How to read these standards of proficiency

Reference: PFN Last Updated: 29/10/2026

The standards of proficiency are stated as outcomes that each midwife must achieve at the point of registration.

The standards of proficiency are grouped under six Domains. These domains inter-relate and build on each other, and should not be seen separately. Together these reflect what we expect a midwife to know, understand and be capable of doing safely and proficiently, at the start of their career. This approach aims to provide clarity to the public and the professions about their knowledge, understanding and skills they can expect every midwife to demonstrate.

The Domains

1 Being an accountable, autonomous, professional midwife

2 Safe and effective midwifery care: promoting and providing continuity of care and carer

3 Universal care for all women and newborn infants

A The midwife's role in public health, health promotion and health protection

B The midwife's role in assessment, screening and care planning

C The midwife's role in optimising normal physiological processes and working to promote positive outcomes and prevent complications

4 Additional care for women and newborn infants with complications

A The midwife's role in first line assessment and management of complications and additional care needs

B The midwife's role in caring for and supporting women and newborn infants requiring medical, obstetric, neonatal, mental health, social care, and other services

5 Promoting excellence: the midwife as colleague, scholar and leader

A Working with others: the midwife as colleague

B Developing knowledge, positive role modelling and leadership: the midwife as scholar and leader

6 The midwife as skilled practitioner

Communication, sharing information and relationship management skills: shared skills for Domains 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Being an accountable, autonomous, professional midwife: skills for Domain 1

Safe and effective midwifery care: promoting and providing continuity of care and carer: skills for Domain 2

Assessment, screening, planning, care and support across the continuum: shared skills for Domains 3 and 4

Evidence-based medicines administration and optimisation: shared skills for Domains 3 and 4

Universal care for all women and newborn infants: skills for Domain 3

Additional care for women and newborn infants with complications: skills for Domain 4

Promoting excellence: the midwife as colleague, scholar and leader: skills for Domain 5

Key themes

Several key themes run throughout the Domains, and include:

- evidence-based care and the importance of staying up-to-date with current knowledge
- the physical, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual safety of women and newborn infants
- communication and relationship building, working in partnership with women
- enabling and advocating for the human rights of women and children
- enabling and advocating for the views, preferences, and decisions of women, partners and families
- working across the whole continuum of care and in all settings, and understanding the woman's and newborn infant's whole maternity journey
- providing continuity of care and carer
- optimising the normal processes of reproduction and early life
- ensuring that women, partners and families have all the information needed to fully inform their decisions
- the importance of physical, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual factors
- anticipating, preventing, and responding to complications and additional care needs
- public health, health promotion, and health protection
- understanding and working to mitigate health and social inequalities
- interdisciplinary and multiagency working
- protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding
- the impact of pregnancy, labour and birth, postpartum, infant feeding, and the early weeks of life on longer-term health and wellbeing
- taking personal responsibility for ongoing learning and development.