Practice placements for student midwives

Last Updated: 29/10/2026

Relating to: Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes

Overview

This new standard was added into our Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes to give student midwives the opportunity to experience different ways of working and incorporate this learning into the development of their own leadership style and approach to team working.

We are aware that currently some students only have limited experience in one Trust or Health Board. By introducing this new standard, it will support student midwives in gaining a broader placement experience which will help them to provide safe, effective, and kind care.

Practice placements for student midwives FAQs

Why is this standard being introduced?

The aim of this standard is for student midwives to experience a different maternity provider from their normal placement setting. This will offer students an opportunity to see different ways of working and leadership styles.

How is a different maternity provider defined?

A different maternity provider is likely to be a different maternity unit, Trust or Health Board that the student does not normally have placements allocated. This may include a student exchange arrangement with a different Approved Education Institution (AEI).

The important consideration is that the student will gain experience of different leadership and team working styles, and in some instances, the placement may also offer different learning opportunities. For example, a student midwife will gain different learning opportunities by being placed in a tertiary unit with higher acuity to their usual placement.

How long does the placement need to be?

The AEI will determine the length of the experience. The experience may be a defined practice placement, an elective or observational.

What will the student midwife be able to do on the placement?

The AEI should set learning outcomes for the experience aligned to the standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes. We support a flexible approach being adopted, which reflects the students' individual needs and circumstances. Depending on local requirements, a placement may be observational for some students.

What if the student midwife does not want to change maternity providers?

It is good practice for student midwives to be made aware of the experiences they are likely to have at the start of their programme.

It is the AEI's responsibility to ensure a student meets this new standard, but student midwives should be involved in the decision-making process about this experience

What if additional costs are incurred by the student midwife to undertake this experience?

There are national policies in place, across the four UK countries, which would apply to this experience and can support student midwives with additional expenses.