

# Studying midwifery

Overview of commitments  
and expectations



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# What to expect as a midwifery student

**This document provides an overview of what being a midwifery student entails, to help you understand the commitment you're making before you enrol.**

Our Bachelor of Midwifery degree is an applied programme designed to give you extensive hands-on experience so that you're truly work-ready when you graduate. As such, during your studies you'll be required to undertake a range of activities which involve a significant commitment of time, and in some cases, additional cost. There may also be resources you need for your studies. These are outlined below.

## Theory

The theory elements of the degree equate up to 36 hours per week (full-time). They're delivered in a blended model. This comprises of:

- Compulsory attendance at 'Wānanga/Intensive' weeks (occasional week-long blocks of teaching at our Manawa campus in Christchurch) for face-to-face learning
- Self-directed learning based on weekly modules delivered to you electronically
- Weekly attendance\* at two, 90-minute online forums related to that week's module(s), recorded for those who can't attend due to clinical obligations
- Weekly attendance\* at hui ākongā; small group tutorials that run for 3-4 hours in Christchurch and each satellite location\*\*

*\*Excluding during module-free weeks (usually these coincide with school holidays)*

*\*\*Satellite locations are based in Nelson/Marlborough, Mid/South Canterbury and (according to need) in the West Coast*

## Practical

Practical experience is gained from the following activities/settings:

- Placement working with women in the community during their maternity experience (at times this requires 24-hour availability for the labour and birth)
- Placements in a variety of hospital settings (across all shifts)

- Placements with midwives in the community
- Placement with allied health practitioners (for example, Well Child providers, lactation consultants)
- Attendance at community/educational activities related to pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding and postnatal care
- Engagement with the midwifery profession through representative roles, attending meetings and educational/professional activities

## First year

In year one you'll follow three women throughout their maternity care. Your involvement may range from a few weeks to several months and you'll be on-call for each woman's labour and birth.

You'll also attend five weeks of hospital placements in both primary and secondary/tertiary facilities. If there's no primary unit in your region, you'll do this part of your placement in another region.

Also in your first year, alongside weekly modules as outlined above, you'll attend five, week-long Wānanga/Intensive in Christchurch, spread across the year. These will be held in late January (the first week of the programme), February, May, July and August. You'll also have exams in November during a two-week period, although you'll only be required to attend on your own specific rostered exam days.

## Second year

In the first semester of your second year you'll work with a midwife and her back-up over a period of 6-7 weeks and be involved in the care of women from the midwife's caseload. This includes all aspects of midwifery care and therefore you'll be on-call for the duration of the placement.

In the second semester, you'll work for blocks of time in maternity facilities and in the community with allied health professionals. If you're based in a satellite outside of Christchurch, you'll also undertake 11-14 rostered shifts<sup>^</sup> on tertiary hospital placement at Christchurch Women's Hospital.

Alongside weekly modules as outlined above, four Wānanga/Intensive (one or two weeks long) will be held in Christchurch across the year and you'll also have an exam week at the end of the year.

<sup>^</sup>Shift times are subject to change.

### Third year

There are four practical courses with placements this year, ranging from four to 14 weeks. At least two of these placements will occur away from your geographical location.

A two-week Wānanga/Intensive will take place in Christchurch in the middle of the year, with another Wānanga/Intensive in November.

### General requirements

For the duration of your studies you will require:

- a computer and a reliable internet service
- a mobile/smartphone
- a full driver's licence (enabling you to drive at any time, day or night)
- access to reliable transport 24-hours a day when on-call
- a uniform (compulsory top, approx. cost \$60)
- dedicated study space at home
- support to meet your family's needs (if required) when on-call
- funds to pay for transport and accommodation when on placement away from home
- funds to pay for transport and accommodation when attending Wānanga/Intensive blocks in Christchurch (if you don't live there)

**Please note: This degree is likely to gain NZQA approval to become a four-year programme from February 2025. Contact us if you'd like to know more.**



### Additional information

#### Theory/practical balance

The proportion of theory content to practical experience is spread approximately as below:

**First year:** 74% theory | 26% practical

**Second year:** 60% theory | 40% practical

**Third year:** 20% theory | 80% practical

#### Midwifery Council of New Zealand requirements

For registration as a midwife, the MCNZ requires you to have completed 4800 hours of education, equally split between theory and practical. MCNZ also sets the minimum number of practical events you must undertake during your studies (such as facilitating the physiological vaginal births of 40 women and 100 comprehensive newborn assessments). After you have successfully completed the programme, you'll be able to sit the New Zealand Midwifery Council exam

#### Hospital placements

Hospital placements are based on shift work and during the programme you'll work a full range of shifts. Indicative shift times<sup>^</sup> are:

**Morning shift:** 6.45am-3.15pm

**Afternoon shift:** 2.45pm-11.15pm

**Night shift:** 10.45pm-7.15am

#### Primary, secondary and tertiary facilities

A primary facility is a midwifery-led maternity and birthing unit such as Oromairaki, Rangiora, Kurawaka Waipapa, Ashburton and Motueka. A secondary facility is a hospital that provides some level of specialist and medical care alongside midwifery care. There are secondary facilities in Timaru, Blenheim, Nelson and Greymouth. A tertiary facility is a specialist hospital that provides the full range of medical services alongside midwifery care, such as Christchurch Women's Hospital.

# Want to find out more?

For details of all Ara courses, including full entry criteria and how to apply, visit [ara.ac.nz/search](https://ara.ac.nz/search)

[ara.ac.nz](https://ara.ac.nz)

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## Manawa campus

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Christchurch

Mon-Fri, 8.30am-4.30pm



## Midwifery entry requirements and programme structure

For details visit: [ara.ac.nz](https://ara.ac.nz)

If you have any further questions, email us at: [midwifery@ara.ac.nz](mailto:midwifery@ara.ac.nz)

