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# **BLUEPRINT FOR THE CANADIAN MIDWIFERY REGISTRATION EXAMINATION**



**A National Assessment of the Entry-Level  
Competencies for Canadian Midwives**

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# CANADIAN MIDWIFERY REGISTRATION EXAMINATION BLUEPRINT

## **INTRODUCTION**

Each province and territory is responsible for ensuring that graduates of midwifery programs in Canada, and midwives educated in other countries, applying for registration as a midwife meet an acceptable level of competence before they begin to practise in Canada. This level of competence is measured, in part, by the *Canadian Midwifery Registration Examination (CMRE)*. The CMRE was developed in 2005-06 by the Canadian Midwifery Regulators Consortium, the network of midwifery regulatory authorities in Canada, in conjunction with its examination consultants, Assessment Strategies Inc. Assessment Strategies Inc. provided professional testing services and consultation in the development of the CMRE.. It is anticipated that the development and revision of the CMRE will be an ongoing process, to ensure the continual validity of the examination and to reflect what is expected of an entry-level midwife beginning to practise.

## **CANADIAN COMPETENCIES FOR MIDWIVES**

The CMRE is based on the *Canadian Competencies for Midwives*, a description of entry-level practice that was developed in 2004. This document outlines the knowledge, skills, and professionalism that Canadian midwives are expected to have at an entry-to-practice level, and it provided the basis upon which the CMRE was built.

The *Canadian Competencies for Midwives* was developed via a process that involved a detailed analysis of competency statements from each regulated jurisdiction in Canada; an in-person intensive workshop involving regulators and educators, many of whom were practising midwives, from all regulated jurisdictions; and electronic collaboration and consultation amongst workshop participants and all boards/councils of regulatory authorities. The document is expected to be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains accurate and up-to-date.

## **EXAM BLUEPRINT**

While the Canadian Competencies for Midwives document outlines the competencies that must be assessed, the exam blueprinting process defines how many questions should address each competency, and identifies structural (e.g. length of exam, type of questions) and contextual issues (e.g. the fact that both hospital and out-of-hospital settings should be included). This process was undertaken by the Canadian Midwifery Regulators Consortium's Examination Committee, made up of representatives from each regulated jurisdiction. Assessment Strategies Inc. provided psychometric expertise and guidance to this process.

The resulting exam blueprint provides a detailed description of the CMRE. The details are below.

## COMPETENCY WEIGHTING

### Competency Groups:

To ensure that the examination accurately reflects the profile of *entry-level* midwifery practice, the competencies are grouped according to their relative importance based on the survey ratings and qualitative review of the Canadian Midwifery Registration Examination (CMRE) Committee.

Competencies were divided into four groups:

1. Group 1 competencies comprising 10-15% of the exam are the least important;
2. Group 2 competencies comprising 70-75% of the exam are of average importance;
3. Group 3 competencies comprising 10-15% are most important; and
4. Group 4 competencies representing 5-10% of the CMRE are both broad and important and require one question per phase in the childbearing year (antepartum, intrapartum, postpartum, and newborn).

### Competency Sampling:

Based on the data from the survey and the CMRE Examination Committee guidelines, the sampling scheme presented in Table 1 was developed. The distribution of the weights in this sampling scheme was selected (1) to provide differentiation on the importance ratings, and (2) to conform with the examination length requirement of 210-230 questions (a maximum of one exam day).

At the beginning of the Blueprinting process, there were 187 midwifery competencies identified by the CMRC. Based on the process, 140 of the 187 competencies were established to be appropriate for testing on the CMRE. The 140 competencies represent entry-level competencies related to safe and effective practice that are common across the Canadian jurisdictions and that can be measured effectively on a multiple-choice and short-answer examination.

The competency grouping and sampling is presented in Table 1. For example, in Group 2, there are 97 competencies. Each of these competencies will be assessed approximately twice, and they represent 70-75% of the questions on the CMRE.

*Table 1. Competency Groupings and Sampling*

Grouping	Number of Competencies	Approx. Number of Questions per Competency	Percentage of Questions on the CMRE
1	30	1	10-15%
2	97	2	70-75%
3	9	3	10-15%
4	4	4	5-10 %
TOTAL	140		100%

**Competency Framework:** The framework identifies and organizes the competencies measured by the CMRE. Each of the framework categories contains a different number of competencies that vary in importance.

Table 2 presents a list of the competency categories, the number of competencies in each category that are assessed on the examination (the percentage of competencies are found in brackets), as well as the percentage of questions found on the examination for each category. For example, in the Antepartum Category, 24 competencies are assessed, which represents 17.1% of the 140 competencies sampled on the blueprint. Furthermore, the Antepartum Category will represent 25-30% of the questions on the CMRE (i.e., 55-65 questions).

*Table 2. Competency Framework*

Competency Categories	Competencies Assessed on the CMRE	Percentage of Questions on the CMRE
I. General Competencies	12 (8.6%)	5-10%
II. Education and Counseling	15 (10.7%)	5-10%
III. Antepartum	24 (17.1%)	25-30%
IV. Intrapartum: Care During Labour, Birth, and the Immediate Postpartum Period	38 (27.1%)	25-30%
V. Care of the Woman during the Postpartum Period, Including Breastfeeding	21 (15.0%)	10-15%
VI. Care of the Newborn and Young Infant	18 (12.9%)	10-15%
VII. Well Woman Care, Sexuality and Gynecology	8 (5.7%)	1-5%
VIII. Professional, Inter-Professional, Legal and Other Aspects of the Profession	2 (1.4%)	1-3%
IX. Professional Development	2 (1.4%)	1-3%
X. Advanced Competencies	0 (0%)	0%
TOTAL	140 (100%)	100%

## GUIDELINES FOR EXAM FORMAT

**Structural Variables:** Structural variables include those characteristics that determine the appearance and general design of the examination. They define the length of the examination, the format, and presentation of the examination questions.

1. **Examination Length:** The examination will consist of between 210-230 questions (i.e., multiple-choice, short answer). There will be 165-175 multiple-choice questions and 45-55 short-answer questions on the CMRE.
2. **Question Presentation and Format:** The multiple-choice and short-answer questions are presented as either case-based scenarios or as independent questions. Multiple-choice questions and short-answer questions are presented separately.

The case-based format consists of a set of approximately two to five questions that are associated with a brief midwifery scenario. Independent questions are stand-alone questions that contain all the necessary information without reference to a case. For the 210-230 questions of the CMRE, 65-75% are case-based questions and 25-35% are independent questions.

**Contextual Variables:** Contextual variables qualify the content domain by specifying the midwifery contexts in which the examination questions will be set.

1. **Health Care Setting:** The CMRE is designed to include questions representing the variety of settings encountered when providing midwifery care in Canada. Thus, for the purpose of the CMRE, the setting is defined as either in Hospital or Out-of-Hospital. Table 3 presents the percentage ranges that serve as the guidelines for the CMRE development.

*Table 3. Distribution of questions by health care setting*

Type of Health Care Setting	Target Percentage of Questions
Hospital	40-50%
Out-of-Hospital	50-60%

2. **Health Care Situation:** It is recognized that within the context of midwifery care, the client may experience a range of Normal to Abnormal health care situations. Table 4 presents the percentage ranges that served as the guideline for the CMRE test development.

*Table 4. Distribution of questions by health care situation*

Type of Health Care Situation	Target Percentage of Questions
Normal	50-60%
Abnormal	40-50%

**Standardization:**

Standardization ensures that exam items are presented consistently and candidates can expect information on the exam to be presented within certain standards. The following standards are adopted for this exam:

- Metric will be used for measurements
- Standard International (SI) Units will be used for drug dosages
- Generic, or common, drug names will be provided. Any trade names provided will follow in brackets.