

CMRC Assessment and Bridging Statement

Background

Preparing Internationally Educated Midwives (IEMs) to become eligible for registration or licensure to practice midwifery in Canada both helps to address Canada's maternity care workforce needs as identified through Health Human Resource planning, and contributes to the diversity of qualified maternity care providers across the country.

The Canadian Midwifery Regulators Consortium (CMRC) does not engage in the active recruitment of midwives, but fully supports the philosophy of ethical recruitment as put forward by the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM). The ICM believes that the right of the individual midwife to migrate is legitimate, and that midwives will continue to seek career advancement and education opportunities in countries other than their own. The ICM believes that recruitment of midwives from other countries cannot be a long-term solution to midwifery shortages, and that the international recruitment of midwives must not be carried out against the interests of another country where the lack of experienced midwives will have serious implications for the midwifery services and standards of care available to women and their newborns. Recruitment practices should be guided by ethical principles such as those ensuring freedom of movement, fair and equitable working conditions, and provision of safe working environments. Midwives recruited from other countries should receive sufficient and appropriate orientation, training and education to ensure that they understand the culture and health care of the host country and the protection of women's rights. (ICM, 2008)

Statement of Belief

The CMRC is committed to adhering to basic principles with respect to the assessment of IEMs qualifications and experience. A rigorous and comprehensive assessment provides the foundational information from which an appropriate bridging process can be provided. This two-part process enables IEMs to practice midwifery safely and competently in the Canadian health care system.

Basic Principles

Assessment

- Assessment is core to any bridging model, and is required before admittance to a bridging program.
- Active midwifery practice, midwifery education and language competency are key considerations in the development of an assessment model.
- Assessments must complement the degree of comprehensiveness of the bridging program; the more compressed the bridging program is, the more thorough and rigorous the assessment must be.

Bridging

- Bridging is essential and consists of two (2) sub-areas. They are:
 - Orientation to the Canadian health care system, including working in the Canadian model of practice; and
 - Gap training which is based on the core competencies required for Canadian midwifery practice in order than IEMs can function as primary care providers and provide continuity of care.
- Bridging programs will include a clinical practice component.
- Bridging programs may be focused on preparation for registration in a single jurisdiction or multi-jurisdictional.

Curriculum

Bridging programs must demonstrate a basic competency-based curriculum so regulators can have confidence that the combination of assessment and the program's curriculum will lead to a midwifery practitioner with competencies that meet or exceed those set out in *Canadian Competencies for Midwives*.

Accessibility

Fair access is a desirable trait of any assessment and/or bridging program. Assessment and curriculum may be offered at a distance to the IEM so long as it does not decrease the rigour and quality of the curriculum.

Requirements for Internationally Educated Midwives

- *Assessment*. Assessment involves a number of components including verification of midwifery education and clinical experience as a primary care midwife.
- *Language competencies*. Language fluency assessment must be performed prior to assessment for entry to bridging; this should include the ability to use language in the cross-cultural context.
- *Safety considerations*. Another core criterion is linked to safe practice. Lack of comfort and confidence in a practice environment can put clients at risk and create vulnerability and liability for both the midwife and the employer. It is important to have safe and competent practitioners to ensure the protection of the public and the profession as a whole.
- *Supervised practice*. The orientation and gap training process helps build essential skills and confidence and orients the IEM to the Canadian model of midwifery practice. It is important to have a period of clinical placement or supervised practice to integrate those skills and evaluate how each IEM performs and identify how to best support the transition to independent practice.

Position

Midwifery regulators are charged with the mandate to protect the public by ensuring midwives are qualified and safe practitioners. The rigorous and comprehensive assessment and bridging of IEMs is key to enabling IEMs to practice safely and effectively in the full scope of midwifery within the Canadian health care system.

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