



UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

Faculty of Health

School of Nursing and Midwifery

Programme Specification

MSc Midwifery (Pre-registration)
(blended learning programme)

Academic Year: 2022-23

Date Approved From: 30 Dec 2021

Date of Implementation: Sep 2022

Date of First Award: Sep 2025

Internal Programme Code	Award Title	Site	Mode of Study
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7330	MSc Midwifery (Pre-Registration)	South West	Blended Learning

Reviewed	Amended following review (Y/N)	Sections amended

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1. **MSc Midwifery (Pre-registration)**

Final award title:

MSc Midwifery (Pre-registration)

Intermediate award titles:

Professional Graduate Certificate (120 credits L6)

Post Graduate Certificate (60 credits L7)

(This award does not lead to eligibility to apply for NMC registration)

Post Graduate Diploma (120 credits L7)

(This award does not lead to eligibility to apply for NMC registration)

Post Graduate Diploma Midwifery (Pre-registration) (140 credits L7)

(This award leads to eligibility to apply for NMC registration, provided all NMC requirements – including theory and practice hours – have been achieved. It would be used for those who are unable to achieve the final Research and Quality Improvement module assessment at 40 credits).

Later: MSc Health and Wellbeing (Midwifery)

Students can achieve this award with a Post Graduate Diploma Midwifery (Pre-registration) (140 credits L7) and NMC registration following completion of an additional 40 credits at L7.

JACS3 code: B720 - Midwifery

HECOS code: 100288 - Midwifery

2. **Awarding Institution:** University of Plymouth

Teaching institution(s): University of Plymouth

3. **Accrediting body:** Nursing and Midwifery Council

4. Distinctive Features of the Programme and the Student Experience

This contemporary programme has been designed following a dynamic collaborative working relationship between the University, its students and stakeholders. A blended learning approach eliminates the requirement to attend lectures on the University of Plymouth Drake Circus campus, enabling students to access immersive digital teaching and learning materials asynchronously, at a time that suits them. Students will also be required to complete clinical placements (20.3 hours on average per week, integrated throughout the three-year programme) and attend regular local group tutorials / workshops. This programme will appeal to students in more remote areas, and those with family or caring commitments, in view of the flexible approach to learning. Students will, however, need to be self-motivated and have excellent time management skills in view of the high level of guided independent learning required.

It takes into consideration the distinct and autonomous role of midwives in the care of healthy pregnant women and their babies, in line with NMC Standards of proficiency for midwives (NMC, 2019¹). It also acknowledges national drivers to deliver safe and personalised maternity care with a focus on safety of mothers and babies as paramount (NHS England and NHS Improvement, 2020²).

This MSc programme offers students, who have already achieved a degree, the opportunity to study midwifery at postgraduate level. On completion students will be eligible to join the NMC register as midwives and look forward to rewarding careers both nationally and internationally.

4.1 Distinctive Features

- Students will spend 50% of the programme undertaking integrated, part time clinical practice placements in line with the NMC (2019a)³ Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes, under the supervision of a registered practitioner, providing excellent preparation for employment.

¹ NMC(2019) Standards of proficiency for midwives. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/standards/standards-of-proficiency-for-midwives.pdf> Accessed 11/06/20

² NHS England and NHS Improvement (2020) Better Births Four Years On: A review of Progress. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/better-births-four-years-on-progress-report.pdf> Accessed 11/06/20

³ Nursing and Midwifery Council (2019a) Part 3: Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/standards/standards-for-pre-registration-midwifery-programmes.pdf>

- Students will engage digitally with online asynchronous teaching and learning activities, alongside clinical placements, which will equip them with the knowledge and skills to optimise the childbirth experience for women and their families
- Students will be offered regular face-to-face group tutorials / workshops, to ensure they are “on-track” with their learning, practice clinical skills, and provide support
- Students will not be required to travel to the University of Plymouth Drake Circus campus for lectures, but will be able to access all theoretical teaching and learning resources online, including access to the library and student support hub
- Students will be equipped within a rigorous academic framework for the development and synthesis of critical knowledge and skills to optimise the childbirth experience for women and their families
- Students will be given the opportunity to further explore a quality improvement project or research proposal of their choice. This will demonstrate their knowledge and skills, providing a positive role-model in leadership relating to scholarly activities and research
- Students will be provided with practical placements and theoretical skills to promote and maximise physiological birth and support women with more complex needs
- Excellent communication networks exist between the midwifery team and local maternity services (clinicians and service-users), providing a strong foundation of support to students and facilitating prompt identification and resolution of any issues. Team members have experience of academic leadership of Placement Development Teams in the footprint, enabling a broader appreciation of contractual requirements, the importance of partnership working, and the wider context in which midwifery students’ practise. Members of the midwifery team engage in direct clinical practice, further extending communication networks and enhancing theory-practice links.
- ‘Fieldwork’ opportunities throughout the programme will enable students to access wider learning in practice settings which will complement Domain 5 (NMC, 2019b)⁴: ‘Promoting excellence: the midwife as colleague, scholar and

⁴ Nursing and Midwifery Council (2019b) Standards of proficiency for midwives. Available: at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/standards/standards-of-proficiency-for-midwives.pdf> (Accessed 11/6/20)

leader', such as involvement in audits and other quality improvement activities and inter-professional learning.

- Midwifery students will be provided with opportunities to engage with students from other Faculties through the philosophy of inter-professional learning, which is promoted within the University. Recent projects include collaboration with nursing, health professions, paramedicine, medicine, dentistry and law.
- Multi-professional Schwartz Centre Rounds are also offered at the UoP, and have been demonstrated to promote connectedness between healthcare students through sharing emotions and experiences (Clancy *et al.*, 2019)⁵.
- The midwifery team is committed to continuing to provide a curriculum that is accredited by UNICEF BFI, equipping students with the knowledge and skills they need to effectively support infant feeding and relationship building.
- The midwifery team is an experienced and diverse group of professionals with a range of clinical and academic backgrounds. Some represent midwifery at national level.
- The team lead, teach and supervise on modules in the generic MSc Advanced Professional Practice (Nursing and Midwifery) programme, therefore engaging with a wide range of health professions and being familiar with masters level delivery and assessment.
- Masters students will benefit from tutorial sessions to facilitate discussion, analysis and evaluation of concepts at an appropriate level for postgraduate study.

The initial modules will focus on the midwife as a professional and practitioner, clinical skills, medication calculation and consolidation in research terminology. The following theoretical modules will build on these essential midwifery skills and integrate research modules to extend knowledge and prepare students for their final research or quality improvement project. Clinical placements will be part-time throughout the 3-year programme, allowing students to apply their knowledge and skill, and develop their competence in preparation for professional registration as midwives (NMC, 2019b)⁴. These placements are authentic in context; participation and learning is facilitated through midwifery practice supervisors and underpinned by theoretical knowledge.

⁵ Clancy, D., Mitchell, A., Smart, C. (2019) 'A qualitative exploration of the experiences of students attending interprofessional Schwartz Rounds in a University context'. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 34 (Issue 3), p287-296. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13561820.2019.1692797>

4.2 The Student Experience

The student experience is central to the quality of educational programmes. The student experience has a direct bearing and significant impact on patient care. Therefore, quality monitoring, including retention and achievement, and continuous quality enhancement is an important part of the delivery process of the programme.

Students will need to consider whether the blended learning route is best suited to their learning style, as they will need to access online teaching and learning activities independently. Those students who prefer a “classroom” experience, alongside other students, would be advised to consider a campus-based programme (also available at the University of Plymouth).

Our experience of online learning during the COVID pandemic has demonstrated the benefits and opportunities afforded by a distance learning approach to theoretical elements of the programme. Students will be encouraged to engage in online learning communities through the digital learning environment (DLE – Moodle) as well as national digital fora; regular face to face tutorials / workshops will also enable small group learning.

Students will work in an environment alongside health professionals who will provide a model for the attributes and qualities required of learners. Through the School’s position in the Faculty of Health, students on the MSc Midwifery (Pre-registration) programme will be encouraged to access a wide range of online events which extend their learning, including research seminars in the health professions, Schwartz rounds, and other continuing professional development type events as appropriate to the students’ stage and interests.

Introduction to a needs analysis at the outset of the programme will require students to identify pre-existing transferable knowledge, skills and attitudes, enabling them to map out elements of their programme by drawing on these experiences and identifying gaps in clinical practice and theoretical knowledge, such as research and biology. Flexibility in modules such as the final year ‘Advancing Midwifery Practice’ will accommodate opportunities to gain and reflect on additional opportunities, promoting a well-rounded skilled and knowledgeable professional midwife.

A main feature of the student experience is engagement in a research community. Students are encouraged to think of research and practice as an iterative, cyclical process involving: enquiry, design, technique, communication, practice, and

reflection. Students will be encouraged to reflect on their learning regularly throughout the year, and tutorial activities will ensure this is integrated within their own practice. Reinforcement for masters' students will take place through additional self-directed guided independent learning activities which may include accessing activities available to postgraduate students on other programmes in the Faculty of Health and beyond. These – together with appropriate tutorial and online activities – will focus on empowering students to critically advance their conceptual understanding and management of complexities, promoting originality in application of knowledge and problem-solving approaches.

4.3 Sustainability

Sustainability has been embedded throughout the nursing and midwifery curricula in SNAM based on the innovative research of the Sustainability, Society and Health Research Group (for example, Grose *et al.* 2012⁶; Grose and Richardson, 2013a⁷,b⁸; Manzi *et al.* 2016⁹; Nichols *et al.* 2009¹⁰; Richardson *et al.* 2009)¹¹. Since 2011 we have developed and evaluated evidence based teaching and learning approaches to introduce students to the challenges of climate change in the context of health and wellbeing and sustainable healthcare provision (Grose and Richardson 2015¹²; Richardson *et al.* 2015)¹³. A NurSus TOOLKIT (www.nursus.eu), developed during a European funded project, provides a resource for health professionals, focusing on

⁶ Grose, J., Bennallick, M., Nichols, A., Pahl, S., Richardson, J. (2012) 'Facilitating Sustainable Waste Management Behaviours Within the Health Sector: A Case Study of the National Health Service (NHS) in Southwest England, UK.' *Sustainability*, 4, p630 – 642. doi: [10.3390/su4040630](https://doi.org/10.3390/su4040630)

⁷ Grose, J., Richardson, J. (2013a) 'Managing a sustainable, low carbon supply chain in the English National Health Service: The views of senior managers.' *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy*, 18 (2), p83-89. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1355819612473453>

⁸ Grose, J., Richardson, J. (2013b) 'Strategies to identify future shortages due to interruptions in the healthcare procurement supply chain: a method from the English National Health Service'. *Journal of Health Services Research Policy and Practice*. 19/1(19-26), p1355-8196. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1355819613502172>

⁹ Manzi, S., Nichols A., Richardson, J. (2016) 'A comparison of waste compositions at health and social care facilities'. *British Journal of Healthcare Management*, 22 (9), p469-474. <https://doi.org/10.12968/bjhc.2016.22.9.469>

¹⁰ Nichols, A., Maynard, V., Goodman, B., Richardson, J. (2009) 'Health, Climate Change and Sustainability: A systematic Review and Thematic Analysis of the Literature'. *Environmental Health Insights*, 3, p63-88. <https://doi.org/10.4137/EHI.S3003>

¹¹ Richardson, J., Kagawa, F., Nichols, A. (2009) 'Health, Energy Vulnerability and Climate Change: A Retrospective Thematic Analysis of Primary Care Trust Policies and Practices'. *Public Health*, 123, p765-770. DOI: [10.1016/j.puhe.2009.10.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2009.10.006)

¹² Grose, J., Richardson, J. (2015) 'Can a sustainability and health scenario provide a realistic challenge to student nurses and lead to a commitment to making changes in practice?' *Nursing and Health Sciences*, 2, p256-61. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nhs.12241>

¹³ Richardson, J., Grose, G., O'Connor, A., Bradbury, M., Kelsey, J., Doman, M. (2015) 'Nursing students' attitudes towards sustainability and health care'. *Nursing Standard*, 29 (42), p36-41. DOI: [10.7748/ns.29.42.36.e9692](https://doi.org/10.7748/ns.29.42.36.e9692)

the health challenges for climate change and sustainability, and is available in six languages¹⁸.

4.4 Peer Assisted Learning Scheme (PALS)

The Peer Assisted Learning Scheme (PALS) offers students the opportunity to develop their own learning through assisting those at an earlier stage of the curriculum. PALS is defined as '*the acquisition of knowledge and skill through active helping and supporting among status equals or matched companions*' (Topping 2005, p631¹⁴). The School of Nursing and Midwifery PALS scheme is structured to suit the needs of all our stage one and two students (Black and MacKenzie 2008)¹⁵. PALS leaders apply for the role and are selected from stage two and stage three students. The PALS academic lead for midwifery is an ex-PALS leader – bringing invaluable experience and insight to this role. For more information see <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/services/learning-gateway/learning-development/pals>.

4.5 Practice Placements

As part of the MSc Midwifery (Pre-registration) programme all students undertake a minimum of 2496 hours in clinical practice. Practice experiences take place in NHS Trusts (currently across the SW Peninsular – Somerset, Devon and Cornwall) that have agreed to offer the blended learning programme. Student places are therefore dependent on clinical placement capacity. Staff within the School of Nursing and Midwifery work in partnership with practice placement providers to ensure that the practice learning environment is conducive to meeting the individual learning needs of the student; a robust process of quality monitoring and enhancement of the learning environment is in place.

Students are supernumerary in all clinical placements. The shifts that students are rostered onto will reflect that midwifery care is delivered throughout a 24 hour period and on every day of the year. Shifts will include long days / nights, early, late, night, weekend, bank holiday and on-call duties. Students are informed of this at interview.

¹⁴ Topping, K. (2005) 'Trends in Peer Learning'. Educational Psychology, 25 (6), p631–634. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410500345172>

¹⁵ Black, F.M., MacKenzie, J. (2008) 'Peer support in the first year'. Available: https://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/docs/ethemes/the-first-year/peer-support-in-the-first-year.pdf?sfvrsn=2562f981_8 (Accessed 10/6/20)

On recruitment, students will be allocated to a placement zone, which may include up to two NHS Trust providers and the surrounding community areas within a Local Maternity System (LMS). This enables students to undertake integrated placements, on a part-time basis, alongside theory learning and other commitments. Students may be eligible for reimbursement of excess costs incurred when undertaking practical training on placements through the Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses section of the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) Learning Support Fund <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/learning-support-fund>

PLEASE NOTE: The student is responsible for all applications and claims for support from the NHSBSA.

5. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s)

The programme is informed by the NMC Standards of Proficiency for Registered Midwives (NMC, 2019a) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Framework for Higher Education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2014)¹⁶.

The Quality Assurance Agency Subject Benchmark Statements for Midwifery is currently under review; the most recent version (2009) is not currently available on the QAA website.

6. Programme Structure

The Blended learning MSc Midwifery (Pre-registration) programme will run in parallel with the blended learning BSc (Hons) Midwifery programme. This will enable all students to gain the essential knowledge and skills relating to the NMC (2019a) Standards of proficiency for midwives, enhance student identity and cohesion. However, self-directed management of this learning will be an essential component of the postgraduate programmes. The needs analysis, introduced at the start of the programme and reviewed annually, will help students to focus on clinical and theoretical gaps. Students will be provided with guidance as to opportunities for them to individually access additional experiences, and it will be their responsibility to

¹⁶ Quality Assurance Agency (2014) The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies UK. Quality Code for Higher Education. Available at: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf?sfvrsn=170af781_14 Accessed 06/08/18

ensure that their learning pathway is addressed in a way which is most meaningful to their particular professional journey.

Table 2 illustrates the proposed modules for this programme.

In line with NMC standards for pre-registration midwifery education (NMC, 2019a), the programme requires three years of full time training and provides an equal balance of 50% theory and 50% practice learning. To enable students to meet all NMC standards of proficiency for midwives, this training includes a total of 4988 hours: 2492 hours of theory and 2496 hours of practice. Table 1 shows the theory/practice split in hours, each year, demonstrating the 50/50 balance.

Part-time clinical placements will be integrated through all three years of the programme, with online teaching and learning activities and weekly tutorials taking up the other 50% of students' time. However, the asynchronous immersive digital learning activities will be accessible anytime, at the convenience of the student, enabling a flexible and personalised approach to learning. This approach will allow students to critically apply their knowledge and skills, advancing their competence in preparation for professional registration as midwives (NMC, 2019a). Placements are authentic in context; participation and learning is facilitated through midwifery practice supervisors and underpinned by theoretical knowledge.

Figure 1 shows the structure of the programme, in terms of modules. Where the academic level of assessment differs (ie: for zero-credited practice modules), this is indicated in brackets.

Table 1: Theory/practice split in hours, demonstrating 50/50 balance.

	Year 1 (45 wks):	Year 2 (45 wks):	Year 3 (43 wks):	Total hours over 3 years:
	4 theory-only weeks (37.5 hrs)	3 theory-only weeks (37.5 hrs)	3 theory-only weeks (37.5 hrs)	
	41 integrated theory (17.2 hrs) /practice weeks (20.3 hrs)	42 integrated theory (17.2 hrs) /practice weeks (20.3 hrs)	40 integrated theory (17.2 hrs) /practice weeks (20.3 hrs)	

Theory:	856	835	801	2,492
Practice:	832	852	812	2,496
Total:				4,988

Table 2: Programme Structure MSc Midwifery (Pre-registration) – modules

Year one Level 6	Professional Midwifery Practice 40 credits (All year)	Professional Midwifery Practice – MORA (Level 5) 0 credits (All year)	Biology for Midwifery 20 credits (Semester 1)	Evidence Based Practice 20 credits (Semester 1)	Wider Determinants of Health and Wellbeing 20 credits (Semester 2)	Pharmacology and Medicines Management 20 credits (Semester 2)	Exit with Professional Graduate Certificate + transcript of academic achievement
Assessment	OSCE	Practical	Exam	Coursework	Coursework	Coursework and Exam	
Year two Level 7	Developing Midwifery Practice 30 credits (All year)	Developing Midwifery Practice – MORA (Level 6) 0 credits (All year)	Reproductive Health and Pregnancy 15 credits (Semester 1)	Physiological Childbirth and additional needs 15 credits (Semester 1)	Postnatal and Neonatal Care 15 credits (Semester 2)	Developing Evidence Based Practice 15 credits (Semester 2)	Exit with Post Graduate Certificate + transcript of academic achievement (60 credits minimum)
Assessment	Coursework (oral presentation)	Practical	Coursework	Exam	VIVA/VOSCE	Coursework	
Year three Level 7	Advancing Midwifery Practice 30 credits (All year)	Complexity in midwifery (1) 10 credits (Semester 1)	Complexity in midwifery (2) 10 credits (Semester 2)	Research and Quality Improvement 40 credits (All year)	Exit options: Exit with Post Graduate Diploma + transcript of academic achievement (120 credits minimum – not eligible for NMC registration) Exit with Post Graduate Diploma Midwifery (Pre-registration) (eligible for registration with NMC as midwife provided all NMC requirements achieved- 140 credits minimum) Opportunity to study an additional 40 credit substantive project at a later date to gain an MSc Health and Wellbeing (Midwifery)		
Assessment	Coursework (written reflection) and Practical	Coursework	Exam	Coursework (choice of research or QI proposal) and Poster			

7. Programme Aims

The MSc Midwifery (Pre-registration) programme will prepare safe, competent and confident postgraduate midwives, who combine a critical understanding of clinical knowledge and skills with interpersonal and cultural competence. The programme will enable these postgraduate students to positively contribute to the health of childbearing women and their families, through individualised midwifery care, promoting continuity of care, personalisation and choice, while demonstrating sound judgement and originality in problem-solving. The programme will also equip graduates for further educational development at PhD/DPhil and professional doctorate level.

We will demonstrate respect for individuals; embracing diversity and equity of students, staff and partners, striving to provide accessible education in a working and learning environment, which is creative, inclusive and culturally sensitive. We will promote trust, empowerment, transparency and accountability; recognising that participants learn best when they are active, take responsibility for their own learning and critically apply it to their own context. We will support our local communities in a partnership approach, valuing contributions, passions and talents of staff, students and partners.

8. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

These have been developed in conjunction with the NMC standards of proficiency for midwives (NMC, 2019a), NMC standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes (NMC, 2019b) and our stakeholders to represent the complex requirements of this professional programme. Reference is also made to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) (Quality Assurance Agency, 2014) to ensure that they reflect the appropriate academic level of study.

8.1 Knowledge and understanding

On successful completion graduates should have developed a deep and systematic understanding to:

- 1) Demonstrate a fitness for purpose, practice, professional standing and the academic award in midwifery
- 2) Critically appraise current concepts and theoretical perspectives on midwifery practice, demonstrating originality in application.

- 3) Apply complex knowledge of bio-psycho-sciences in the context of midwifery practice and critically assimilate this knowledge to all areas of midwifery care
- 4) Integrate legal and ethical frameworks as they apply to the midwifery care of service users, anticipating likely conflicts and dilemmas
- 5) Critically evaluate the impact of current health and social care policy on maternity care through comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the mechanisms through which policy is generated
- 6) Demonstrate problem solving and involvement of multidisciplinary teams in complex health promotion and education environments, throughout the childbearing continuum.
- 7) Synthesise knowledge and understanding of beliefs and cultural practices of individuals and groups and utilise this to promote equality, respect diversity and recognise and challenge discriminatory practice
- 8) Use critical reflective processes for the systematic advancement of midwifery practice and professional development, demonstrating understanding of the role of revalidation in maintenance of professional registration.

8.2. Cognitive and intellectual skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

- 1) Critical awareness of a plethora of approaches to adult learning and study skills and the ability to apply these flexibly to problem solving
- 2) The skills of systematic enquiry and research to enable them to evaluate complex situations and generate transformative solutions through applying appropriate methodological approaches
- 3) Significant and well-reasoned judgement in decision making in new or unfamiliar environments, exercising initiative and formulating abstract ideas

8.3. Key and transferable skills

On successful completion graduates should have integrated:

- 1) Autonomous values based behaviours consistent with the relevant professional standards
- 2) Critical reflective practice with a lifelong commitment to self-directed transformative professional development to become highly adaptable and flexible employees
- 3) Complex strategies to respond to challenges by proactively initiating and managing transformational change
- 4) Emotional resilience to consistently exercise personal responsibility and professional accountability by working effectively with multiple teams as leader or member, challenging own and others' practice.
- 5) Advanced skills to enhance the development of professional knowledge and safe practice of others through peer support, coaching, supervision, teaching and research
- 6) Current and evolving technology in accessing information and manipulating text and data in support of care delivery.

8.4. Employment related skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed a comprehensive:

- 1) Appreciation of their role as agents of change, working in partnership with multiple professional disciplines, service users and their families
- 2) Ability to prioritise their workload to enable highly efficient and effective use of time and resources in pressured and complex environments

8.5. Practical skills

On successful completion graduates should demonstrate:

- 1) Proficiency in the midwifery skills required for registration.
- 2) The ability to practise competently in accordance with the NMC Code (2018).
- 3) Comprehensive, individualised midwifery care in a compassionate, respectful way, maintaining dignity, enhancing wellbeing and communicating effectively with people of all ages
- 4) High quality midwifery care in diverse environments and complex or unpredictable situations, within an ethical dimension.
- 5) The principles of transactional and transformational skills and the ability to apply these flexibly to leading, managing and supervising others in the delivery of midwifery care
- 6) The ability to be responsive to change in the delivery of sustainable and ethical maternity services, demonstrating originality in problem-solving.
- 7) Responsibility and accountability in safeguarding the public through person-centred, evidence-based and autonomous midwifery practice

9. Admissions Criteria, including Disability Service arrangements

Admissions are screened using a values-based recruitment process that builds upon and enhances an already robust application and selection process. The NMC has clear guidance on how the Approved Education Provider (AEI) must meet these criteria. This robust admissions process followed for all applicants is transparent, fair and equitable and takes account of the University Equality and Diversity Policy (2016).

This is available at:

https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/uploads/production/document/path/7/7108/Equality_and_Diversity_policy_Aug_2016_v.1.1_2_.pdf

In line with NMC Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes (standard 1.3), recognition of prior learning (RPL) is not permitted for the MSc Midwifery (Pre-registration) programme.

Student selection is via UCAS and includes:

- A personal statement demonstrating an understanding of the role of the midwife
- References.
- Confirmation of academic attainment.

Applicants are initially screened to ensure they have the required academic qualifications. All eligible students will undertake a face-to-face interview with members of the programme team and clinical partners. Service users are also involved in setting interview questions. Where the number of suitable applicants exceeds placement capacity, selection will be made based on interview score.

Potential students applying through UCAS should demonstrate:

- A strong GCSE profile of five GCSE subjects at level 4 (grade C) or above.
- They have subjects that include English, Mathematics and a Science.
- Have an honours degree from an Institution of Higher Education normally at 2:1 or above, preferably in a related subject. We will, however, also consider applications from graduates with non-related degrees.
- Evidence of recent study (within the last 10 years)
- Relevant work experience (paid or voluntary)

Students not achieving mathematics GCSE at grade C on application may be offered a free online mathematics support package and an examination equivalent to C grade GCSE to enable the achievement of appropriate entry requirements prior to commencing the programme. This examination is offered twice during the recruitment cycle to all eligible candidates.

Applicants who have not been educated in the UK or those for whom English is not their first language will be required to undertake a recognised English language qualification which must include reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

The NMC accept an IELTS Academic examination certificate that confirms you achieved:

- an overall score of at least 7
- at least 6.5 in all elements.

This programme is not available to international students in view of UKVI Compliance Tier 4 requirements.

9.1 Transfers from Other Universities

Neither internal transfers from other programmes or external transfers from other universities are permitted into this programme.

9.2 Health and Enhanced Disclosures

Offers are subject to Occupational Health clearance and Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure. If following an unsatisfactory Occupational Health assessment or the student reveals a change in health circumstance through the annual declaration, the Programme Lead will consult to determine continuation of the programme. Failure to meet DBS disclosure will result in the offer being withdrawn.

In addition to references, Occupational Health screening, and DBS checks students are required to complete a self-declaration form annually regarding any change in their circumstances, on enrolment. If in the process of the DBS check or students annual declaration, there is any disclosure of a positive criminal conviction, further advice is sought from the Faculty Professional Issues Committee.

9.3 Disability Service

This programme is designed to enable students through an equitable experience. We work collegiately with expert colleagues in Disability Services (within the Wellbeing Centre) to ensure students, who consider studying our MSc Midwifery (Pre-registration) receive timely advice on the support available. This is particularly important for a programme that has a professional element and specific requirements for practice. Students can declare a support requirement or disability – via the disclosure for applicants' pages. If an applicant declares a disability, an assessment is undertaken to confirm that the candidate is able to meet the learning outcomes of the programme and to identify the support requirements and adjustments.

10. Progression routes/criteria for progression to Final and Intermediate Awards

Students will progress through the programme in line with the University academic framework and the conditions set by the NMC Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes. Robust Fitness to Practise and academic measures are in place to act

promptly to concerns raised regarding a student's conduct or progress, or where safety or learning is compromised. At the end of the period of study the Award Assessment Board will review the students' academic and practice achievements in the given period and determine progression to the next stage/year of the programme. Both the University and NMC regulations determine the criteria for progression. Progression points will apply to the MSc Midwifery (Pre-registration) at the end of each year of the programme.

In exceptional circumstances students may request to transfer between equivalent campus-based and blended learning Midwifery programmes at the end of a completed stage; this will be considered following prior request and discussion with the programme leads as well as with agreement from relevant clinical practice partners.

At the end of the programme, the Award Assessment Board will ensure that all elements of the programme have been passed and achieved. This will include all theory and practice elements (including confirmation from the practice and academic assessors), confirmation of practice hours, good health and character. Students enrolling on the MSc Midwifery (Pre-registration) programme will complete the three-year programme, requiring a minimum of 2,496 practice hours. The Lead Midwife for Education (LME) (or designated midwife substitute) is accountable for signing the supporting declarations of health and character for applicants applying for admission to the register after completing the programme. The LME has been identified to the NMC.

Students are advised that have five years to apply to register with the NMC if they wish to rely on this qualification. In the event of a student failing to register their qualification within five years they will have to undertake additional education and training or gain such experience as specified in NMC standards.

Students stepping off the programme, with 60 credits at Level 7, are awarded a Post Graduate Certificate. Students who step off the programme with 120 credits at level 7 are awarded a Post Graduate Diploma. Students who complete all academic components and NMC programme requirements, with the exception of completion of the final research project, are eligible for the award of Post Graduate Diploma Midwifery (Pre-registration) with NMC registration. Those who complete all academic components and practice elements of the three years are eligible for the award of MSc Midwifery (Pre-registration) with NMC registration.

Holders of the Post Graduate Diploma Midwifery (Pre-registration) with NMC registration may choose to 'top up' their award to a full MSc at a later date with the University of Plymouth. For this group under University regulation, the award holder would receive two certificates. Here the MSc award will be in Health and Wellbeing (Midwifery) and would

stand alongside the previous award of Post Graduate Diploma in Midwifery (Pre-registration). This means that these MSc graduates will retain the Diploma award and paper certificate that they have used to gain their NMC registration but will gain a different MSc name to both the MSc Midwifery (Pre-registration) and the MSc Advanced Professional Practice (Nursing and Midwifery), that is also given by the School to registered practitioners who come onto the MSc Advanced Professional Practice programme.

Fitness to Practice

The University has a responsibility to ensure that students are fit to practice and must adhere to regulatory advice provided by the NMC. Student Handbooks and the professional body websites provide information about the standards of behaviour expected. It is the student's responsibility to familiarise him/herself with the provisions and requirements of the relevant professional bodies. Any student departing from the guidance given by regulatory bodies may be subject to consideration by the Fitness to Practise procedure of the Faculty of Health. Information is available to students at:

<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/regulations>

11. Non Standard Regulations

The following non-standard regulations apply to this programme:

- Recognition of Prior Learning is not permitted for the MSc Midwifery (Pre-registration) programme, as either APCL or APEL. This includes student transfers internally from other programmes within University of Plymouth, and student transfers from an external institution.
- All elements and components of assessment within the programme must be achieved, with a minimum of 40% at level 6 and 50% at level 7 for all percentage-weighted assessments.
- There is no compensation within or across modules.
- Medication calculation formal examinations are assessed as Pass/Fail, due to the NMC requirement to pass this assessment at 100%.

- Students are required to pass each level of practice before moving onto the next stage of the programme; a student who has already been given a referral opportunity, but is unsuccessful in that referral and still has a further attempt, will be required to pass the module before progressing to the next stage.
- Where a student has failed practice, they are permitted one opportunity to pass the practice assessment on a subsequent occasion and at a time to be agreed with the placement area and programme lead.
- Recommencement of a practice placement may need to begin before the Award Board is scheduled to enable students the opportunity to progress to the next stage of the programme.
- Students are prevented from progressing in the programme if they fail their first attempt at consecutive practice modules, and will be withdrawn with the appropriate exit award.
- Modules contributing to the award of MSc Midwifery (Pre-registration) comprise of level 5 (0 credit practice module), level 6 (120 credits, and 0 credit practice module) and level 7 (180 credits). Note, standard University Regulations apply to calculation of the award, including awards of merit and distinction.
- **An Aegrotat award of MSc Midwifery (Pre-registration) or PgDip Midwifery (Pre-registration) is not permitted as these are registerable qualifications with the NMC; other aegrotat awards may be considered**
- The following exit awards are permitted:

Credits:	Award:
120 credits at L6	Graduate Certificate
Less than 60 credits at L7	Transcript of academic achievement for Credit Accumulation Transfer Scheme (CAT)
60 credits at L7	Postgraduate Certificate (unnamed)
120 credits at L7	Postgraduate Diploma (unnamed)
140 credits at L7, plus 120 credits at L6 and all additional requirements of NMC award	Postgraduate Diploma Midwifery (Pre-registration)
Postgraduate Diploma Midwifery (Pre-registration) plus 40 credits L7	MSc Health and Wellbeing (Midwifery) (NB. Holders of Postgraduate Diploma Midwifery (Pre-registration) can study the additional 40 credit substantive project at a later date to achieve this award. Top-up award follows University regulations for APL)

12. Transitional Arrangements for existing students looking to progress onto the programme – N/A

Appendix 1: Programme Specification Mapping (PGT): module contribution to the meeting of Award Learning Outcomes

Core Modules (no optional modules) (no modules compensatable)		Award Learning Outcomes contributed to (for more information see Section 8)																					Assessment Element(s) and weightings				
		1 Knowledge and understanding							2 Cognitive and intellectual skills			3 Key & transferable skills					4 Employment related skills		5 Practical skills								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	1	2		3	4	5	6
Year 1 - Level 6	Professional Midwifery Practice (40 credits)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	E2 100%	
	MORA (L5) (0 credits)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	P1 (MORA) pass/fail	
	Biology for Midwifery (20 credits)	x	x	x			x		x	x						x										E1 100%	
	Wider determinants of health and wellbeing (20 credits)		x	x	x	x	x	x																		C1 100%	
	Pharmacology and medicines management (20 credits)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x						x	x	x	x		x	P1 100% E1 pass/fail
	Evidence based practice (20 credits)	x	x		x	x			x	x	x						x	x								x	C1 100%
L6 Learning outcomes		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Year 2	Developing Midwifery Practice (30 credits)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	P1 100%	
	MORA (L6) (0 credits)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	P1 (MORA) pass/fail	
	Reproductive health and pregnancy	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x					x		x				x	x			C1 100%	

Appendix 2: Mapping to NMC Standards of Proficiency for Midwives (NMC, 2019) and EU directive.

Year 1

Module	Content	Map to NMC proficiencies (2019)	Map to EU directive 2005/36/EC
Biology for Midwifery	Anatomy, physiology, genetics and genomics of women and reproductive system of men, Pathology, bacteriology, virology, parasitology, biophysics, biochemistry, radiology,	3.11	Article 40 – sciences on which activities of midwifery are based Annex V – as listed
Pharmacology and medicines management	Knowledge of pharmacology and ability to recognise the positive and adverse effects of medicines, Knowledge of principles of safe and effective administration, including associated clinical skills Knowledge of legal aspects of pharmacology including midwives exemptions,	3.18, 3.19,	Article 40 – pharmacology Annex V – basic pharmacology
Wider determinants of health and wellbeing	Human rights perspective, promoting respectful and non-discriminatory care, meaningful communication skills with women families and colleagues promoting choice, culturally sensitive and individualised care Knowledge of social context in which women and their families live including inequalities, focus on public health and health promotion across all settings. Psychological and social factors relating to maternity care.	1.3, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.17, 1.18, 2.7, 2.12 3.1, 3.2, 3.27	Article 40 – social environment Annex V – as listed
Evidence based practice	Understand importance of midwives' contribution to knowledge base through research, Associated skills including literature searching and referencing	5.17; 6.3: 6.3.1; 6.3.2	
Professional Midwifery Practice - MORA	Theory in linked Professional Midwifery Practice module MORA – EU numbers and NMC proficiencies	Domain 6 (excluding 6.3, 6.18, 6.35 (<i>cannulation</i>),	Annex V – as listed, including EU numbers

		6.50.8, 6.58.4, 6.59.2, 6.65.5, 6.69.2, 6.69.3, 6.69.6, 6.71.7, 6.71.8, 6.72.2, 6.73.2, 6.73.3, 6.80, 6.84, 6.85, 6.86)	
Professional Midwifery Practice	<p>The professional midwife: Legislation and regulation of midwifery including the NMC Code; the role and scope of midwife in the 21st century; historical and political context</p> <p>Philosophy and values: Introduction to the philosophies and values of midwifery; principles of courage, integrity, transparency, duty of candour</p> <p>The midwife as scholar: Self-awareness , reflection and personal/ professional development; introduction to PALS</p> <p>Relationship building and partnership working with women: Principles of trustful person-centred relationships and partnership working; conflict resolution</p> <p>Communication: Confidentiality/ information governance; professional communication</p> <p>Record keeping: Principles of effective record keeping including booking histories</p> <p>Core clinical skills: Antenatal, labour, postnatal, neonatal periods including maternal and fetal observations, introduction to fetal movements/ wellbeing/ monitoring, bladder and bowels (theory), pressure areas (theory), wounds and healing (theory), mechanism/ management of labour (theory application from biology and practice), VE, BLS, NLS, infection prevention and control/ asepsis/ handwashing; MORA – EU numbers and NMC proficiencies</p> <p>Organisation of care: Introduction to models of care and professional placements including CLiP</p> <p>Continuity of care and care: Introduction to continuity of care and caseloading</p> <p>Safe and effective midwifery care: Introduction to factors impacting on quality of care including an introduction to risk assessment and escalation</p> <p>Accountability and autonomy: Introduction to ethical principles</p> <p>The midwife as colleague – interdisciplinary roles and collaboration: Team-working; introduction to MDT roles</p> <p>The midwife as leader: Self-leadership and ownership of learning</p> <p>Self-care: Introduction to the importance of self-care and building resilience; introduction to the role of professional midwifery advocates</p>	1.1-1.5 1.7-1.27 2.1-2.10 2.12 3.1-3.27 4.1-4.10 5.2-5.10 5.12-5.16 5.18 Domain 6 (<i>excluding</i> 6.3, 6.18, 6.35 (<i>cannulation</i>), 6.50.8, 6.58.4, 6.59.2, 6.65.5, 6.69.2, 6.69.3, 6.69.6, 6.71.7, 6.71.8, 6.72.2, 6.73.2, 6.73.3, 6.80, 6.84, 6.85, 6.86)	Article 40 – ethics and legislation; clinical experience Article 42 – resuscitation of newborn infant and emergency measures

Year 2

Module	Content	Map to NMC proficiencies (2019)	Map to EU directives
Reproductive health and pregnancy	<p>Women's health issues taking a human rights approach, enabling women to make evidence-informed decisions,</p> <p>Sexual and reproductive health and rights, contraception and gynaecology, associated ethical issues</p> <p>Health promotion in relation to preconception, SRH, fertility, contraception</p> <p>Ovarian (menstrual) cycle and Embryology</p> <p>Anatomy, physiology and epigenetics of pregnancy and fetal development</p> <p>Evidence-based care in pregnancy to optimise normal processes manage common symptoms and problems and anticipate and prevent complications,</p> <p>Screening and diagnostic tests and associated ethical dilemmas,</p> <p>Health promotion messages and enabling women to make evidence-informed decisions including parent education and preparation for parenthood. Nutrition in pregnancy.</p>	<p>1.3, 2.12</p> <p>3.3, 3.4, 3.7, 3.8, 3.12.1, 3.13.1, 3.17.1, 3.20, 3.25,</p>	<p>Article 40 – sciences on which activities of midwifery are based</p> <p>Article 42 – family panning Article 42 – pregnancy preparation for parenthood Annex V: health education, nutrition and dietetics</p> <p>Annex V – as listed</p>
Physiological Childbirth and additional needs.	<p>Anatomy, physiology and epigenetics of labour and birth</p> <p>Psychological, behavioural and cognitive factors during labour and birth,</p> <p>Evidence-based care in labour and birth to optimise normal processes manage common symptoms and problems and anticipate and prevent complications,</p> <p>Analgesia and anaesthesia</p> <p>The importance of birth to public health and well-being across the life course,</p>	<p>3.5, 3.12.2, 3.12.3, 3.17.1, 3.21, 3.24, 3.25,</p>	<p>Article 40 – sciences on which activities of midwifery are based</p> <p>Article 42 – labour and birth</p> <p>Annex V – as listed</p>

Developing Midwifery Practice - MORA	Theory in linked Developing Midwifery Practice module MORA – EU numbers and NMC proficiencies	Domain 6 (excluding 6.69.2, 6.69.3, 6.69.6, 6.71.7, 6.71.8, 6.80, 6.86)	Annex V – as listed, including EU numbers
Developing Midwifery Practice	<p>The professional midwife: Ambassador role and upholding public trust</p> <p>Philosophy and values: Upholding public trust and promoting confidence; Application of evidence-based practice</p> <p>The midwife as scholar: Ongoing self-reflection and professional development</p> <p>Relationship building and partnership working with women: Maintaining trusting, compassionate, respectful relationships</p> <p>Communication: Digital technology and data sharing</p> <p>Record keeping: Referral processes</p> <p>Core clinical skills: Mandatory updates; Clinical skills not included in other modules or revision workshops/ scenarios/ reflections eg: catheterisation, cannulation, IV administration, other drugs updates or repeat calculations needed, blood transfusion, suturing, episiotomy, OASI care bundle/ perineal protection/HOOP etc, explore experiences of supporting birth, FSE, ARM, homebirth/ waterbirth/ physiological 3rd stage, stillbirth and bereavement</p> <p>Organisation of care: Introduction to year 2 placements including brief adult mortality for non-maternity experiences; Sustainability of resources/ environment</p> <p>Continuity of care and carer: Continuation of COC and caseloading</p> <p>Safe and effective midwifery care: Sustainability of midwifery service including COC in more rural areas</p> <p>Accountability, autonomy: Safeguarding, domestic abuse, psychological and mental health needs and support</p> <p>The midwife as colleague - interdisciplinary roles and collaboration: Interprofessional learning including Medlaw/ EU days etc</p> <p>The midwife as leader: Leading peers - introduction to peer support</p> <p>Self-care: Sustainability of the midwife as an individual and professional</p>	<p>1.1-1.5 1.7-1.27 2.1-2.10 2.12 3.1-3.27 4.1-4.11 5.1-5.11 5.12-5.21 Domain 6 (excluding 6.69.2, 6.69.3, 6.69.6, 6.71.7, 6.71.8, 6.80, 6.86) with particular focus on 6.3, 6.50.8, 6.58.4, 6.59.2, 6.65.5, 6.72.2, 6.73.2, 6.73.3, 6.84, 6.85</p>	<p>Article 40 – clinical experience</p> <p>Article 42 – resuscitation of newborn infant and emergency measures</p>

Year 3

Module	Content	Map to NMC proficiencies (2019)	Map to EU directives
Complexity in midwifery (1)	<p>Complications and additional needs relating to physical, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual factors; pre-existing current and emerging complications and additional care needs may include embryology and fetal development, adaptation to life, the new-born infant, infant feeding, very early child development and transition to parenthood/attachment; evidence-based approaches to signs of compromise and deterioration in the woman and new-born and ability to make decisions and act,</p> <p>Understanding when additional care or support is needed including how to consult and make referrals for additional care when necessary,</p> <p>Evidence based approaches to management of emergency situations and first line management including interdisciplinary team working, collaborative working while continuing to provide midwifery care needed, keeping mothers and new-borns together whenever possible even when complications arise, respectful compassionate team working when end of life care is required,</p> <p>Advocacy for women and infants who are vulnerable, including ways to reach out to women who find it difficult to access services, work with others to share knowledge concerning the impact of social determinants of health,</p> <p>Build on skills required for NIPE</p>	<p>1.16, 2.8, 2.9 3.26 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11</p> <p>Domain 6</p>	<p>Article 42 – “at risk” pregnancy Article 42 – postnatal care</p>
Complexity in midwifery (2)	<p>Complications and additional needs relating to physical, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual factors; pre-existing current and emerging complications and additional care needs</p> <p>Evidence-based approaches to signs of compromise and deterioration in the fetus and ability to make decisions and act; evidence based approaches to management of emergency situations and first line management including</p>	<p>1.6 2.8, 2.9 3.26 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9</p>	<p>Article 42 – labour and birth, including episiotomy and breech and emergency measures</p>

	interdisciplinary team working, collaborative working while continuing to provide midwifery care needed,		
Advancing Midwifery Practice	<p>The professional midwife: Decision-making and professional judgement; Fitness to practise; Revalidation</p> <p>Philosophy and values: Application of strength based approaches</p> <p>The midwife as scholar: Ongoing self-reflection and professional development; Career pathways and preparation for employment/ transition to registrant/ preceptorship</p> <p>Relationship building and partnership working with women: Advocacy and partnership in complexity</p> <p>Communication: Assertiveness and communication in complex situations</p> <p>Record keeping: Quality assurance - report writing and audits</p> <p>Core clinical skills: Mandatory updates (excluding BLS and NLS); Revision of clinical skills as required; MORA - EU numbers and NMC proficiencies.</p> <p>Organisation of care: Introduction to year 3 placements; Contextual influences - environment, workforce staffing levels and skills mix, contemporary issues/ policy drivers; Influencing organisational culture</p> <p>Continuity of care and carer: Ongoing continuity of care and caseloading</p> <p>Safe and effective midwifery care: Escalation of concerns; Clinical governance including incident reporting and management, risk assessment and management; Human factors</p> <p>Accountability, autonomy: Accountability and autonomy as future registered and lead professional</p> <p>The midwife as colleague - interdisciplinary roles and collaboration: Co-ordinating care; Effective inter-disciplinary team-working</p> <p>The midwife as leader: Leading and managing colleagues and teams; Preparation for practice supervisor and assessor – theories and practical application of supporting and assessing learners</p> <p>Self-care: Compassionate self-care; Engagement in supervision and professional reflective activities</p>	<p>1.1-1.27</p> <p>2.1-2.12</p> <p>3.1-3.27</p> <p>4.1-4.11</p> <p>5.2-5.10</p> <p>5.12-5.16</p> <p>5.18-5.21</p> <p>Domain 6 (all)</p>	<p>Article 40 – clinical experience, understanding training</p> <p>Article 42</p> <p>Annex V – listed EU numbers</p>
Research and Quality Improvement	<p>Use, share and apply research findings to promote and inform best midwifery policy and practice,</p> <p>Quality improvement methodologies and skills required to engage in QI processes; understanding of how to work with stakeholders to develop</p>	<p>1.5</p> <p>5.1, 5.11, 5.17</p> <p>Domain 6</p>	

	improvement strategies, change management and ability to collaborate in, implement and evaluate evidence-informed change,	6.3: 6.3.1; 6.3.2	
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