

POSITION STATEMENT

Certified Nurse-Midwife and Certified Midwife Education and Certification in the United States

The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) is the professional organization that sets national educational and practice standards for certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs). The education and certification standards are identical for CNMs and CMs, as the difference between the 2 credentials simply reflects the background of the individual before entering professional midwifery. Both enter midwifery education with degrees in a variety of fields and complete comparable preparatory coursework in the sciences and social sciences; however, only CNMs enter midwifery as registered nurses (RNs). This document provides a brief overview of the education and certification processes for CNMs and CMs.

Midwifery Education Programs

All midwifery education programs associated with the certification of CNMs and CMs are in or affiliated with institutions of higher learning that are accredited by an agency recognized by the US Department of Education. Midwifery graduate programs are accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME) and grant master's or doctoral degrees. ACME is an autonomous accrediting agency and has been recognized continuously by the US Department of Education since 1982. Standardized criteria developed by ACME are used to assess the quality and content of midwifery education.¹

Core Competencies

Entry-level competencies that must be mastered in all education programs accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME) are standardized in ACNM's *Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice*.² This document was developed by ACNM, is reviewed every 5 years, and is revised as needed. The curricular standards for midwifery education programs have been set by ACNM since 1962.³⁻⁵

Global Standards for Midwifery Education

The International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) has defined a midwife as a person who has *successfully completed a midwifery education programme based on the ICM Essential Competencies for Midwifery Practice and the framework of the ICM Global Standards for Midwifery Education, recognised in the country where it is located; who has acquired the*

*requisite qualifications to be registered and/or legally licensed to practice midwifery and use the title 'midwife,' and who demonstrates competency in the practice of midwifery.*⁶

The education standards and core competencies for CNMs and CMs exceed the minimum educational requirements set forth by the ICM.⁷ ACNM supports accredited education that meets ICM standards as the gold standard for all midwives.

Certification Process for CNMs and CMs

The American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB) is an autonomous certifying organization accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies. The functions of the AMCB include initial certification of CNMs/CMs for entry into clinical practice, recertification, and discipline. Candidates must graduate from an ACME-accredited program to be eligible to sit for the national certification examination administered by the AMCB. Individuals who successfully complete AMCB certification requirements are granted certificates as CNMs or CMs. Certification is maintained through a certificate maintenance program that requires continuing education and successful completion of learning modules. CNMs and CMs are educated to meet the same high standards that every state in the United States has recognized as the legal basis for AMCB-certified midwives' practice.

Standards of Practice

CNMs and CMs who are educated and certified through these processes practice according to the ACNM standards for the practice of midwifery, which are reviewed and updated regularly by ACNM to reflect evidence-based practice.

REFERENCES

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4. American College of Nurse-Midwives. Core competencies in nurse-midwifery expected outcomes of nurse-midwifery education. *J Nurse Midwifery*. 1979;24(1):32-36. doi:10.1016/0091-2182(79)90193-9

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 6. International Confederation of Midwives. International Definition of Practice of the Midwives. International Confederation of Midwives. Published 2024. Accessed August 6, 2024. <https://internationalmidwives.org/resources/international-definition-of-the-midwife/>
 7. Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education. Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME) Gap Analysis of ACME and ICM Global Education Standards. Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education. Published 2013. Accessed August 6, 2024. <https://www.midwife.org/acnm/files/acnmlibrarydata/uploadfilename/000000000336/Gap-Analysis-ACME-and-ICM-Global-Education-Standards.pdf>

Note: 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).

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