I am delighted to welcome you to the first edition of the MidStART Handbook. The NSW public health system is committed to the training and development of midwives and we are delighted that you are considering this option.

This Handbook is designed to provide you with the information that you need to make the process easier as we appreciate that it can be confusing and a little daunting. In regard to your choices about potential locations for employment my best advice is to keep your mind open to the many different options and locations available to you.

Nursing and midwifery are outstanding careers – the difference that you will make to the lives of women and their families is immeasurable and I wish you well for the wonderful opportunities ahead.

Susan Pearce
Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer

Welcome to the NSW Health postgraduate midwifery student application for recruitment and training, and thank you for your interest in becoming a member of the midwifery profession.

Midwife means ‘with woman’. This meaning shapes midwifery’s philosophy, work and relationships. (ACM 2011)

This handbook has been designed to assist you in preparing and applying for a midwifery student position within maternity services in NSW Public Hospitals and a small number of private not-for-profit hospitals. Recruitment is a competitive process and it is important to ensure that you stand out from the crowd.
MidStART at a glance

May-June 2013
- Information about 2014 application process available on NSW Health Nursing & Midwifery website
- Research where you would like to undertake midwifery training
- Contact universities that offer post graduate studies in midwifery
- This process is completely separate from your online application and **YOU** are responsible for applying to university

July -August 2013
- **Wednesday 3 July** - Applications open for NSW Health 2014 MidStART
- **Wednesday 14 August** - Applications close for NSW Health 2014 MidStART

September 2013
- Interviews conducted at your first preference hospital

October 2013
- Maternity services advise interview outcome
- Acceptance of student training position - applicants must accept or decline online by **17 October**
- Notify the university of acceptance of an offer of employment
- Eligibility list opens on **21 October** for those applicants who were successful at interview but who were not offered a training position at their first preference hospital

November 2013
- Employment contracts sent
Preparing to apply – some things to know, do and research

What is a midwife?

On entry to practice, a midwife is a person who:

- has successfully completed a midwifery education program that is duly recognised in the country where it is located and that is based on the ICM Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice and the framework of the ICM Global Standards for Midwifery Education; who has acquired the requisite qualifications to be registered and/or legally licensed to practise midwifery and use the title ‘midwife’; and who demonstrates competency in the practice of midwifery.

The midwife is recognised as a responsible and accountable professional who works in partnership with women to give the necessary support, care and advice during pregnancy, labour and the postpartum period, to conduct births on the midwife’s own responsibility and to provide care to the newborn and the infant. This care includes preventative measures, the promotion of normal birth, the detection of complications in mother and child, the accessing of medical care or other appropriate assistance and the carrying out of emergency measures.

The midwife has an important task in health counselling and education, not only for the woman, but also within the family and community. This work should involve antenatal education and preparation for parenthood and may extend to women’s health, sexual or reproductive health and child care.

A midwife may practise in any setting including home, community, hospitals, clinics or health units. (ICM 2011)

Becoming a midwife as a registered nurse

There are two pathways to becoming a registered midwife. MidStART (this process) is the pathway to enter midwifery if you are already registered as a nurse with the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Australia. The other pathway is through the completion of a Bachelor of Midwifery degree.

‘the best day of my midwifery training was being able to conduct births myself plus the feeling of achievement and involvement with the family’

ME postgraduate midwifery student 2012

In order for a registered nurse to gain a midwifery qualification, she/he must be enrolled in a recognised postgraduate university course in midwifery and be concurrently employed in a recognised midwifery student position in a maternity service. There are a number of universities who provide this course, as well as a wide range of hospitals that provide midwifery student training positions. Links to information about Local Health Districts and hospitals can be found at http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/lhd/
Choosing a Hospital

It is important that you give some time to considering the hospital/s where you wish to apply for a midwifery student position, remembering that learning opportunities exist in all training facilities regardless of whether they are rural, regional or metropolitan hospitals. Training in rural hospitals may include periods of rotation to larger facilities to enable you to gain the required clinical experience. As part of this application process you will be asked to nominate, in order of preference, up to six hospitals where you would like to undertake midwifery training. Your application will be forwarded to your first preference hospital, and the Local Health District (LHD) or hospital will contact eligible applicants by email regarding an interview.

Recruitment is a competitive process, and in some services there are many more applications than available midwifery student positions. In order to increase the likelihood of a successful application, it is important that you choose your preferences carefully. It is suggested that you do not restrict yourself to the major metropolitan/women’s hospitals and be flexible in your options.

Choosing a University

Local Health Districts may have memorandums of understanding (MOU) and partnerships with specific universities so that students studying at a particular university may only be able to undertake midwifery training at linked hospitals. In the same way, students employed in some hospitals may only be able to undertake their study at particular universities. It's important to confirm this with the universities and the hospitals prior to selecting your hospital preferences in your application. You can also check with the university/hospital to enquire if they provide mid-year intakes.

Universities provide information on their websites and offer open days and information nights. It is recommended you contact the university to enquire about the application process and course admission requirements. The university will also be able to answer your questions in regard to attendance and assessment.

If the university of your choice requires you to attend an intensive theoretical program at the commencement of your midwifery training, this does not form part of your employment contract. The process of contacting and applying for a university placement to study midwifery is your responsibility and is completely separate to MidStART online recruitment. You will have an opportunity to discuss university placement at interview.

Midwifery student intakes

Some hospitals and universities offer a mid-year intake for postgraduate midwifery students. You will have the opportunity to discuss the intake schedule for your preferred training maternity service at interview. If hospitals are unable to fill their midwifery student positions as part of MidStART, recruitment to any vacant midwifery student positions will be advertised and coordinated by the hospital or Local Health District.

The ‘typical’ week of a midwifery student

The combination of work and study requires you to give some consideration to how you can achieve a work/life balance. A useful strategy is to explore the support that your family or
close friends can provide during your year as a student midwife. You will also experience the expert-to-novice readjustments that come from being a student again. Requirements of your course include 20 Continuity of Care (CoC) experiences. This will require you to spend a minimum of six hours per week attending/providing antenatal, intrapartum and postnatal midwifery care to the women you have recruited. These hours may be on top of your contracted hours of employment.

Your week will include:

- Working with your diary to ensure that you have allocated time for your CoC experiences
- Negotiating with the Midwifery Unit Manager of the unit in which you are working to ensure that you are able to be at the births of the women you have recruited for your CoC experience
- Increased travel related to attending antenatal visits, births and postnatal care of your CoC women
- Allocating time for study, research and completion of university essays/projects
- Attend university one day a week or at residential school. Please confirm this with your chosen university
- Attend in-services provided for student midwives within your training hospital
- Working closely with registered midwives in the development of midwifery skills
- Ensuring that you rest, relax and keep fit!

‘to achieve a balance between study, work and life I found having a diary and planning shifts and assignments, scheduling in activities I enjoy on days off.. exercising and getting enough sleep all helped’

JC Postgraduate midwifery student 2012
Useful information

NSW needs midwives who are fervent about evidence based midwifery practice, who enjoy working as a member of a team and who are committed to lifelong learning. The following links may be useful to you as you prepare your application for a midwifery student position.

Australian College of Midwives [www.midwives.org.au](http://www.midwives.org.au)

International Confederation of Midwives [www.internationalmidwives.org](http://www.internationalmidwives.org)

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Accreditation Council [www.anmac.org.au](http://www.anmac.org.au)

Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Authority [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au)


Interview preparation

Most of us find interviews nerve-racking and stressful, even people with many years of experience. The interview may last up to 30 minutes with the panel comprised of up to three friendly, welcoming and experienced midwives, educators and managers from the maternity service. Feeling confident at interview is a learned process. Below are some tips that can help:

- Request a ‘mock’ interview with a colleague or your current manager
- Consider all selection criteria as interview questions will be based around these
- Review the competency standards for a registered midwife
- Research the maternity service you have selected as your first preference, this will enable you to ask questions of the panel
- Display an understanding of the role of a midwife
- Demonstrate enthusiasm for the midwifery profession
At interview you must be able to provide proof of current registration as a registered nurse with the Nurses and Midwives Board of Australia. If you are not registered at the time of your application you are not eligible to apply for a midwifery student position in a NSW public hospital or the two not-for-profit hospitals involved in the MidStART recruitment process.

**The application and recruitment process**

The selection process will consider:

- Your application
- The interview
- Referee reports

**How do I apply?**

You will be able to lodge your online application between **9am Wednesday 3 July 2013 and 9am Wednesday 14 August 2013. Only online and complete applications will be accepted.**

**Link to be added**

- After submitting your online application, there will be a confirmation on the screen with your name and your MidStART ID number. Please print this acknowledgement for your records.

- You will only receive email confirmation of the successful lodgement if you provide a valid email address at the time of submission.

- You will need to use the MidStART ID number and your date of birth if you wish to change your details or preferences on your application.

- You will be able to change your details only up until applications close at 9am on Wednesday 14 August 2013.


**Please remember**, the process of contacting a university and applying for a university place to study midwifery is your responsibility and is completely separate to MidStART online recruitment. You cannot be employed as a postgraduate midwifery student if you are not enrolled in an appropriate university programme.

**When is the closing date?**

The closing date is **9am Wednesday 14 August 2013. Remember late applications will not be accepted.**
What are the selection criteria for employment?

The selection criterion provides a framework that outlines the knowledge, skills, attributes and abilities required within a position.

The selection criteria are:

- Current registration as a registered nurse with the Nurses and Midwives Board of Australia
- Understanding the role of a midwife within a primary healthcare framework
- Demonstrated understanding and commitment to the requirements of the training programme including the continuity of care experience
- Demonstrated effective interpersonal, verbal and written communication skills
- Demonstrated ability in clinical problem solving
- Demonstrated understanding of collaboration across an interdisciplinary team
- Understanding of EEO, WH&S, infection control and quality improvement principles
- Australian citizenship or permanent residency (New Zealand citizens residing in Australia who hold a current Special Category Visa are considered to have permanent residency status)

NB. Some positions (e.g. rural and community) may require a valid driver’s licence.

A requirement of your application is that you must submit a letter (maximum of 750 words) demonstrating your ability to meet the selection criteria. This letter may be typed directly into the application form or ‘copied and pasted’ from a word document which you have prepared prior to commencing your on-line application.

Some tips in answering the selection criteria

- Avoid broad sweeping statements
- Provide strong evidence (recent, relevant, appropriate)
- Use short, direct and active sentences
- Restrict the use of belief statements (do not use “I feel, think, believe, wish”)

The interview and offer of employment

Eligible applicants will be contacted by their first preference hospital or Local Health District and invited to attend a face-to-face interview between Friday 23 August and Tuesday 24 September 2013. Interview dates and times will vary between hospitals. Telephone and/or
skype interviews will be offered upon request and at the discretion of the interviewing hospital. Please do not assume that you will be able to be interviewed by telephone.

**Please review the interview tips provided on Page 5 of this handbook in your preparation for interview.** Questions asked at interview are designed to enable the panel members to assess your knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of the postgraduate midwifery student as well as to give you an opportunity to promote your own strengths, and your professional and personal achievements. The interview also provides you with an opportunity to ask questions about the midwifery student position.

Normally there will only be one interview, however if you have not gained a 1st preference position and you have chosen one of the not-for-profit private hospitals as another preference; you may be contacted for a second round interview.

As part of the recruitment process, reference checks will be conducted following the interview by a member of the interview panel. When nominating referees please note that both must be clinical; one of the referees must be your current or most recent manager.

The interview panel will inform you how to obtain feedback after your interview. In accordance with privacy laws applications can only be discussed with the applicant unless the applicant gives consent for discussion with another specified person.

**What to bring to interview**

Along with your Curriculum Vitae, your interviewing hospital or Local Health District will advise you of any additional documents that you will need to provide at interview.

**Employment Screening Checks**

In addition to referee checks, a number of other employment screening checks are required for preferred applicants seeking employment within NSW Health facilities. These include:

- 100 point Identification Check
- National Criminal Record and Working with Children Check
- Work Health and Safety and Physical Demands Checklist

For more information regarding employment screening checks, you can download the NSW Health policy


**Notification of Offer of Employment**

Positions will be allocated on a merit basis where the best applicant is selected following a competitive process. You will be advised of the result of your application when the selection process is complete. Letters will be sent by email on **Wednesday 8 October 2013** advising of the following outcomes:

- You have been successful and have been offered a position at a particular hospital
- You have been placed on an eligibility list for allocation if positions remain available
- You have been unsuccessful
If you are offered a position you will have until **Thursday 17 October 2013** to accept the offer online or the offer will be withdrawn. As recruitment is a competitive process, if you decline an offer of employment, you **will not be** automatically placed on an eligibility list.

When you accept an offer, an email will be generated to the address you have provided on your application. This email will provide confirmation of your midwifery student position. This confirmation is required by the university and **must** be forwarded immediately to the programme coordinator at your preferred university.

**Please note:** It is **YOUR** responsibility to notify your preferred university that you have been successful in gaining a midwifery student position.

**Eligibility List**

For applicants who are deemed suitable for employment but are not allocated a position because of the limited number of positions available, an eligibility list for employment will be created. You may be contacted by LHD coordinators who have vacant positions in their district.

**Sharing of your information**

In order for universities and maternity services to coordinate their midwifery student program, the names of successful applicants and the facility where they have accepted a position, will be shared with all universities in NSW that offer a postgraduate midwifery student program. Your consent for the release of this information will be requested prior to submission of your application. No information (other than your name and facility) gained through the application process is shared with any entities outside NSW Health.

The complete list of successful applicants is sent to all universities. The list does not stipulate which university you will attend, as this is your decision and should be based on information you have gained from the maternity service and the universities. You must inform your preferred university of your intention to study there as well as the location of your midwifery student position.