Midwifery Education Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference

1. Responsibilities of the Committee

Purpose
There are ongoing challenges to address core midwifery education in Australia requiring the active involvement of the Australian College of Midwives (ACM). The Midwifery Education Advisory Committee (MEAC) (referred to as ‘the Committee’) will provide advice and make recommendations to the ACM on these matters and, where necessary, liaise with the ACM’s Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC), which provides advice and guidance on the development, implementation and progress of continuing professional development (CPD) programs.

Role
The role of the Committee is to:

- provide expert advice to the ACM via the ACM’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO) on matters relating to midwifery education;
- provide expert advice and support to the CEO on methods to utilise national and international policies and developments in midwifery education, thus assisting with the ongoing development of midwifery education in Australia;
- recommend ways in which the ACM can effectively contribute to the ongoing development of midwifery education in Australia;
- undertake specified tasks or projects as requested by the CEO, such as drafting ACM policies on midwifery education, supporting ACM delegates when preparing for International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) meetings, responding to requests for information and advice relating to midwifery education, and other relevant projects;
- represent the ACM, either as an individual or a group, when requested to do so by the CEO on matters of relevance to midwifery education;
- liaise with various international midwifery education organisations on behalf of the ACM;
- provide input to the CEO on the selection of experts representing the ACM on national/international committees;
- liaise with other ACM committees through the Chair as matters arise; and
- carry out this role in a culturally-safe manner, demonstrating respect and understanding of a wide variety of cultural beliefs and practices.

Members should be prepared to attend all scheduled Committee meetings, with a minimum of 50% attendance per year to maintain Committee membership. Furthermore, members are expected to promptly and actively participate in all Committee business that occurs ‘out of session’. This information will inform decisions related to continued membership of the committee.
2. Structure of the Committee

Membership
The Committee members shall be appointed by the CEO of the ACM, or by the CEO's appointed representative. The CEO will determine the size of the Committee and reserves the right to vary the number of appointees when necessary. The minimum size of the committee is seven (7) members, including the Midwifery Advisor for the Education Unit. This will allow for diversity and ensure that a consensus can be reached when voting occurs. A sense of geography will be considered upon making appointments to the committee. There is an intention that students will be represented in this committee with a maximum of one position available at any given time.

Members of the Committee shall be selected on merit following an Expression of Interest (EOI) process. The CEO may invite representatives from relevant organisations to join the committee outside of the EOI process. All members shall meet the following requirements:

- be a current financial member of the ACM;
- be registered as a midwifery student or midwife with AHPRA. Midwives need to be able to meet recency of practice requirements. Students must be in at least their 2nd year of a Bachelor of Midwifery program;
- have experience in, or a capacity to represent midwives with regards to midwifery education (a student representative need only have an interest in this area but be willing to represent at a university level);
- have a well-developed capacity to analyse research evidence and other sources of information relating to midwifery education;
- have access to an active email account; and
- be willing to donate time and expertise to the scheduled meetings and activities undertaken by the committee, on behalf of the ACM and as outlined in the Committee’s TOR.

The CEO may invite ‘temporary’ members, such as those from the consumer or student community, to join the Committee for specific tasks and projects.

Length of Appointment
Each member of the Committee shall be appointed by the CEO for a term of three years, and is eligible to serve a maximum of six consecutive years on the Committee. The student committee members must be in at least their 2nd year of a Bachelor of Midwifery program, therefore, this appointment will include 2 years as a student committee member and an additional year as a registered midwife (standard committee member).

Members are expected to respond to an EOI process at the end of their first term, thus reconfirming their commitment to the Committee and the Committee obligations. Re-appointment to the Committee will be dependent on a successful EOI being completed, as well as, evidence being noted of active participation in Committee meetings and project work over the period of the previous appointment. Ideally, all of the Committee members should not all be appointed to commence at the same time to ensure the Committee retains continuity and consistency in its functioning. This may mean that a member’s appointment is soft-rolled into a further period of time before the EOI process for re-appointment commences.

At the end of the maximum term of appointment, individuals shall be asked to undertake a period of ‘downtime’ for at least two years before applying for a position on the Committee again, unless they are specifically invited by the CEO to re-apply for the role on the Committee at the end of this period.
Chair
The Committee shall be chaired by a member of the Committee, as approved by the CEO.

When the position of Chair is to be filled, existing members of the Committee can nominate for this position by submitting an application to the CEO. The minimum requirements for application to the position of Chair includes:

- completion of the Committee Chair Nomination Form,
- support by at least two members from the relevant committee, and
- an EOI outlining the applicants ability to meet the criteria and responsibilities of Chair.

The Chair position is appointed for a maximum of three years or until the members appointment to the Committee expires, whichever occurs first.

The Chair will be responsible for:

- determining the agenda for meetings, thus requiring the Chair to be current with issues pertaining to midwifery education and working alongside the ACM to identify matters that need to be addressed by the Committee;
- chairing scheduled Committee meetings;
- leading discussion and ensuring all Committee members have the opportunity to contribute their expertise and views;
- ensuring that Committee tasks and/or projects are completed in a timely manner;
- coordinating the preparation of the Committee’s quarterly reports to the CEO; and
- will have the casting vote on a tied decision for the Committee.

Filling a vacancy
Members of the Committee may resign their position upon providing 4 weeks’ notice and a written resignation notice.

3. Workings of the Committee

Communication within the committee
The Committee will communicate predominantly by email and telephone. All committee communication is confidential, unless advised differently by the CEO and/or Chair.

Committee members must notify the Midwifery Advisor, Education Unit if their personal information (i.e. email address and phone number) changes throughout their term.

Frequency of Meetings
The schedule for meetings will be the responsibility of the Chair, in consultation with the Committee members. The Committee will meet formally at least two times per year, and additional matters may be addressed via email or telephone at any given time.

Ideally, meetings will be held within business hours, any changes to this timeframe will be discussed and agreed upon by the Chair and the Midwifery Advisor, Education Unit.

Committee meetings will generally take place via teleconference or web based-conference. Face-to-face meetings will be opportunistic and may occur at national events, such as the ACM National Conference or ICM.

Quorum
50% plus 1

Decision Making
Decisions are reached by consensus, however, in the event of a tied Committee the Chair will have the deciding vote.
Secretariat Support
Where possible, the ACM will provide secretariat support to the Committee, including:
• providing means of communication via teleconference and web conference links,
• recording and distributing meeting minutes, and
• distributing information as directed by the Chair and/or CEO.

Funding/ Resources
Membership of the Committee is honorary and attracts no remuneration, or fee for services provided.

There is no specifically allocated budget for the work of the Committee. The Committee’s work will be resourced using the office services allocations in the budget provided by the ACM for teleconferencing and IT services. The CEO may determine to make resources available for a specific project or activity undertaken by one or more members of the Committee from time to time.

Stakeholders
The key stakeholders in this Committee are members of the ACM, as well as, midwives and others with an interest in and knowledge of national/international midwifery education.

Indemnity
The activities of the Committee are covered by and in accordance with the ACM’s Professional Indemnity Insurance Policy.

Dispute Resolution
The Committee are expected to foster professional dialogue among its members, and to support and encourage differences of view based on fact or substance. Professional differences of view can provide a robust basis for effective and informed decision making on an issue, by providing the opportunity for reflection on alternative viewpoints or perspectives.

Where the Committee is unable to reach agreement on a particular matter, alternative views will be outlined in a report to the CEO with sufficient information to support informed decision-making by the CEO on substantive issues over which the disagreement arose.

4. Accountability of the Committee

Reporting
The Committee reports to the CEO of the ACM, and is required to provide a brief summary report of its activities on a quarterly basis. Submission dates for these reports will be agreed upon with the CEO.

The Committee is also required to keep minutes of any teleconference, web conference or face to face meetings it holds. The minutes shall be a brief summary of any decisions made or recommendations agreed to by the Committee relevant to its role and responsibilities as outlined in Part 1.

Deed Poll
In accordance with the ACM Governance Policy, Committee members are required to sign the ‘Deed Poll by Committee Members about confidentiality, conflict of interest and Intellectual property’ within one month of their appointment.

Dissolution of the Committee
The CEO reserves the right to disband this Committee if he/she deems that the Committee is no longer needed to support the work of the ACM, or no longer able to fulfil its responsibilities.