

## **The Ontario Midwifery Education Program: Student Guide to Professionalism**

Professionalism is a set of practices that are intended to ensure that midwives are respectful, thoughtful care providers. Midwives make every attempt not to replicate oppressive or discriminatory practices in their clinical environments. Midwives strive to work skillfully together with colleagues, both intra and inter-professionally. Cultural competence is a central aspect of professional behaviour.

Professionalism is an essential set of attitudes and behaviours expected of midwives throughout all stages of their careers, including their time as learners. As members of a self-regulating profession, midwives are entrusted to maintain professional accountability to themselves, clients in their care, colleagues, and their profession.

The Student Guide to Professionalism is applicable in all contexts and circumstances in which students are, or could reasonably be considered to be, representing their educational program including both real-world and on-line settings. The principles articulated in the Student Guide to Professionalism do not replace or limit the legal or ethical standards established by the Ontario midwifery professional and regulatory bodies, or by any other applicable university standard, policy or procedure. In addition to the standards for professional behaviour outlined in this document, students are required to adhere to their individual university “Student Codes of Conduct” for non-academic offences. Breaches of academic integrity, including academic dishonesty, cheating and plagiarism, are defined in individual university academic integrity policies. Procedures for handling allegations, complaints or charges are set out in those documents.

### **I. Professional Behaviour Standards for Students in the Midwifery Education Program (MEP)**

Students in the MEP will:

1. Adhere to the regulations and policies of their university and program, including:
  - Program policies regarding clinical placements, immunization reporting and the midwifery placement lottery
  - University policies regarding academic conduct
  - Submission of course related paper work (e.g. evaluations, birth log, learning plans, assignments) in a timely manner.
  - Adherence to deadlines for the submission of forms and documents to the program
  - Checking their university email, including when they are not enrolled in courses
  - Ensuring that all correspondence (including email) is written in a courteous and professional manner.

2. Demonstrate respect for the rights and feelings of others, including:
  - Behaving in a manner that does not disrupt or disrespect others
  - Treating others with courtesy and respect. This includes clients, other students, tutors, preceptors, faculty, guest speakers, community members, administrators, custodial staff, or any other person/people on campus or affiliated with any institution where the student is placed
  - Being cooperative
  - Using inclusive language
  - Resolving conflict in an open, timely and respectful manner
  - Refraining from behavior or language that is discriminatory or harassing in nature
  - Demonstrating competency in working respectfully and skillfully across differences of identity such as, but not limited to, ability, age, class, economic status, education background, ethnicity, gender, geographical location, language, race, religion, reproductive and parenting decisions, and sexual orientation.
3. Support the learning process for themselves and others, including:
  - Attending classes and placements regularly and on time
  - Being prepared for class/clinical placements
  - Actively participating in class and clinical activities
  - Promoting learning in the classroom and the clinical setting
  - Taking responsibility for own learning in the classroom and the clinical setting
  - Avoiding dominating class conversations, and welcoming the opinion of others
4. Be responsible for school, hospital, clinic and private property, including:
  - Respect building, grounds and property of the university, hospitals, birth centres, midwifery clinics, and clients' homes

## **II. Professional Behavior during Clinical Placements**

Exemplary professional behaviour is expected of students during clinical placements. Students must arrive on time, be dressed according to the expectations of the practice group or other placement site in which they are placed, and wearing ID if required. Students are expected to be on call within the norms of the practice and program, to respond in a timely manner when paged, and to report all pages (when taking calls from clients) or independent visits to their preceptor or assigned delegate, in a timely manner. They should be helpful within the placement site, assisting with the type of tasks that the midwife or other care providers normally undertake. Students are expected to be respectful and polite with administrative staff and to seek guidance from the preceptor about any special requests the student might have of the staff.

Students in clinical placements are expected to:

- Develop and revise learning plans and communicate learning needs and strategies to clinical teachers
- Seek out and integrate feedback from preceptors and others involved in clinical teaching, and reflect on performance in tutorials
- Actively attempt to address learning needs through self-study and skills practice
- Seek out appropriate learning opportunities with support from tutors and preceptors and support the learning of other students through participation in clinical skills teaching sessions
- Accept learning opportunities offered by clients, preceptors and other health care providers
- Inform preceptors and tutors of any problems that might affect clinical performance. *Students experiencing personal difficulties should consider accessing student services at the university and/or seek suggestions from their tutor or instructor*

The *Guide to Teaching, Learning and Assessment for Midwifery Preceptors and Student Midwives*<sup>1</sup> provides a more detailed discussion of the specific expectations regarding professional behavior for students during the various clinical placements. It is recommended that students review the entire section titled “MEP expectations of students in clinical placements” prior to placement.

### III. Social Media and Professional Behaviour

The *Policy & Information Handbook*<sup>2</sup> outlines expectations for student use of social media while in the MEP, as follows:

Students must refrain from discussion of issues related to clinical care as midwifery students in public or through social media such as electronic networks and/or social networking sites, e.g., Facebook, MSN, Myspace, Twitter, Youtube, Yahoo groups. Client confidentiality and respect for privacy and professional boundaries must be observed at all times and in all circumstances and these platforms are not appropriate places for sharing information

Unprofessional behaviour can have serious consequences. Students should be aware that their behaviour could affect future opportunities. Students should be aware that

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<sup>1</sup> The *Guide to Teaching, Learning and Assessment for Midwifery Preceptors and Student Midwives* can be accessed through First Class / Learnlink by first accessing the Midwifery Program folder and then choosing MWC Clinical Courses. It is listed as an additional resource.

<sup>2</sup> The link to *MEP Policy & Information Handbook* can be accessed through First Class / Learnlink by first accessing the Midwifery Program folder. It is provided as an additional resource.

practices often review internet sites and social media postings before contracting prospective midwives.

Students must refrain from derogatory or inappropriate discussions about clients, fellow students, faculty, preceptors, tutors, MEP staff, hospital staff, midwifery practices and allied health care providers, in their communications. Discussions about program procedures and policies, such as the placement lottery, should be guided by the principles of respect and support for others that are expressed in this document. All program related communications whether verbal, electronic or on paper, must be free of discrimination and/or harassment.

Students in the MEP are expected to demonstrate exemplary professional behaviour in all academic and clinical settings, at all times. This expectation is consistent with their role as developing health care professionals.