Midwifery Accreditation Standards Survey

Outcome Report

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Midwifery Education Advisory Committee (MEAC)

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Background

The Midwifery Accreditation Standards outline ‘the minimum requirements to be met by higher education providers wanting accreditation of their program of study by ANMAC’ (ANMAC, 2016). To be registered as a midwife by NMBA, individuals must have been awarded a Bachelor or Post-Graduate Degree in Midwifery, such programs are currently only offered by accredited universities.

The current edition of the Midwifery Accreditation Standards came into effect in 2014, following a two stage consultation throughout 2013 (ANMAC, 2014):

Stage 1 – First Consultation Paper: Developed by Expert Advisory Group and approved by ANMAC’s Board, prior being released to on ANMAC’s website for public consultation. Feedback was accepted via attendance at forums, email submission, or responding to an electronic survey.

Stage 2 – Second Consultation Paper: ANMAC’s Expert Advisory Group reviewed feedback provided by stakeholders, and released a second consultation paper.

The final and approved version features nine (9) standards:

Standard 1: Governance
Standard 2: Curriculum Conceptual Framework
Standard 3: Program Development and Structure
Standard 4: Program Content
Standard 5: Student Assessment
Standard 6: Students
Standard 7: Resources
Standard 8: Management of Midwifery Practice Experience
Standard 9: Quality Improvement and Risk Management

For a full outline of each standard, please visit https://www.anmac.org.au/standards-and-review/midwife.

Previously, the Midwifery Accreditation Standards have been superseded five (5) years after the release of the current edition. The review process generally commences following the release of the equivalent standards for nurses, Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards, therefore ACM anticipates that a new edition will be released for consultation in 2019/2020.

In preparation for the consultation process, ACM distributed an electronic survey to stakeholders, inviting them to provide comment on the existing standards. As the peak professional body, it is vital that ACM’s feedback throughout the review process reflects the collective voice and opinions of midwives in Australia.
Survey Overview

The aim of ACM’s Midwifery Accreditation Standard Survey was to engage with interested parties in relation to the impending review of the ANMAC Midwife Accreditation Standards (2014). The information obtained from this survey will assist ACM when identifying changes that Australian midwives would like to see implemented in a revised edition of the Standards. It will form the basis for ACM’s formal response and position when advocating for midwives throughout the consultation and review process.

The feedback submitted as part of this survey was collated and reviewed by ACM’s Education Unit, and the Midwifery Education Advisory Committee (MEAC). An overview of this feedback has been made publically available for ACM stakeholders.

For any enquiries relating to this survey and/or report, please contact ACM’s Education Unit via education@midwives.org.au.

Mapping to ANMAC’s Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards and/or ICM’s MEAP

MEAC provided survey respondents with the following table, which outlines existing areas that the Australian standards have been mapped to the international publication, as well as areas that have the scope to be strengthened.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANMAC’s Midwife Accreditation Standards</th>
<th>ICM’s Midwifery Education Accreditation Programme (MEAP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard 1: Governance</td>
<td>Organisation and Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some reference to National Requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 2: Curriculum conceptual framework</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 3: Program development and structure</td>
<td>Some reference to National Requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 4: Program content</td>
<td>Delivery of Relevant, Competency-Based Curricula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 5: Student assessment</td>
<td>Assessment Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 6: Students</td>
<td>Student Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 7: Resources</td>
<td>Facilities and Services Midwifery Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 8: Management of midwifery practice experience</td>
<td>Delivery of Relevant, Competency-Based Curricula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 9: Quality improvement and risk management</td>
<td>Organisation and Administration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With this information in mind, ACM asked respondents to outline whether the ICM MEAP standards should be considered when reviewing the Midwife Accreditation Standards in 2019 – 84.4% of participants answered ‘Yes’ to this question.
To determine the rationale behind this response, ACM asked individuals who responded ‘Yes’ to expand on this answer in a written format. In an attempt to streamline these responses, ACM has categorised these comments into the following categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Uniformity/consistency of education standards across all countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>For consideration or guidance purposes only. National standards should remain relevant to Australia, however maintain the overarching International Standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To ensure that Australian Midwives meet international education and training. Standardization of minimum requirements to be a midwife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To support engagement and collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To increase the influence and importance of Australian Standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Set foundation for professional training and practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>To aid Australian midwives transferring their skills and qualifications to other countries, and vice versa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One respondent noted ‘demonstrating consistency against international standards may help to ensure that Australian midwives are recognised internationally in research, provision of best standards, and professional practice’. Another respondent indicated that consideration of the ICM MEAP Standards would aid Australian midwives ‘on a global arena rather than localised, and facilitate international collaboration.’

The following responses have been considered as outliers to the categories listed above, but of notable significance when reviewing the basis behind respondents answers to this question:

- I also believe the new UK NMC standards for pre-registration education (2019) need to be considered [https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/standards-for-midwives/standards-for-pre-registration-midwifery-education/](https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/standards-for-midwives/standards-for-pre-registration-midwifery-education/).
I believe the current MEAP standards, particularly Standards 5 and 8, are difficult to attain for students in the Victorian model of midwifery care and education. I believe this impacts on the learning and development of vital midwifery practice skills.

I would like to see a return to competency-based curricula.

ACM anticipate that the Expert Advisory Panel for the Midwife Accreditation Standards will unify and/or map the number of standards to those outlined in the equivalent nursing standards. In 2019, the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards have been reduced from a nine (9) standard model to a five (5) standard model. This is a significant reduction in standards, and concerns have been raised as to whether all key areas will be addressed. ACM’s survey asked respondents to outline if they support the Midwifery Accreditation Standards being reduced to a five (5) standard model.

The ANMAC Nurse Accreditation Standards have recently been reviewed and reduced to a five standard model. For the purpose of consistency, do you feel that the Midwifery Accreditation Standards should also be reduced to five standards?

To identify further areas/items that midwives would like to see considered when educating the future midwifery workforce, ACM requested that respondents highlight five key issues in order of priority.

**Key Issue 1:** 6% of respondents highlighted the importance of **Continuity of Care and Carer Models**, including greater awareness and curriculum content on this model, as well as increased ability for midwives to work in these areas both during placement and as a graduate.

**Key Issue 2:** 4% of respondents indicated that additional knowledge and skills on complex and high-risk pregnancies should be included in the curriculum.

**Key Issue 3:** 3% of respondents mentioned **access to clinical placement** as a priority. A further 3% of individuals highlighted the importance of **mentoring programs for midwives** (students, graduates, and registered midwives). Another 3% stated that **women-centred models of care** was a key issue.

**Key Issue 4:** 2.2% of respondents believed there is equal value in the following areas:

- Clearer outline of **clinical placement requirements**;

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Inclusion of **culturally safe and respectful content** within the curriculum and inclusion of various birthing practices; and

Focus on **evidence-based care and practices**.

**Key Issue 5:** Respondents indicated that the following issues are of particular importance when reviewing the Midwifery Accreditation Standards:

- Various locations of placement (i.e. hospital, community, country, rural and remote)
- Length of clinical placement to be increased;
- Review the number of births required for registration/to pass Continuity of Care requirements;
- Greater collaboration and communication with clinical partners;
- Hands-on midwifery practice & skills (i.e. palpitation, BP assessment);
- Optimising Physiology;
- Governance and legislation
- Woman’s right to choose (incl. midwives supporting the woman’s choice)