

POSITION STATEMENT

Mandatory Degree Requirements for Entry Into Midwifery Practice

It is the position of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) that:

- Certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) must be educated according to ACNM's *Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice*.¹
- As of 2010, completion of a graduate degree program is an added requirement for certification and entry into clinical practice for CNMs/CMs.
- The professional competencies and analytical skills developed and fostered during graduate education contribute to the profession and to the success of the graduates themselves.
- The value of graduate degree preparation in midwifery, nursing, public health, and other related fields is widely recognized. However, a doctoral degree will not be a requirement for entry into practice for CNMs or CMs.²
- CNMs and CMs educated before 2010 in certificate programs, without graduate degrees, should continue to retain their licensure to practice without the added requirement of a graduate degree, and granting such midwives licensure to practice in additional states is recommended.

Background

ACNM has set the standard for education programs for CNMs since 1962 and for CMs since 1994. The clinical safety of entry-level midwifery practice has been documented and will continue to be ensured through several mechanisms:

- The ACNM document *Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice*¹ provides standardized, entry-level competencies that must be mastered in all education programs. This document is updated periodically.
- The Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME) assesses the quality and content of midwifery education programs.
 - ACME is recognized by the US Department of Education as an accrediting agency.
 - ACME currently accredits independent institutions as well as midwifery programs affiliated with institutions of higher learning and accredits programs in institutions that offer distance education options.
- The American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB) is responsible for developing and administering the national certification examination leading to the CNM or CM

credential. AMCB is a member of the National Organization for Certifying Agencies and is certified by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies.

ACNM continues to affirm the value of the certificate route for entry into midwifery practice for students with previously earned graduate degrees and those concurrently enrolled in graduate degree programs.

ACNM's recommendation regarding the licensing of CNMs and CMs who were educated without graduate degrees before 2010 is in alignment with the clause for continued licensure, footnote 7, in the *Consensus Model for APRN Regulation: Licensure, Accreditation, Certification & Education*.³

References

1. American College of Nurse-Midwives. Core competencies for basic midwifery practice. Published March 20, 2020. Accessed June 12, 2022.
https://www.midwife.org/acnm/files/acnmldata/uploadfilename/000000000050/ACNMCORECOMPETENCIESMAR2020_FINAL.PDF
2. American College of Nurse-Midwives. Midwifery education and doctoral preparation. Updated April 2019. Accessed June 1, 2022.
<https://www.midwife.org/acnm/files/acnmldata/uploadfilename/000000000079/PSMidwiferyEducationandDoctoralPreparation190927.PDF>
3. APRN Consensus Work Group, National Council of State Boards of Nursing APRN Advisory Committee. *Consensus Model for APRN Regulation: Licensure, Accreditation, Certification & Education*. National Council of State Boards of Nursing. National Council of State Boards of Nursing. July 7, 2008. Accessed June 12, 2022.
https://www.ncsbn.org/public-files/Consensus_Model_for_APRN_Regulation_July_2008.pdf

Note. The terms *midwifery* and *midwife* as used throughout this document refer to the education and practice of certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) who have been certified by the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB).

Original Source: Division of Education, Basic Competency Section

Approved by the ACNM Board of Directors: 1992

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