

## **University of Washington Graduate Nurse-Midwifery Education**

### ***Frequently Asked Questions***

#### **Q: What are the requirements for admission to the nurse-midwifery education program?**

**A:** Applicants must meet the admission requirements for the University of Washington (UW) Graduate School and the School of Nursing (SoN). For detailed admissions information, see the SoN webpage. Applicants to the nurse-midwifery program must successfully demonstrate a strong interest in women's health care issues as well as the ability to succeed in graduate school. Applicants should have experience in some aspect of women's healthcare or health-related issues and should be able to provide examples of experience in leadership, teaching, research, and/or community service activities. Competitive applicants will be able to articulate a clear understanding of what nurse-midwifery is and a strong commitment to the profession.

#### **Q: What kind of work experience is required or preferred in order to be accepted into your program?**

**A:** We believe that experience is important to success in graduate school and will evaluate applicants based on professional and volunteer experiences that demonstrate a commitment to women's and maternal-child health issues. Applicants with a background in nursing specialty areas such as labor & delivery, mother-baby, antepartum, gynecology, or ambulatory women's health are excellent candidates for nurse-midwifery education. Training and experience in professional areas outside of nursing can also provide a strong background for nurse-midwifery education. Applicants with experience as a doula, lactation consultant, childbirth or health educator, mental health counselor, or in public or international health programs are all good candidates. Advanced practice nurses who already have a master's degree in nursing, such as women's health or family nurse practitioners and perinatal clinical nurse specialists, are well-equipped to succeed in the nurse-midwifery post-graduate certification (GCPAPN) program.

#### **Q: Do I need a nursing degree before entering the nurse-midwifery program?**

**A:** In order to begin the graduate nurse-midwifery program, you must have or be eligible for RN licensure *and* have (at minimum) a Bachelor's degree, which does not have to be in nursing. If you already have a BS/BA, you can get your RN via several options: a traditional BSN program at a 4 year school, an Associate Degree in nursing (ADN) program at a community college, or a professional nursing program such as the Accelerated BSN program offered at the UW. All routes may require completion of some prerequisite coursework for application to the graduate program.

**Q: How long is the UW nurse-midwifery program?**

**A:** The full-time Masters in Nursing (MN) program is seven consecutive quarters or two years in length; including one summer quarter. The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) in nurse-midwifery is designed to be completed in approximately three years of full-time study for post-BSN students, although the length of time spent in the DNP program will depend on each individual's curriculum. The amount of clinical practicum time is the same for both degrees. Part-time curricula are available for both degrees as well. The nurse-midwifery post-graduate certificate (GCPAPN) can be completed in approximately a year, depending on your background.

**Q: Where are the sites for student clinical experiences?**

**A:** We place midwifery students with expert clinical preceptors (nurse-midwives and nurse practitioners) in community practices located throughout the greater Seattle area, as well as in many other communities in Western Washington, including Bellingham, Skagit Valley and Everett in the north to Olympia and Vancouver in the south. In addition, we place students with nurse-midwifery practices in communities in Eastern Washington, including Yakima and Spokane. Quarterly clinical site assignments are decided by faculty based on the learning needs of each student. All students must have the ability to travel to all of the community sites for their clinical experiences throughout the program.

**Q: Do you offer distance nurse-midwifery education?**

**A:** The majority of courses that comprise the core nurse-midwifery curriculum are designed to be either completely *web-based* (no requirements for class attendance) or are *web-accessible* (requires occasional on-campus class attendance) for both local and distant students. Many of these courses are not held in weekly real-time meetings; students are able to access lectures, etc. at any time that is convenient for them. However, most courses do require that students be available to either attend or log-in at specific times, for instance for live chats or to take examinations. (Currently, the only exception is NClin500/501 which is required prior to entry into clinical practica and covers history taking & physical examination for advanced practice nurses; distance students must arrange to take this course either on-campus or complete a comparable course at another school.) Otherwise, *all* nurse-midwifery students can expect to come to campus approximately two to three times per quarter to attend required class meetings and to participate in activities such as skills labs and seminars. These are typically arranged in consolidated blocks of time (usually two or three days) and always take place in the first and last weeks of each quarter, with mid-quarter meetings varying by course.

Contact the nurse-midwifery program director if you have questions about attending as a distance nurse-midwifery student. Applicants who are interested in attending the program as distance students may be asked to identify local preceptors willing to work with them. The UW nurse-midwifery faculty will then work with the potential preceptor(s) to develop that clinical placement site. In addition, applicants are encouraged to consult with the SoN

Academic Services Office regarding the availability of distance accessible courses required for completion of the DNP.

**Q: How much clinical experience will I get in the UW program?**

**A:** In general, all midwifery students will complete 6 consecutive quarters of clinical practicum (identified in the curriculum plan as NCLIN512), beginning in the Winter quarter and finishing the following Spring quarter, including one Summer quarter, for a total of approximately 1500 clinical hours. The first quarter of the clinical practicum rotation begins will consist of one day a week in an out-patient women's health clinic. During the second through fifth quarters, students will be doing ambulatory care (antenatal, postpartum) one day a week and intrapartum care at least 24 hours per week (the actual hours will vary by the volume of births at the site). The sixth, and final quarter, consists of an 'integrative' clinical practicum of full-time midwifery practice for approximately 8 weeks.

**Q: Can I work while I attend the program?**

**A:** The faculty discourages students from working any more than they absolutely must while attending the program for two reasons. First, the curriculum is challenging and interesting and we would like students to be able to optimize their ability to focus on the learning experiences they will have while in graduate school. Second, while students are completing their clinical practica they must have significant schedule flexibility in order to meet the time demands required and to be able to match with the schedules of their clinical preceptors.

**Q: Do you provide students with exposure to out-of-hospital labor and birth experiences in this program?**

**A:** Today, the majority of CNM's in the U.S. provide care for laboring women in hospitals and, subsequently, most of our labor & birth clinical practica take place in hospital settings with nurse-midwives as preceptors. However, we are very proud that we are able to offer students some out-of-hospital birthing experience, including home births.

**Q: Do you have any association with licensed or lay midwives?**

**A:** Our program at UW School of Nursing is for educating Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNM's). However, we have a good relationship with the excellent schools in Seattle that educate Licensed Midwives (LM's), the Seattle Midwifery School, Bastyr University. Some of our faculty teaches at Seattle Midwifery School.

**Q: How many out-of-state students do you accept into the program annually?**

**A:** Applicants are ranked for acceptance to the program based upon faculty determination of who is most likely to succeed in graduate studies and midwifery practice. We admit the most qualified applicants regardless of their residency.

**Q: If I graduated from a midwifery program abroad and have worked as a midwife there, how do I become certified or register in the U.S. as a certified nurse midwife?**

**A:** Please visit <http://www.midwife.org/edu/fenm.cfm> for information foreign-trained midwives about the options for education that are available in the country and how to start the process. At this time, University of Washington does not offer such a program.

**For more information about nurse-midwifery, visit these web sites:**

The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) at <http://www.acnm.org>

The Washington State Chapter of the ACNM at <http://midwivesofwa.org>

The International Confederation of Midwives at <http://www.internationalmidwives.org>