

Student Guide to Respectful Conduct and Professionalism in the Ontario Midwifery Education Program

Preamble

Respectful conduct and professionalism as defined by the Midwifery Education Program (MEP) is a set of attitudes and practices that are intended to ensure that, as future midwives, MEP students demonstrate they have the ability to be truthful, respectful and thoughtful care providers. As members of a self-regulating profession, midwives are entrusted to be accountable to themselves, clients in their care, colleagues, their profession and their communities.

As primary health care professionals and learners, midwives and student midwives are expected to adhere to exemplary professional standards. The [Professional Standards for Midwives](#) of the College of Midwives (CMO) state, “You must practice according to the standards expected of you by demonstrating professional knowledge and practice; providing person-centred care; demonstrating leadership and collaboration; acting with integrity; and being committed to self-regulation”. According to the CMO [Good Character Guide](#), midwives and student midwives are expected to “practice midwifery with decency, honesty, integrity and in accordance with the law and [to] display an appropriate professional attitude towards clients and colleagues.” The Canadian Midwifery Regulators Council (CMRC) [Canadian Competencies for Midwives](#) places cultural humility and anti-racism as central aspects of professional behaviour.

The MEP recognizes that professionalism is a concept rooted in colonialism and white supremacy and acknowledges that concepts of respect, relationality and accountability to community are deeply rooted in Indigenous, Black and racialized people's understandings of the world and ways of being. The MEP is committed to working towards an approach to professionalism that does not reproduce existing inequalities, and that centres respect, relationship and accountability to community.

The Student Guide to Respectful Conduct and Professionalism is applicable in all contexts and circumstances in which students are, or could reasonably be considered to be, representing their educational program and the profession including both real-world and on-line settings. This document provides a guide for students of the expectations of the MEP with regards to student professionalism and respectful conduct. The examples provided here are not meant to be exhaustive.

The principles articulated in this student guide 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 be aware of and adhere to the CMO and CMRC standards and 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. Students should be

aware that privileging hospitals routinely ask the MEP to report on student professionalism for New Registrants seeking hospital privileges. Regulatory bodies may also contact the MEP as they assess applications for registration or complaints, and we are required to report on professional behaviour during the MEP and the results of any remediation provided to the student.

The aim of this student guide is to be explicit about expectations and shared values of the MEP about respectful conduct and professionalism. 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.

Professional Behaviour Standards for Students in the MEP

Students in the MEP will:

1. Adhere to the regulations and policies of their university and program, including:

Program policies regarding the placement allocation process, clinical placements, immunization reporting, other non-academic requirements

University policies regarding academic conduct

Adherence to deadlines for the submission of forms and documents to the program

Submission of course related paperwork (e.g. evaluations, birth log, learning plans, assignments) by published deadlines

Reading their university email daily when enrolled in courses, and every 2 weeks when not enrolled, and responding in a timely and appropriate manner

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

Using inclusive language

Resolving conflict in an open, timely and respectful manner

Refraining from behaviour or language that is discriminatory or harassing in nature

Demonstrating competence in working respectfully and skillfully across differences of identity such as, but not limited to, ability, age, class, economic status, education background, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, language, race, religion,

- reproductive and parenting decisions, sex and sexual orientation
3. Support the learning process for themselves and others, including:
 - Attending classes and placements following program policies
 - Being prepared for class/clinical placements
 - Being collaborative, flexible and working constructively with others
 - Actively engaging and 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
 - Welcoming the voices and opinions of others into class conversations
 4. Be responsible for school, hospital, clinic and private property, including:
 - Respecting building, grounds and property of the university, hospitals, birth centres, midwifery clinics, and clients' homes

Professional Behaviour during Clinical Placements

Students should be aware that in clinical placements, in addition to the MEP expectations there may also be both placement and hospital policies related to professionalism and respectful behavior. 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 wear ID if required. If a student's religious, cultural, or other protected grounds require modifications to standard dress expectations, they are encouraged to bring this to the Program's attention for review and guidance. Students are expected to be on call within the norms of the MEP and placement, to respond in a timely manner when paged/called, and to immediately report all communications from clients and independent visits to their preceptor or assigned delegate. 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 other practice personnel and to seek guidance from the preceptor about any special requests the student might have of the staff or personnel. Students should follow the practice's policies about the use of cell phones and electronic communication. Generally, students should put away cell phones while providing clinical care to be able to focus on client care.

Students in clinical placements are expected to:

- Be self-directed learners, including developing and revising their own learning plans and communicating learning needs and strategies to clinical teachers

- Give and receive feedback in a respectful manner. Learners will seek out and integrate feedback from preceptors and others involved in clinical teaching, and reflect on their clinical learning with their preceptors and in tutorials

Engage in their own learning, including actively attempting 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 and engage in 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 MEP Guide to Teaching, Learning and Assessment for Midwifery Preceptors and Student Midwives provides a more detailed discussion of specific expectations regarding professional behaviour for students during clinical placements. It is recommended that students review the entire section titled “MEP expectations of students in clinical placements” prior to placement.

Social Media and Professional Behaviour

Midwifery students must refrain from discussion of issues related to clinical care in public settings or through social media such as electronic networks and/or social networking sites. Students must maintain and respect professional boundaries, recognizing the client’s right to confidentiality and privacy. Unprofessional behaviour while using social media can have serious consequences. Students should be aware that their behaviour could affect future career opportunities. Students should be aware that 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/personnel, 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.