient/client case load.</li> <li>7. evaluate and critique current evidence base to set standards for best practice.</li> </ol>

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# Award Standards - Nursing and Midwifery

Know-How & Skill-Selectivity	<i>Formulate responses to well-defined abstract problems</i>	<i>Exercise appropriate judgement in planning, design, technical and/or supervisory functions related to products, services, operations or processes</i>	<i>Exercise appropriate judgement in a number of complex planning, design, technical and/or management functions related to products, services, operations or processes, including resourcing</i>	<i>Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning; develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques</i>
	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. respond appropriately within defined nursing situations.</li> <li>2. seek guidance as appropriate in situations beyond experience or competence.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. exercise relevant judgement in participating in the assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of patient care with appropriate supervision.</li> <li>2. undertake delegated duties in a reliable manner taking responsibility for actions or omissions, as appropriate.</li> <li>3. seek guidance in situations beyond experience or competence.</li> <li>4. utilise knowledge, experience and learning resources from diverse sources to enhance competence.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identify and meet the nursing needs of the individual, family and community in all health care settings.</li> <li>2. demonstrate the skills of               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analysis</li> <li>• critical thinking</li> <li>• problem solving, and</li> <li>• reflection</li> </ul>               in nursing practice.             </li> <li>3. act as an effective member of the health care team, in an appropriate nursing setting and participate in the multidisciplinary team approach to the care of patients and clients.</li> <li>4. evaluate practice and use current research findings to underpin clinical practice.</li> <li>5. <i>articulate and represent patient/client interests and enable patient/client and others to fully participate in decisions about their health needs.</i></li> <li>6. <i>implement changes in health care service in response to patient/client need and service demand.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. critically evaluate with discrimination the complex theories and concepts underpinning professional practice.</li> <li>2. utilise advanced knowledge and critical thinking skills to directly and indirectly provide optimum nursing care.</li> <li>3. develop and apply critical faculties to practice through advanced reflection skills.</li> <li>4. demonstrate vision of professional practice that can be developed beyond the current scope of practice.</li> <li>5. act proactively as an educational resource for health care professionals.</li> <li>6. apply critical faculties to professional practice through analysis of the underlying epistemology of its knowledge base.</li> </ol>

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# Award Standards - Nursing and Midwifery

Competence-Context	<i>Act in a range of varied and specific contexts involving creative and nonroutine activities; transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of contexts</i>	<i>Utilise diagnostic and creative skills in a range of functions in a wide variety of contexts</i>	<i>Use advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for all related decision making; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills in a range of contexts</i>	<i>Act in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional levels and illdefined contexts</i>
	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>act, with appropriate supervision, in a defined range of contexts in the health care setting.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>utilise skills in a wide range of appropriate functions in the health care setting with appropriate supervision.</li> <li>seek and understand sources of evidence to underpin nursing interventions.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adopt a holistic approach to care and the integration of knowledge; conduct a systematic holistic assessment of client needs based on nursing theory and evidence-based practice.</li> <li>plan care in consultation with the client, taking into consideration the therapeutic regimes of all members of the health care team.</li> <li>implement planned nursing care/interventions to achieve the identified outcomes.</li> <li>evaluate client progress towards expected outcomes and review plans in accordance with evaluation data and consultation with the client.</li> <li>establish and maintain therapeutic interpersonal relationships, with individuals/ clients/groups/ communities.</li> <li><i>identify, critically analyse, disseminate and integrate nursing and other evidence into the area of specialist practice.</i></li> <li><i>initiate and/or participate in and evaluate audit and use the outcome of audit to improve service provision.</i></li> <li><i>contribute to service planning and budgetary processes through the use of audit and specialist knowledge.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate autonomy, experience, competence, accountability, authority and responsibility in nursing practice.</li> <li>demonstrate leadership in nursing practice.</li> <li>use knowledge to autonomously identify, resolve and evaluate intellectual issues and practical problems that appear in practice.</li> <li>identify and integrate research into areas of health care that can incorporate best evidence based practice.</li> <li>use advanced skills to conduct an in-depth research study relevant to the field of professional nursing.</li> </ol>

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# Award Standards - Nursing and Midwifery

Competence–Role	<i>Exercise substantial personal autonomy and often take responsibility for the work of others and/or for allocation of resources; form, and function within, multiple complex and heterogeneous groups</i>	<i>Accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes; take significant or supervisory responsibility for the work of others in defined areas of work</i>	<i>Act effectively under guidance in a peer relationship with qualified practitioners; lead multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups</i>	<i>Take significant responsibility for the work of individuals and groups; lead and initiate activity</i>
	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. work with patients, clients, and their families with supervision as appropriate.</li> <li>2. undertake delegated nursing duties with supervision as appropriate.</li> <li>3. respect the expertise of and work collaboratively with all members of the multiprofessional care team.</li> <li>4. adhere to the policies, procedures and clinical guidelines of the health care provider.</li> <li>5. work within the boundaries of role competence.</li> <li>6. seek guidance when unsure how to intervene or act.</li> <li>7. take responsibility for own actions or omissions.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. accept responsibility for personal outcomes within a defined range of nursing activities.</li> <li>2. undertake delegated nursing duties with supervision as appropriate.</li> <li>3. respect the expertise of and work collaboratively with all members of the multiprofessional care team.</li> <li>4. adhere to the policies, procedures and clinical guidelines of the health care provider.</li> <li>5. work within the boundaries of role competence.</li> <li>6. seek guidance when unsure how to intervene or act.</li> <li>7. take responsibility for own actions or omissions.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. effectively manage the nursing care of clients/ groups/communities.</li> <li>2. contribute to the overall goal/mission of the health care institution.</li> <li>3. demonstrate the ability to work as a team member.</li> <li>4. determine priorities for care based on need, acuity and optimal time for intervention.</li> <li>5. select and utilise resources effectively and efficiently.</li> <li>6. utilise methods to demonstrate quality assurance and quality management.</li> <li>7. delegate to other nurses activities commensurate with their competence and within their scope of professional practice, having due regard for the principles outlined in the <i>Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework</i>, when delegating a particular role or function.</li> <li>8. facilitate the coordination of care. This is achieved through working with all team members to ensure that client care is appropriate, effective and consistent.</li> <li>9. <i>provide leadership in clinical practice and act as a resource and role model for specialist practice.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. co-ordinate evidence based practice audit and research to develop and evaluate practice.</li> <li>2. actively contribute to the professional body of nursing knowledge.</li> <li>3. demonstrate the value of nursing through the generation of nursing knowledge and innovative nursing education and practice.</li> <li>4. teach others from a broad and in-depth knowledge base, derived from reflection on nursing practice and expertise.</li> <li>5. critically review the working of teams and demonstrate skills in negotiation and the management of conflict.</li> </ol>

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# Award Standards - Nursing and Midwifery

<b>Competence–Learning to Learn</b>	<i>Learn to evaluate own learning and identify needs within a structured learning environment; assist others in identifying learning needs</i>	<i>Take initiative to identify and address learning needs and interact effectively in a learning group</i>	<i>Learn to act in variable and unfamiliar learning contexts; learn to manage learning tasks independently, professionally and ethically</i>	<i>Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development</i>
	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recognise limitations of own level of knowledge, skill, attitude or competence.</li> <li>take appropriate opportunities to enhance own level of knowledge, skill, attitude or competence.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflect on personal experience to integrate experiential learning with theoretical knowledge.</li> <li>identify personal and professional development needs.</li> <li>take appropriate opportunities to enhance own level of knowledge, skill, attitude or competence.</li> <li>show self-direction in use of time, motivation and commitment to enhancing professional development.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>take responsibility for personal and professional development.</li> <li>act to enhance the personal and professional development of self and others.</li> <li>demonstrate a commitment to life-long learning.</li> <li>contribute to the learning experiences of colleagues through support, supervision and teaching.</li> <li>educate clients/groups/ communities to maintain and promote health.</li> <li><i>provide mentorship, preceptorship, teaching, facilitation and professional supervisory skills for nurses and other health care professionals.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify personal learning needs and the steps needed to meet them.</li> <li>reflect critically on practice in order to improve it in self and others.</li> <li>undertake complex and sustained analysis of subject matter and provide a balanced, logical and coherent conclusion.</li> <li>continually evaluate personal contribution to current body of knowledge in practice.</li> <li>utilise life-long learning skills to continue to develop knowledge applied to nursing practice.</li> <li>explore beyond scope of practice, developing effective and innovative nursing practice.</li> <li>demonstrate commitment to advancing the body of knowledge in nursing practice.</li> </ol>
<b>Competence–Insight</b>	<i>Express an internalised, personal world view, reflecting engagement with others</i>	<i>Express an internalised, personal world view, manifesting solidarity with others</i>	<i>Express a comprehensive, internalised, personal world view, manifesting solidarity with others</i>	<i>Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and act to change them</i>
	<p>The graduate should be able to demonstrate an awareness of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the principles of professional regulation.</li> <li>principles governing ethical behaviour in health care.</li> <li>how they can recognise limitations of own level of knowledge, skill, attitude or competence.</li> <li>the need for personal reflection upon clinical practice.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to demonstrate an understanding of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the principles of professional regulation.</li> <li>principles governing ethical behaviour in health care.</li> <li>how they can recognise limitations of own level of knowledge, skill, attitude or competence.</li> <li>the need for personal reflection upon clinical practice.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide and articulate professional and ethical nursing practice. Safe and effective practice requires a sound underpinning of theoretical knowledge that informs practice and is in turn informed by that practice.</li> <li>practice in accordance with legislation relevant to nursing practice.</li> <li>practice within the limits of own competence and take measures to develop own competence.</li> <li>demonstrate an understanding and consciousness of professional nursing practice issues through the process of reflection on experience.</li> <li><i>generate and contribute to the development of clinical standards and guidelines.</i></li> <li><i>use specialist knowledge to support and enhance generalist nursing knowledge and practice.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 identify and implement action to improve practice and initiate change.</li> <li>identify and critically evaluate ethical issues and work with others towards their resolution.</li> <li>develop the ability to be political within and outside of their employing organisation.</li> <li>challenge assumptions and question values, beliefs and policies underpinning care at individual, team and organisational level.</li> <li>actively contribute to the quality of care through research that can advance nursing and health care knowledge.</li> <li>develop advanced communication skills in order to present balanced arguments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>present structured, rational and evidenced coherent arguments using appropriate strategies;</li> <li>engage confidently in academic and multiprofessional debate.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

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# Award Standards - Nursing and Midwifery

## MIDWIFERY

Knowledge				
	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Level 9
	The graduate should be able to demonstrate:	The graduate should be able to demonstrate:	The graduate should be able to demonstrate:	The graduate should be able to demonstrate:
Knowledge-Breadth	<i>Specialised knowledge of a broad area</i>	<i>Specialised knowledge across a variety of areas</i>	<i>An understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to a field (or fields) of learning</i>	<i>A systematic understanding of knowledge, at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning</i>
	The graduate should be able to:  demonstrate a basic knowledge of a systematic approach to care and a specified range of midwifery interventions and of health ethics, interpersonal communication, management, information technology, numeracy and literacy as applied to maternity care.	The graduate should be able to:  demonstrate an integration of knowledge and an understanding of a systematic approach to care and a specified range of midwifery interventions, and of health ethics, interpersonal communication, management, information technology, numeracy and literacy as applied to maternity care within a maternity care team.	The graduate should be able to:  1. demonstrate an understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to relevant clinical practice skills, essential for safe and effective midwifery practice.	The graduate should:  1. know how knowledge is created and changed within the midwifery profession. 2. be able to demonstrate a knowledge base that exercises higher levels of judgement, discretion and decision making within midwifery practice. 3. be able to demonstrate the value of midwifery through the generation of midwifery knowledge and innovative clinical practice, midwifery education and management.
Knowledge-Kind	<i>Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant underpinning theory</i>	<i>Recognition of limitations of current knowledge and familiarity with sources of new knowledge; integration of concepts across a variety of areas</i>	<i>Detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialised areas, some of it at the current boundaries of the field(s)</i>	<i>A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning</i>
	The graduate should be able to:  1. demonstrate a basic knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of midwifery care;</li><li>concepts that underpin midwifery practice and maternity care, including social, biological and related sciences.</li></ul>	The graduate should be able to:  1. demonstrate an integration of knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of midwifery care;</li><li>concepts that underpin midwifery practice and maternity care, including social, biological and related sciences.</li></ul> 2. recognise the limitations to current competence.	The graduate should:  1. know and demonstrate an understanding of relevant biological and related sciences as they apply to midwifery practice. 2. know and demonstrate an understanding of the social sciences as they apply to midwifery practice. 3. critically analyse and evaluate relevant knowledge in contemporary midwifery practice. 4. critically analyse and evaluate relevant knowledge in health promotion and health care policy. 5. demonstrate relevant knowledge to underpin evidence based midwifery practice. 6. <i>possess focused knowledge and skills in a defined area of midwifery practice.</i>	The graduate should:  1. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of knowledge from various domains, showing a breadth and depth of knowledge of midwifery. 2. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of knowledge from a broad range of disciplines that inform and develop midwifery practice. 3. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of the major research methodologies appropriate to midwifery.

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# Award Standards - Nursing and Midwifery

Know-How & Skill-Range	<i>Demonstrate comprehensive range of specialised skills and tools</i>	<i>Demonstrate specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills and tools across an area of study</i>	<i>Demonstrate mastery of a complex and specialised area of skills and tools; use and modify advanced skills and tools to conduct closely guided research, professional or advanced technical activity</i>	<i>Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools and techniques of enquiry</i>
	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. demonstrate a defined range of midwifery activities to practice safely with appropriate supervision.</li> <li>2. take responsibility for actions and omissions.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. demonstrate defined specialised technical, creative or conceptual midwifery skills and tools, with supervision as appropriate.</li> <li>2. take responsibility for actions and omissions.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. conduct a comprehensive needs assessment as the basis for independent midwifery practice.</li> <li>2. provide competent, safe, midwifery care to women<sup>1</sup> and where possible their wider family<sup>2</sup> circle.</li> <li>3. demonstrate evidence based clinical practice skills essential for safe midwifery practice.</li> <li>4. <i>identify and implement health promotion priorities in midwifery practice.</i></li> <li>5. <i>implement health promotion strategies for women, their families and the wider community, in accordance with the public health agenda.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. make critical choices in the selection of approaches to research problems in midwifery practice.</li> <li>2. synthesise different approaches to research and justify their use in midwifery practice.</li> <li>3. systematically gather, interpret and evaluate evidence drawn from a diverse range of sources that are chosen independently.</li> <li>4. demonstrate expert skill in providing care for women and groups in communities, within the scope of practice framework and multidisciplinary teams.</li> <li>5. demonstrate advanced clinical decision-making skills to manage a midwifery case load.</li> <li>6. evaluate and critique current evidence base to set standards for best midwifery practice.</li> </ol>

1 The word "woman"("women") includes her fetus/baby where appropriate The word "family" includes any significant others identified by the woman and not necessarily blood relatives  
 2 The word "family" includes any significant others identified by the woman and not necessarily blood relatives

# Award Standards - Nursing and Midwifery

Know-How & Skill-Selectivity	<i>Formulate responses to well-defined abstract problems</i>	<i>Exercise appropriate judgement in planning, design, technical and/or supervisory functions related to products, services, operations or processes</i>	<i>Exercise appropriate judgement in a number of complex planning, design, technical and/or management functions related to products, services, operations or processes, including resourcing</i>	<i>Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning; develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques</i>
	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. respond appropriately within defined midwifery situations.</li> <li>2. seek guidance as appropriate in situations beyond experience or competence.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. exercise relevant judgement in participating in the assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of midwifery care for women with appropriate supervision.</li> <li>2. undertake delegated duties in a reliable manner taking responsibility for actions or omissions, as appropriate.</li> <li>3. seek guidance in situations beyond experience or competence.</li> <li>4. utilise knowledge experience and learning resources from diverse sources to enhance competence.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identify and meet the midwifery care needs of women, their families and community in all health care settings.</li> <li>2. demonstrate the skills of               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analysis</li> <li>• critical thinking</li> <li>• problem solving, and</li> <li>• reflection</li> </ul>               in midwifery practice.             </li> <li>3. act as an effective member of the maternity care team and participate in the multidisciplinary team approach to the care of women, where appropriate.</li> <li>4. evaluate practice and use current research findings to underpin clinical midwifery practice, promoting the normality of pregnancy and birth.</li> <li>5. <i>articulate and represent women's interests and enable women to fully participate in decisions about their maternity care needs.</i></li> <li>6. <i>implement changes in maternity care service in response to women's needs and choices and service demand.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. critically evaluate with discrimination the complex theories and concepts underpinning professional midwifery practice.</li> <li>2. utilise advanced knowledge and critical thinking skills to directly and indirectly provide optimum midwifery care.</li> <li>3. develop and apply critical faculties to midwifery practice through advanced reflection skills.</li> <li>4. demonstrate vision of professional practice that can be developed beyond the current scope of practice.</li> <li>5. act proactively as an educational resource for health care professionals.</li> <li>6. apply critical faculties to professional midwifery practice through analysis of the underlying epistemology of its knowledge base.</li> </ol>

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Competence-Context	<i>Act in a range of varied and specific contexts involving creative and nonroutine activities; transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of contexts</i>	<i>Utilise diagnostic and creative skills in a range of functions in a wide variety of contexts</i>	<i>Use advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for all related decision making; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills in a range of contexts</i>	<i>Act in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional levels and illdefined contexts</i>
	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>act, with appropriate supervision, in a defined range of contexts in the health care setting.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>utilise skills in a wide range of appropriate functions in the health care setting with appropriate supervision.</li> <li>seek and understand sources of evidence to underpin midwifery care interventions.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adopt a holistic approach to midwifery care and the integration of knowledge: conduct a systematic holistic assessment of women's needs based on midwifery theory and evidence-based practice.</li> <li>plan care in partnership with the woman, taking into consideration the therapeutic regimes of all members of the midwifery care team.</li> <li>implement planned midwifery care to achieve the identified outcomes.</li> <li>evaluate a woman's progress towards expected outcomes and review plans in accordance with evaluation data and partnership with the woman.</li> <li>establish and maintain caring interpersonal relationships with women and their families.</li> <li>assess and confirm the health of women during pregnancy, labour, birth and puerperium and provide appropriate midwifery care.</li> <li><i>identify, critically analyse, disseminate and integrate midwifery and other evidence into midwifery practice.</i></li> <li><i>initiate and/or participate in and evaluate, audit and use the outcome of audit to improve the provision of midwifery care.</i></li> <li><i>contribute to service planning and budgetary processes through the use of audit and midwifery knowledge</i></li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate autonomy, experience, competence accountability, authority and responsibility in midwifery practice.</li> <li>demonstrate leadership in midwifery practice.</li> <li>use knowledge to autonomously identify, resolve and evaluate intellectual issues and practical problems that appear in midwifery practice.</li> <li>identify and integrate research into areas of health care that can incorporate best evidence based practice.</li> <li>use advanced skills to conduct an in-depth research study relevant to the field of professional midwifery practice.</li> </ol>

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<b>Competence–Role</b>	<i>Exercise substantial personal autonomy and often take responsibility for the work of others and/or for allocation of resources; form, and function within, multiple complex and heterogeneous groups</i>	<i>Accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes; take significant or supervisory responsibility for the work of others in defined areas of work</i>	<i>Act effectively under guidance in a peer relationship with qualified practitioners; lead multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups</i>	<i>Take significant responsibility for the work of individuals and groups; lead and initiate activity</i>
	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with women and their families with supervision as appropriate.</li> <li>undertake delegated midwifery duties with supervision as appropriate.</li> <li>respect the expertise of and work collaboratively with all members of the multiprofessional care team.</li> <li>adhere to the policies, procedures and clinical guidelines of the health care provider.</li> <li>work within the boundaries of role competence.</li> <li>seek guidance when unsure how to intervene or act.</li> <li>take responsibility for own actions or omissions.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>accept responsibility for personal outcomes within a defined range of midwifery care activities.</li> <li>undertake delegated midwifery care duties with supervision as appropriate.</li> <li>respect the expertise of and work collaboratively with all members of the multiprofessional care team.</li> <li>adhere to the policies, procedures and clinical guidelines of the health-care provider.</li> <li>work within the boundaries of role competence.</li> <li>seek guidance when unsure how to intervene or act.</li> <li>take responsibility for own actions or omissions.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>effectively manage the midwifery care of women and their families.</li> <li>contribute to the overall goal/mission of the healthcare institution.</li> <li>demonstrate the ability to work as a team member.</li> <li>determine priorities for midwifery care based on need, acuity and optimal time for intervention.</li> <li>select and utilise resources effectively and efficiently.</li> <li>utilise methods to demonstrate quality assurance and quality management.</li> <li>delegate to other midwives activities commensurate with their competence and within their scope of professional practice, having due regard for the principles outlined in the <i>Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework</i>, when delegating a particular role or function.</li> <li>facilitate the coordination of care. This is achieved through working in partnership with a woman and all team members to ensure that a woman's care is appropriate, effective and consistent.</li> <li><i>provide leadership in clinical practice and act as a resource and role model for midwifery practice.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>co-ordinate evidence based practice audit and research to develop and evaluate midwifery practice.</li> <li>actively contribute to the professional body of midwifery knowledge.</li> <li>demonstrate the value of midwifery through the generation of midwifery knowledge and innovative midwifery education and practice.</li> <li>teach others from a broad and in-depth knowledge base, derived from reflection on midwifery practice and expertise.</li> <li>critically review the working of teams and demonstrate skills in negotiation and the management of conflict.</li> </ol>
<b>Competence–Learning to Learn</b>	<i>Learn to evaluate own learning and identify needs within a structured learning environment; assist others in identifying learning needs</i>	<i>Take initiative to identify and address learning needs and interact effectively in a learning group</i>	<i>Learn to act in variable and unfamiliar learning contexts; learn to manage learning tasks independently, professionally and ethically</i>	<i>Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development</i>
	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recognise limitations of own level of knowledge, skill, attitude or competence.</li> <li>take appropriate opportunities to enhance own level of knowledge, skill, attitude or competence.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflect on personal experience to integrate experiential learning with theoretical knowledge.</li> <li>identify personal and professional development needs.</li> <li>take appropriate opportunities to enhance own level of knowledge, skill, attitude or competence.</li> <li>show self-direction in use of time, motivation and commitment to enhancing professional development.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>take responsibility for personal and professional development.</li> <li>act to enhance the personal and professional development of self and others.</li> <li>demonstrate a commitment to life-long learning.</li> <li>contribute to the learning experiences of colleagues through support, supervision and teaching.</li> <li>educate and support women, their families and the wider community to maintain and promote health.</li> <li><i>provide mentorship, preceptorship, teaching, facilitation and professional supervisory skills for midwives, and other health care professionals.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify personal learning needs and the steps needed to meet them.</li> <li>reflect critically on midwifery practice in order to improve it in self and others.</li> <li>undertake complex and sustained analysis of subject matter and provide a balanced, logical and coherent conclusion.</li> <li>continually evaluate personal contribution to current body of midwifery knowledge in practice.</li> <li>utilise life-long learning skills to continue to develop knowledge applied to midwifery practice.</li> <li>explore beyond scope of practice, developing effective and innovative midwifery practice.</li> <li>demonstrate commitment to advancing the body of knowledge in midwifery practice.</li> </ol>

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Competence-Insight	<i>Express an internalised, personal world view, reflecting engagement with others</i>	<i>Express an internalised, personal world view, manifesting solidarity with others</i>	<i>Express a comprehensive, internalised, personal world view, manifesting solidarity with others</i>	<i>Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and act to change them</i>
	<p>The graduate should be able to demonstrate an awareness of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the principles of professional regulation.</li> <li>2. principles governing ethical behaviour in maternity care.</li> <li>3. how they can recognise limitations of own level of knowledge, skill, attitude or competence.</li> <li>4. the need for personal reflection upon clinical practice.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to demonstrate an understanding of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the principles of professional regulation for midwives.</li> <li>2. principles governing ethical behaviour in maternity care.</li> <li>3. how they can recognise limitations of own level of knowledge, skill, attitude or competence.</li> <li>4. the need for personal reflection upon clinical midwifery practice.</li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. provide and articulate professional and ethical midwifery practice. Safe and effective practice requires a sound underpinning of theoretical knowledge that informs practice and is in turn informed by that practice.</li> <li>2. practice in accordance with legislation effecting midwifery practice.</li> <li>3. practice within the limits of own competence and take measures to develop own competence.</li> <li>4. demonstrate an understanding and consciousness of professional midwifery practice issues through the process of reflection on experience.</li> <li>5. <i>generate and contribute to the development of clinical standards and guidelines.</i></li> <li>6. <i>use relevant knowledge to support and enhance midwifery knowledge and practice.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identify and implement action to improve midwifery practice and initiate change.</li> <li>2. identify and critically evaluate ethical issues and work with others towards their resolution.</li> <li>3. develop the ability to be political within and outside of their employing organisation.</li> <li>4. challenge assumptions and question values, beliefs and policies underpinning maternity care at individual, team and organisational level.</li> <li>5. actively contribute to the quality of maternity care through research that can advance midwifery and maternity care knowledge.</li> <li>6. develop advanced communication skills in order to present balanced arguments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• present structured, rational and evidenced coherent arguments using appropriate strategies;</li> <li>• engage confidently in academic and multiprofessional debate.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

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## APPENDIX 1

### National Framework of Qualifications - Grid of Level Indicators

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Level 9	Level 10
<b>Knowledge - Breadth</b>	Elementary knowledge	Knowledge that is narrow in range	Knowledge moderately broad in range	Broad range of knowledge	Broad range of knowledge	Specialised knowledge of a broad area	Specialised knowledge across a variety of areas	An understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to a field (or fields) of learning	A systematic understanding of knowledge, at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning	A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of a field of learning
<b>Knowledge - Kind</b>	Demonstrable by recognition or recall	Concrete in reference and basic in comprehension	Mainly concrete in reference and with some comprehension of relationship between knowledge elements	Mainly concrete in reference and with some elements of abstraction or theory	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant depth in some areas	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant underpinning theory	Recognition of limitations of current knowledge and familiarity with sources of new knowledge; integration of concepts across a variety of areas	Detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialised areas, some of it at the current boundaries of the field(s)	A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning	The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy review by peers
<b>Know-how and skill - Range</b>	Demonstrate basic practical skills, and carry out directed activity using basic tools	Demonstrate limited range of basic practical skills, including the use of relevant tools	Demonstrate a limited range of practical and cognitive skills and tools	Demonstrate a moderate range of practical and cognitive skills and tools	Demonstrate a broad range of specialised skills and tools	Demonstrate comprehensive range of specialised skills and tools	Demonstrate specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills and tools across an area of study	Demonstrate mastery of a complex and specialised area of skills and tools; use and modify advanced skills and tools to conduct closely guided research, professional or advanced technical activity	Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools and techniques of enquiry	Demonstrate a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials which are associated with a field of learning; develop new skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials
<b>Know-how and skill - Selectivity</b>	Perform processes that are repetitive and predictable	Perform a sequence of routine tasks given clear direction	Select from a limited range of varied procedures and apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems	Select from a range of procedures and apply known solutions to a variety of predictable problems	Evaluate and use information to plan and develop investigative strategies and to determine solutions to varied unfamiliar problems	Formulate responses to well-defined abstract problems	Exercise appropriate judgement in planning, design, technical and/or supervisory functions related to products, services, operations or processes	Exercise appropriate judgement in a number of complex planning, design, technical and/or management functions related to products, services, operations or processes, including resourcing	Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning; develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques	Respond to abstract problems that expand and redefine existing procedural knowledge
<b>Competence - Context</b>	Act in closely defined and highly structured contexts	Act in a limited range of predictable and structured contexts	Act within a limited range of contexts	Act in familiar and unfamiliar contexts	Act in a range of varied and specific contexts, taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs; identify and apply skill and knowledge to a wide variety of contexts	Act in a range of varied and specific contexts involving creative and non-routine activities; transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of contexts	Utilise diagnostic and creative skills in a range of functions in a wide variety of contexts	display mastery Use advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for all related decision making; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills in a range of contexts	Act in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional levels and ill defined contexts	Exercise personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent contexts
<b>Competence - Role</b>	Act in a limited range of roles	Act in a range of roles under direction	Act under direction with limited autonomy; function within familiar, homogeneous groups	Act with considerable amount of responsibility and autonomy	Exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities; join and function within multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups	Exercise substantial personal autonomy and often take responsibility for the work of others and/or for the allocation of resources; form, and function within, multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups	Accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes; take significant or supervisory responsibility for the work of others in defined areas of work	Act effectively under guidance in a peer relationship with qualified practitioners; lead multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups	Take significant responsibility for the work of individuals and groups; lead and initiate activity	Communicate results of research and innovation to peers; engage in critical dialogue; lead and originate complex social processes
<b>Competence - Learning to Learn</b>	Learn to sequence learning tasks; learn to access and use a range of learning resources	Learn to learn in a disciplined manner in a well-structured and supervised environment	Learn to learn within a managed environment	Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a supervised environment	Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a managed environment	Learn to evaluate own learning and identify needs within a structured learning environment; assist others in identifying learning needs	Take initiative to identify and address learning needs and interact effectively in a learning group	Learn to act in variable and unfamiliar learning contexts; learn to manage learning tasks independently, professionally and ethically	Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development	Learn to critique the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts
<b>Competence - Insight</b>	Begin to demonstrate awareness of independent role for self	Demonstrate awareness of independent role for self	Assume limited responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour	Assume partial responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour	Assume full responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour	Express an internalised, personal world view, reflecting engagement with others	Express an internalised, personal world view, manifesting solidarity with others	Express a comprehensive, internalised, personal world view manifesting solidarity with others	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and act to change them	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and lead action to change them

Note: The outcomes at each level include those of all the lower levels in the same sub-strand



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