

# Advanced Practice (Midwifery) Standards and Requirements

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Bord Altranais agus  
Cnáimhseachais na hÉireann  
Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland

## Acknowledgements

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# Foreword

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland is very pleased to publish the Advanced Practice (Midwifery) Standards and Requirements in this the 100th year of midwifery regulation in Ireland.

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland recognises the level of knowledge, skill and expertise required of a Registered Advanced Midwife Practitioner (RAMP) who provides care for mothers, babies and their families in all settings during a very special time.

The Standards and Requirements provide flexibility to higher educational institutions and healthcare providers to be responsible and adaptable in providing evidence-based education programmes that will equip midwives with the required competencies to register as Advanced Midwife Practitioners.

Essene Cassidy  
*President*

Mary Griffin  
*Interim Chief Executive Officer*

# Preface

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI), or An Bord Altranais agus Cnáimhseachais na hÉireann, is the statutory body responsible for regulating the professions of nursing and midwifery. As stated in the Nurses and Midwives Act, 2011, the NMBI has two main objectives:

- to protect the public, and
- to ensure the integrity of nursing and midwifery practice.

The NMBI achieves these objectives by promoting high standards of professional education, training and practice, and professional conduct amongst nurses and midwives (Part 2 (8) of the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011), and, in so doing, promote the safety of women and babies accessing maternity services.

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland endorses and adopts the following definition of a midwife adapted from the International Confederation of Midwives' (ICM 2011) definition of a midwife:

'A midwife is a person who has successfully completed a midwifery education programme that is duly recognised in the country where it is located; who has acquired the requisite qualifications to be registered and/or legally licensed to practise midwifery and use the title 'Midwife'; and who demonstrates competency in the practice of midwifery.'

The midwife is recognised as a responsible and accountable professional who works in partnership with women to give the necessary support, care and advice during pregnancy, labour and the postpartum period, to take responsibility for conducting births, and to provide care for the newborn and the infant.

Midwifery care includes:

- taking preventative measures,
- promoting normal birth,
- detecting complications in mother and child,
- accessing medical care or other appropriate assistance, and
- carrying out emergency measures.

When considering advanced practice for registered midwives, there is limited literature in comparison to nursing. Some countries regulate advanced practice, but others do not (Scottish Government 2009; Morgan 2010; Roche et al. 2013; Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's (NMBA) 2015; Gardner et al. 2016). The lack of conformity and consistency relating to the level of regulation of advanced practice worldwide creates confusion for the public, regulators, professional nursing, midwifery and health care providers (Styles and Affara 1997).

Titles and roles for advanced practice vary and may cause confusion (Gardner and Duffield 2014; Carney 2016; Gardner et al. 2016). Ambiguity surrounding the title is often perceived as a barrier to the introduction of advanced midwife practitioner (AMP) roles (Chang et al. 2010; Pulcini et al. 2010), role definition (Hutchinson et al. 2014; Gardner et al. 2016) and scope of practice where many countries have developed advanced practice domains, models, characteristics and documents (NCNM 2008; Mueller and Vogelsmeier 2013; Krautscheid 2014; CAHS 2014; NMBA 2014; NMBI 2015a, b).

Extension of the role is evident worldwide, due mainly to an overlap of the role with that of doctors (Institute of Medicine 2010; Carney 2014, 2015). The midwifery role has expanded, and Registered Advanced Midwife Practitioners (RAMPs) in Ireland are now working in acute, emergency and primary care settings.

### Scope of Practice

The scope of practice for individual practitioners is mainly influenced by the settings in which they practise (NMBA 2015), the requirements of the employer, and the needs of their patients/clients (ANMC 2006b; Fealy et al. 2014; CAHS 2014; NMBI 2014 b; NMBA 2015).

A national review of the Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework, undertaken for the NMBI by Fealy et al (2014) informed the scope of practice in Ireland. The Health Service Executive (HSE) recommends that nurses and midwives should be proactive in identifying areas where expansion in their scope may lead to improved outcomes for patients/clients (HSE 2012). Variations also exist in the level of knowledge, educational qualifications, competencies, role outcomes and job and organisational specifications required for practice. The main points of role differentiation are legislative title protection.

This is viewed as an essential step in differentiating between roles, and demonstrates that the AMP meets the extended standards required by the regulatory authority – thus operating within the scope of the registered midwife with the AMP title protected (An Bord Altranais (ABA) 2010a, b). The RAMP can request diagnostic tests, prescribes medication and refers patients/clients as necessary.

### Criteria

The criteria for advanced practice incorporate broadly similar concepts, standards and scope across the countries where roles are established. The basis of advanced practice is the high degree of knowledge, skill and experience that is applied within the midwife/client relationship to achieve optimal outcomes through critical analysis, problem solving and accurate decision-making (ANMC 2009).

Specific standards relating to the description of the core role, education standards, generic competencies and authorisation of criteria for advanced practice exist in Australia and Ireland (NMBI 2015). The outer limits to advanced practice are set by legislation, policy and guidelines within which individuals make decisions about their own level of competence, and take personal responsibility and accountability for their practice (NMBI 2015). Professional principles and values form the basis of ethical behaviour, which should guide each RAMP's professional interactions. The Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives (NMBI 2014) is based on five principles (see Figure 1).

## Competence

Competencies for advanced practice are central components of the role (ABA 2010; NMBI 2015). It is recognised that the education, expertise and experience of advanced practitioners can result in differing patient/client outcomes, mainly positive (Begley et al. 2013; Carney 2016).

Competencies required by the Advanced Practitioner in Ireland include:

- using advanced assessment and intervention strategies;
- using research when making clinical decisions;
- analysing complex interactions;
- guiding decision-making; and
- developing client focused care.

There is also a need to include, where appropriate, education programmes, and to build on patient/client relationships (ABA 2010, NMBI 2015).

Work is also continuing in the area of capability in advanced practice. The introduction of the Professional Competency Scheme by NMBI will standardise the revalidation process for RAMPs in Ireland. Currently, revalidation for advanced practice in Ireland takes place every five years post registration. Respondents to the NMBI Survey (2014) on Advanced Practice in Nursing suggested that candidates should maintain a clinical log book and a Portfolio of Practice that incorporate all competencies.

Mentorship or clinical supervision is an important component of competence development in advanced practice. Currently, AMP candidates in Ireland are usually mentored by a medical mentor.

Flexibility in utilising models other than the medical model is recommended to promote interdisciplinary, collaborative relationships between healthcare disciplines including mental health and community care (Kilpatrick et al. 2014).

Kostas-Polston et al (2015) recommend that more strategic leadership and support from organisations is needed in order to realistically prepare future AMPs for the challenges they will face, through mentorship programmes and continuous further training. Findings from a longitudinal intervention study, undertaken in Australia by Leggat et al. (2015), indicate that a structured mentoring programme, based on principles of action learning, was successful in assisting advanced practitioners (albeit in nursing) to enhance their clinical leadership skills in preparation for formal endorsement as Advanced Nurse Practitioners.

Growth in education and practice is occurring in tandem with a confused scope of practice, the need for healthcare cost containment, fragmented educational and training criteria, and qualifications leading to challenging healthcare delivery. The Department of Health's (2017) policy presents a framework for graduate, specialist and advanced nursing and midwifery practice capable of developing a critical mass of nurses and midwives to address emerging and future service needs, including driving integration between services. The overarching principle underpinning this policy is to develop the nursing and midwifery resource in Ireland in response to patient/client and service need. In most countries, including Ireland, a master's degree in nursing/midwifery is now recommended or required for qualification as an advanced nurse or midwife practitioner (CNA 2010; NCNZ 2015). Preparation for advanced nursing practice is at post-graduate level in Australia (ANMAC 2015). Inter-professional healthcare education programmes are offered by some universities.

Advanced practice in medical, surgical and emergency nursing (Small 1999; Gibbons 2014) has been introduced in many countries, but advanced practice remains underdeveloped in mental health/psychiatry (Dreher et al. 2014; Maas and Ezeobebe 2014), intellectual disability, midwifery and specialised mother and child education (AANP 2009; Hornor and Herendeen 2014; NMC 2014).

Models are a useful method of characterising advanced practice (Gonzalez and Wagenaar 2005; Chang et al. 2010; HIQA 2012, QQI 2014; NMBA 2015; ABA 2010; NMBI 2015; HSE 2016). Frameworks for advanced practice are presented in Carney 2016 and are available at: <http://www.nmbi.ie/Standards-Guidance/Current-Projects/Advanced-Practice>.



## Organisational Structures

The value of the midwifery contribution as a distinct profession must be safeguarded and articulated in the development of new services led by AMPs, complementing rather than replacing current services delivered by doctors.

Organisational structures and environments influence the development of advanced practice services (ABA 2010; NMBI 2015). Development of advanced practice has been constrained in Ireland due to relevant site preparation and development of advanced practice services that meet population needs, including collaborative, systematic evidence-based strategies to provide sufficient data to support the need for the service; thus, enhancing role clarity (Government of Ireland 2011; HSE 2012, Begley et al. 2013; HSE 2014; Carney 2016).

In most countries, including the United Kingdom, the governance structure for nurse/midwife practitioners remains with the healthcare system and with individual healthcare organisations, rather than with regulatory bodies (DOH 2004, 2007).

New governance structures are being implemented in Ireland. Directorate systems will identify areas of priority, and the responsible Directors will lead service provision. The Minister for Health will determine the functions of the Directors, and Health Service Executive (HSE) service providers will be accountable for governance and quality. The HSE has introduced the Framework for Improving Quality in our Health Services (HSE 2016). The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) will support best practice by ensuring that care is provided through a model of service that will drive high-quality, safe and reliable healthcare (HIQA 2012; HSE 2008, 2012).

The Higher Education Institute (HEI) and the Associated Healthcare Provider (AHCP) facilitates the student to achieve the competencies for advanced midwifery practice through the provision of an evidence-based programme of education. This programme includes a substantive clinical practicum component which incorporates general and specific education and clinical criteria for the role, as indicated in this document.

The Advanced Practice (Midwifery) Standards and Requirements will provide comprehensive guidance to support the development of RAMPs and contribute to public trust and confidence, quality patient/client care, patient/client safety and public protection. Educational quality is achieved through partnership and collaboration between the key stakeholders based on the principles of governance and self-assessment and in informing the development, delivery and evaluation of flexible and innovative educational programmes for AMPs (WHO 2013; Taylor 2015; NMBI 2015; Casey et al. 2016; HSE 2016).

# Abbreviations

AHCP: Associated Healthcare Provider

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ABA: An Bord Altranais

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ANMAC: Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council

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ANMC: Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council

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AMP: Advanced Midwife Practitioner

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ANP: Advanced Nurse Practitioner

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EC: European Community

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HEI: Higher Education Institution

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HSE: Health Service Executive

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ICM: International Confederation of Midwives

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NCNM: National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery

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NMBI: Nursing and Midwifery Board Ireland

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QQI: Quality and Qualifications Ireland

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RAMP: Registered Advance Midwife Practitioner

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SI: Statutory Instrument

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WGAP: Working Group Advanced Practice

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# Introduction

The Report of the Commission on Nursing: A Blueprint for the Future (Government of Ireland 1998) recommended the establishment of the National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery (NCNM) with one of its functions being the development of advanced nursing and midwifery persons and posts.

In 2010, the Department of Health & Children (DoHC) assigned additional functions to An Bord Altranais (ABA) to determine, in accordance with criteria set by the NCNM, applications for accreditation of posts as Advanced Nurse/Midwife Practitioners and applications for the registration of nurses as Advanced Nurse Practitioners and midwives as Advanced Midwife Practitioners (Statutory Instrument (SI) 3 of 2010). This became operational through the Nurses Rules 2010 (SI 689 of 2010).

The duties of the Board of the NMBI in relation to education and training of nurses and midwives are defined by the provisions of Part 10(85) of the Nurses and Midwives Act (2011). The academic standard and terminal award for advanced midwifery practice programmes are at Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) 2014), which was developed in partnership with national stakeholders and evolved from the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999.

The Nurses and Midwives Act (2011) states that the Board shall publish the standards required for registration in any division, which includes registration as an Advanced Midwife Practitioner. In accordance with the Nurses and Midwives Act (2011), the development of Advanced Practice (Midwifery) Standards and Requirements was needed. Therefore, a Working Group for Advanced Practice (WGAP) was established on 11 February 2014. The Midwives Committee in the NMBI established a sub-committee/working group for Advanced Midwifery Practice in December 2016.

The methodology employed by the WGAP to develop advanced practice included an extensive review of the literature (Carney 2014, updated April 2016). The WGAP devised a Survey for Advanced Practice, comprising 32 questions, which was distributed to nurses and midwives in May 2014 (n=250). The response rate was 92% (n=193).

Survey findings were further explored at focus groups in September 2014. Eight venues in Cork, Dublin North and Dublin South, Limerick, Louth, Offaly, Sligo and Waterford were organised in collaboration with the Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Units (NMPDU's). Whilst some AMP services are easily articulated in terms of disease-specific conditions, the challenge of describing what constitutes Advanced Midwifery Practice in normality or supported care pathways has given rise to much debate. A further public consultation in October 2017 on Advanced Practice (Midwifery) Standards and Requirements informed a revised and refined definition of Advanced Midwifery Practice.

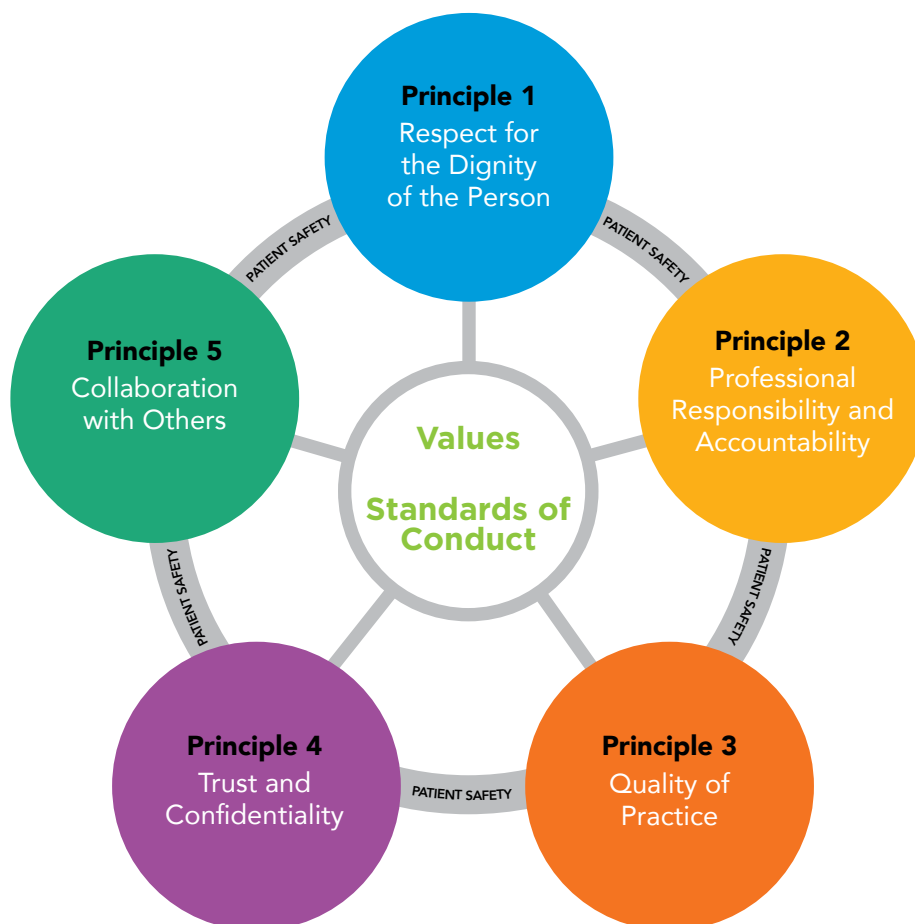
## Definition of Advanced Midwifery Practice

While there is no definition in the literature of 'advanced midwifery practice', for the purposes of this document a Registered Advanced Midwife Practitioner (RAMP) promotes wellness, offers healthcare interventions and advocates healthy lifestyle choices for women, their families and the community in a wide variety of settings in collaboration with other healthcare professionals.

RAMPs utilise advanced clinical midwifery knowledge and critical thinking skills to provide optimum care and improved clinical outcomes for women and their babies through higher levels of critical analysis, problem solving and senior clinical decision-making as a lead healthcare professional who is accountable and responsible for their own practice.

Professional principles, values and standards, articulated in the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Midwives (NMBI 2014), form the basis of ethical behaviour by guiding the clinical practice of each Registered Advanced Midwife Practitioner and their work with women and their families, professional colleagues and society. **The Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives** (NMBI 2014) is based on five principles (see Figure 1).

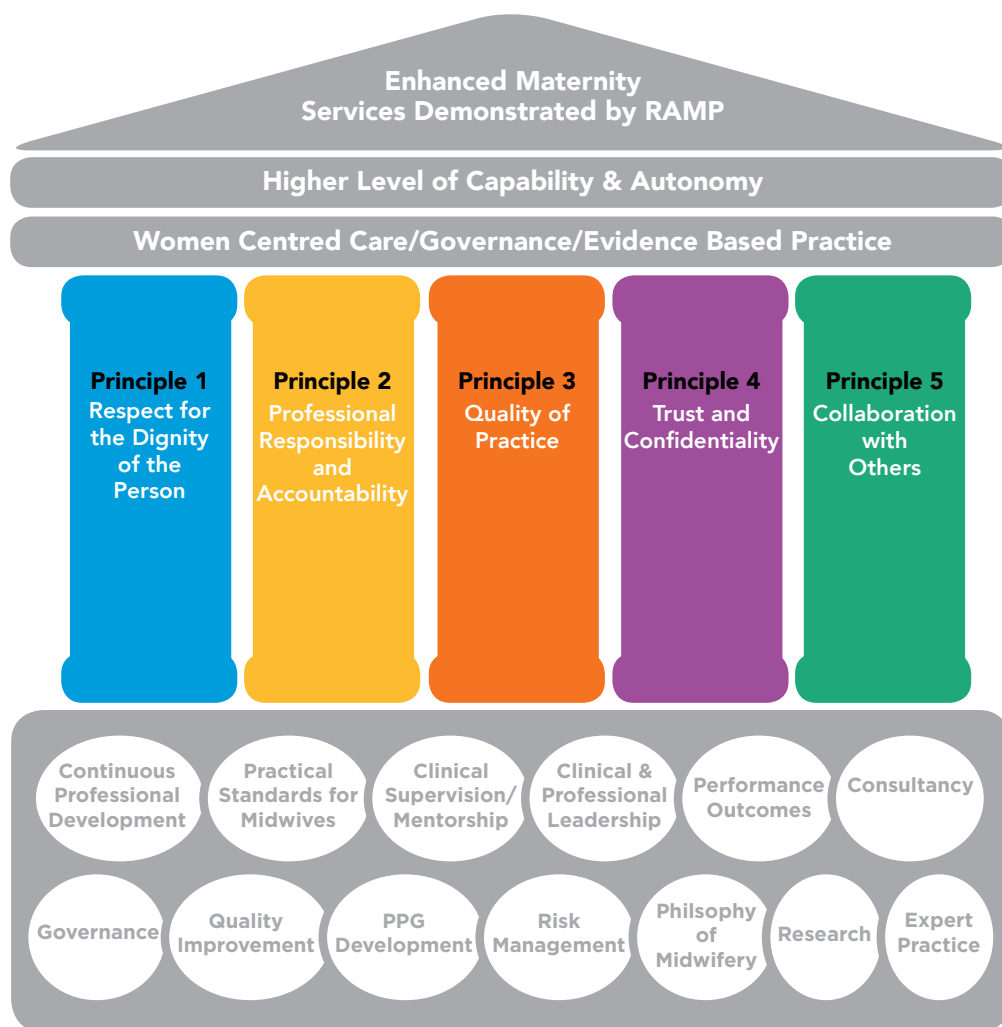
Figure 1. The five principles of the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives (NMBI 2014)



Practice Standards for Midwives (NMBI 2015) are clearly aligned with the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives (NMBI 2014) and are underpinned by the philosophy and values for midwifery. These values govern and inform the development of competencies to demonstrate Advanced Midwifery Practice.

A model of Advanced Midwifery Practice has been developed and is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Advanced Midwifery Practice Model



This document sets out the standards and requirements that must be met to register and practise as a Registered Advanced Midwife Practitioner. Furthermore, the document provides guidance for the development of innovative and practice orientated programmes of education that lead to registration as an Advanced Midwife Practitioner. The document is comprised of two sections:

Section 1 Sets out the Competencies required for registration as an Advanced Midwife Practitioner

Section 2 Sets out the Standards for the Approval of HEIs, AHCP(s) and Educational Programmes, leading to Registration as an Advanced Midwife Practitioners

# Section 1

## Competencies for Advanced Midwifery Practice

Competence is the ability of the midwife to practise safely and effectively, fulfilling their professional responsibility within their scope of practice (NMBI 2014). Moral principles, as set out in the **Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives** (NMBI 2014), and Practice Standards for Midwives (NMBI 2015), underpin professional midwifery practice.

Competencies for Advanced Midwifery Practice continually evolve in response to changing healthcare needs. Hence, it is imperative that competencies are clearly articulated with indicators specific to each area of clinical practice. Consequently, established local governance for quality assurance, including the assessment and management of clinical risk, focusing on the safety of women and their babies must support the maintenance of competence and development of higher capability for Registered Advanced Midwife Practitioners.

The competencies required for AMP build on the competencies achieved to register as a midwife with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland. These competencies are based on the principles of the Code of Professional Conduct for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives (NMBI 2014) and the Practice Standards for Midwives (NMBI 2015).

# Principle 1: Respect for the Dignity of the Person

## Practice Standard 1

Midwifery practice is underpinned by a philosophy that protects and promotes the safety and autonomy of the woman and respects her experiences, choices, priorities, beliefs and values.

## Competency 1

The Registered Advanced Midwife Practitioner applies ethically sound solutions to complex issues related to caring for women and their babies.

## Indicators

- 1.1 Demonstrates leadership by protecting, promoting and supporting the human rights of women and babies, including advocating for each woman's right to choose how and where to give birth.

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- 1.2 Demonstrates clinical leadership by practising empathically and compassionately to facilitate, and support the health and wellbeing of all women, babies and their families, respecting the diversity of beliefs, values, choices and priorities of each woman and her family.

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- 1.3 Demonstrates leadership by advocating for women and their babies, including their emotional and psychological safety whilst at all times respecting each woman's right to choose whether or not to follow advice and recommendations about her care.

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# Principle 2: Professional Responsibility and Accountability

## Practice Standard 2

Midwives practise in line with legislation and professional guidance, and are responsible and accountable within their scope of midwifery practice. This encompasses the full range of activities of the midwife as set out in EC Directive 2005/36/ EC and the adapted Definition of the Midwife International Confederation of Midwives 2011 (ICM) as adopted by the NMBI.

## Competency 2

The Registered Advanced Midwife Practitioner uses advanced knowledge, skills and abilities to critically analyse, problem solve and engage in complex clinical decision-making as lead healthcare professionals.

## Indicators

- 2.1 Is accountable and responsible for senior clinical decision-making, practising effectively as a lead healthcare professional in accordance with legal, professional and regulatory requirements.

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- 2.2 Understands and demonstrates professional boundaries by referring to and collaborating with other members of the multidisciplinary team for areas that are outside the AMP's scope of practice, experience or competence.

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- 2.3 Promotes, protects and articulates the AMP role in clinical, professional and political contexts based on clinical expertise and supervision, reflection in and on practice and continuous professional development.

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- 2.4 Demonstrates a vision for AMP based on a competent expert knowledge derived from research, critical thinking and experiential learning.

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# Principle 3:

## Quality of Practice

### Practice Standard 3

Midwives use comprehensive professional knowledge and skills to provide safe, competent, kind, compassionate and respectful care. Midwives keep up to date with midwifery practice by undertaking relevant continuing professional development.

### Competency 3

The Registered Advanced Midwife Practitioner promotes and protects a culture of quality, compassionate and evidence-based safe maternity care and services.

### Indicators

- 3.1 Demonstrates leadership in developing maternity services through initiatives, improvements and changes in the care provided to women, their babies and families.
- 3.2 Influences clinical practice through education (formal and informal), mentoring and coaching in the multidisciplinary team.
- 3.3 Uses expert knowledge and clinical competence when facilitating clinical supervision and mentorship of midwifery colleagues, midwifery students and others.
- 3.4 Leads in the translation of new knowledge and facilitation of best available evidence in the clinical setting.
- 3.5 Demonstrates professional leadership by conducting audits and research and disseminating findings that shape and advance practice in midwifery, education, and policy at local, national, and international levels.

# Principle 4: Trust and Confidentiality

## Practice Standard 4

Midwives work in equal partnership with the woman and her family and establish a relationship of trust and confidentiality.

## Competency 4

The Registered Advanced Midwife Practitioner negotiates and advocates with other health professionals to ensure the beliefs, rights, and wishes of women, babies and their families are upheld in the design and evaluation of services.

## Indicators

- 4.1 Demonstrates professional leadership in advocating choice for women when developing midwifery services.

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- 4.2 Promotes, protects and develops a culture of openness, honesty, trust and confidentiality with women and their families.

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- 4.3 Articulates and understands how, in exceptional circumstances, confidential information may need to be shared with others.

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# Principle 5: Collaboration with Others

## Practice Standard 5

Midwives communicate and collaborate effectively with women, women's families and with the multidisciplinary healthcare team.

## Competency 5

The Registered Advanced Midwife Practitioner manages risk for those who access the service through collaborative risk assessments and promotion of a safe environment.

## Indicators

- 5.1 Communicates effectively with other members of the multidisciplinary team sharing information in accordance with legal, professional and regulatory requirements.

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- 5.2 Uses expert professional judgment to make timely referrals to other appropriate healthcare professionals or members of the multidisciplinary team.

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- 5.3 Demonstrates leadership in negotiation and consensus-building to manage conflict in collaboration with women receiving care and other members of the multidisciplinary team.

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## Section 2

# Standards for the approval of Higher Education Institutions, Associated Healthcare Providers and Educational Programmes leading to registration as Advanced Midwife Practitioners

The Board has statutory responsibility to approve educational providers in respect of education programmes for AMP. The role of the Board in relation to approval of professional education is distinct from academic accreditation of programmes by awarding bodies, which are governed by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Professional accreditation and approval is a judgment as to whether a programme meets the standards and requirements to prepare a registered midwife to work as a Registered Advanced Midwife Practitioner. Educational quality will be achieved through partnership and collaboration between the key stakeholders, based on the principles of governance and self-assessment. HEIs and AHCPs must meet the Board's **Post Registration Nursing and Midwifery Programmes Standards and Requirements** in addition to these specifics for AMP.

### 2.1 Approval of the Higher Education Institute

- The Higher Education Institution must submit to the Board a detailed curriculum document including evidence of compliance with the Board's **Post Registration Nursing and Midwifery Programmes Standards and Requirements** and these **Advanced Practice (Midwifery) Standards and Requirements**. Supporting documentation such as competence assessment tool(s) that incorporate evidence of achievement of clinical competencies relevant to the context of practice should be included.

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- Submissions must adhere to the submission criteria as specified in the Board's **Post Registration Nursing and Midwifery Programmes Standards and Requirements**.

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- The HEI must make a written submission to the Board in the form of a self-assessment audit of compliance with the Board's **Post Registration Nursing and Midwifery Programmes Standards and Requirements** in addition to these **Advanced Practice (Midwifery) Standards and Requirements**.

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- Site visits by the Board for AMP will be composite, and, from publication of these **Advanced Practice (Midwifery) Standards and Requirements**, may be incorporated into five yearly visits undertaken for undergraduate nursing and midwifery education registration programmes. Separate site visits may be undertaken for advanced midwifery practice, if deemed necessary by the Board. The site visit team will include a Board member(s) and officer(s) of the Board. An external expert in advanced midwifery practice and/or a health service user may form part of the site visit team.

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## 2.2 Additional Criteria for Education Programmes for the purpose of Registration as an Advanced Midwife Practitioner

### 2.2.1 Curriculum Design, Content and Development

#### Criterion

Curriculum design and development should reflect current evidence-based educational theory, healthcare policy and advanced midwifery practice. The curriculum chosen should be dynamic and flexible to allow for changes in advanced midwifery practice and healthcare delivery and the development of evidence-based professional advanced practice in response to educational, health, social, cultural and economic change.

#### Standard

The curriculum is strategically planned to demonstrate balanced distribution and integration of theory and practice, in order to achieve the learning outcomes, proficiency and competencies for AMP.

#### Indicators

- The programme of study is designed at Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (QQI 2014).

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- Curriculum design and development ensures the programme meets all legislative and statutory requirements, and is guided by the **Criteria for Registration as an Advanced Midwife Practitioner** established educational theory, professional knowledge, advanced midwifery practice science, and contemporary healthcare practice and policy. The curriculum may offer opportunities for share international, interdisciplinary learning that is designed to enhance collaborative advanced midwifery practice with other healthcare professionals.

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- The programme demonstrates consistency with the Board's **Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives** and the **Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework** and **Practice Standards for Midwives**.

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- The programme focuses on the safety of the person and the protection of the public. These are integral, explicit and continuing components within the curriculum.

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- The programme of study reflects collaboration, consultation, engagement and participation with people who access the service and/or advocate for the person receiving AMP care.

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- The programme of study demonstrates the delivery of woman-centred, AMP that respects the autonomy, dignity and rights of the woman receiving care to make health and life choices, as integral, explicit and continuing components within the curriculum.

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- The curriculum development team is led by academic midwifery staff, who are registered nurse/midwife tutors, or hold academic and teaching qualifications and experience deemed equivalent and approved by the NMBI. The curriculum development team comprises representative members of key academic and clinical stakeholders in AMP, and should include all disciplines relevant to the area of advanced practice.

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- The curriculum describes the range of knowledge, competencies, skills and professional attributes designed to assist the development of competent, knowledgeable and reflective advanced practitioners capable of accepting personal and professional accountability for delivering evidence-based AMP.

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- Module descriptors identify aims, learning outcomes, syllabus content, learner contact hours, learner effort/self-directed learning hours and assessment strategy. The curriculum articulates how the student is expected to achieve the expected learning outcomes of the programme.

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## 2.2.2 Learner Entry, Admission, Transfer, Discontinuation and Completion

### Criterion

The Higher Education Institution should provide explicit information to applicants and potential students as to the minimum entry requirements for admission to, transfer from, discontinuation of and completion of the programme of study. At the outset of the programme, the HEI should provide students with information on academic support, personal guidance, learner services and academic facilities.

### Standard

The Higher Education Institution demonstrates a commitment to fair and transparent processes for student admission, entry, transfer, discontinuation and completion as per the Board's **Post Registration Nursing and Midwifery Programmes Standards and Requirements** in addition to these additional indicators for AMP programmes of education.

### Indicators

- Information specifies entry and programme requirements in relation to the HEI's and AHCP's requirements in terms of signed declarations relating to arrangements for clinical supervision, clinical governance, and the Board's **Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework**.
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## 2.2.3 Programme Governance

### Criterion

This programme is governed by a Local Joint Working Group/ Strategic Group for AMP with membership drawn from key stakeholders from the HEI, AHCP and maternity service user representative/patient advocacy groups. The programme should be well organised with clear governance, managerial, operational and reporting structures. Systems for programme evaluation should be robust and transparent.

### Standard

Delivery and development of the programme of education must be coordinated through joint HEI and AHCP governance with mechanisms in place to ensure compliance with the Board's **Post Registration Nursing and Midwifery Programmes Standards and Requirements**, in addition to these additional indicators for AMP programmes of education.

### Indicators

- The relationship between the HEI and each Associated Healthcare Provider, in relation to students' clinical supervision and competence assessment, is specified in a formal Memorandum of Understanding that is subject to review on a five-year basis, or earlier, if deemed necessary by the HEI, AHCP, NMBI or other relevant authority.

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- The programme of study adheres to all statutory and regulatory requirements, including a policy for dignity and respect.

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- The Local Joint Working Group/Strategic Group is responsive to programme change in line with the Department of Health Reform Agenda and population focus.

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- A governance agreement is in place within the HEI in respect of financial and staffing resources to support the delivery of the educational programme for the five-year approval period.

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- Confirmation of institutional support for the long-term security of the programme is explicit with appropriate and adequate resources and facilities being made available to meet the teaching and learning needs of students.

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- Structures are in place to facilitate the participation of academic and clinical staff, including Registered Advanced Midwife Practitioners and students in the relevant deliberation, decision-making and evaluation processes.

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- A mechanism for staff development, including academic staff and clinicians involved in delivery and assessment of teaching and learning, is declared.

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## 2.2.4 Clinical Supervision and Learning Resources

### Criterion

The HEI and its AHCPs should provide adequate guidance and support for student learning throughout the programme of study to foster an effective learning climate as per the Boards **Post Registration Nursing and Midwifery Programmes Standards and Requirements**. Both the HEI and its AHCPs should provide adequate financial and human resources in terms of academic, administrative, supervisory and clinical personnel to ensure the effective delivery of teaching, learning and assessment. Such resources should support programme administration, research activity and professional development of the staff involved in programme delivery.

### Standard

There is evidence of the commitment of adequate resources by the HEI and its AHCPs for effective support, guidance and supervision of students. The HEI and its AHCPs routinely monitor and review the effectiveness of support services available to students and implement necessary improvements.

### Indicators

- Processes for monitoring learner achievement, including demonstration of competence relevant to context of practice, completion and progression, are accurate, available, fair and transparent.
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## 2.2.5 Assessment Strategies

### Criterion

Assessment of learning is a continuous process. Assessment should be balanced and integrated throughout the AMP education programme as per the Boards **Post Registration Nursing and Midwifery Programmes Standards and Requirements**. Assessment of academic achievement, progression and completion must be effective, fair and transparent. Learners should be assessed using published criteria, procedures and regulations that are applied consistently and are subject to internal and external verification.

### Standard

The assessment of learning is a continuous process that demonstrates a balanced and integrated distribution throughout the educational programme for AMP that is verified through the external examination process.

### Indicators

- Curriculum design includes the assessment strategy in relation to the measurement of clinical and theoretical learning outcomes for AMP relevant to context of practice.
  - The assessment strategy ensures that students meet the programme's intended learning outcomes and competencies for advanced midwifery practice to facilitate progression to registration in the Advanced Midwife Practitioner Division of the Register maintained by the Board.
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## 2.2.6 Development of Clinical Competence for Advanced Midwifery Practice

### Criterion

Students must develop expert practice and competence in hospitals, community, health services, social care settings or other sites deemed relevant to the profession. Selection of sites is dependent on service needs in terms of advanced midwifery practice. Preparation of clinical placement sites/ service occurs in partnership between the HEI and its AHCPs to ensure that the student gains adequate learning opportunities to facilitate the development of competencies in AMP.

### Standard

The Higher Education Institution and its Associated Healthcare Providers ensure that the student gains adequate learning opportunities to facilitate the development of competencies for advanced midwifery practice. AMP areas are subject to audit. The areas of AMP, whether in a hospital setting, community/primary healthcare service, social care, or other healthcare setting, is subject to audit of the clinical learning environment in accordance with the Board's **Post Registration Nursing and Midwifery Programmes Standards and Requirements** in addition to these additional indicators.

### Indicators

- The number of theoretical and supervised clinical hours must be consistent with the acquisition of competence in compliance with the **Criteria for Registration as an Advanced Midwife Practitioner**.

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- Students who apply to complete the programme of education for advanced midwifery practice must consider the **Criteria for Registration as an Advanced Midwife Practitioner**.

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- The area of practice provides an effective learning environment to support the achievement of AMP competencies.

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- Named academic staff, in collaboration with named clinical supervisors, monitor the quality of the learning environment and guide and support the students, ensuring that practice placements provide an optimum learning environment for AMP.

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- Named academic staff support for students and clinical supervision is explicit.

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## 2.2.7 Clinical Supervision and Competence Assessment

### Criterion

Practice-based learning forms a mandatory and essential component of the advanced practice midwife education programme to enable learners to develop the domains of competence to become safe, caring, competent, autonomous decision-makers who are willing to accept personal and professional accountability for evidence-based expert midwife care at advanced practice level.

### Standard

Clinical supervisors (medical practitioners, Registered Advanced Midwife Practitioners and others deemed suitable by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland) as assessors of AMP are appropriately qualified, prepared for, and supported in the role of clinical supervisor and assessor of competence in accordance with the Board's **Post Registration Nursing and Midwifery Programmes Standards and Requirements** in addition to these additional indicators.

### Indicators

- Clearly written, up-to-date learning outcomes/objectives appropriate to agreed practice-specific competencies are available and accessible to guide each student's learning and achievement of competence at advanced practice level.

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- Students and all those involved in meeting their learning needs are fully acquainted with the expected learning outcomes relating to agreed practice-specific competencies.

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- Students are assigned to a named appropriate clinical supervisor for the duration of the programme. The supervisor will provide support and supervision and assist students to develop evidence-based knowledge, competence, know-how and skills to demonstrate learning. Protected time is agreed for clinical supervision and assessment of competence.

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- Evaluation of learning in clinical practice and the development of practice-specific competencies incorporate feedback from students, clinical supervisors, link lecturers, persons who access the service, and other members of the multidisciplinary team.

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## 2.2.8 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Mechanisms

### Criterion

The strategy, policy and procedures for quality monitoring, assurance and enhancement of education and training for AMP should have formal status within the HEI and its AHCPs, be publicly accessible and include a role for students, lecturers, and clinical experts, people who access the service, clinical supervisors and others involved in the programme.

### Standard

The HEI and its AHCPs demonstrate a commitment to the fostering of a culture for continuous quality improvement, with written evidence outlining the systems and outcomes of quality monitoring and enhancement in accordance with the Board's Post **Registration Nursing and Midwifery Programmes Standards and Requirements** in addition to these additional indicators.

### Indicators

- The HEI and its AHCPs ensure quality assurance indicators are identified and measured in relation to the availability of reports, quality reviewing, resources, needs analysis, clinical supervision/mentoring, clinical accountability and responsibility for and governance of quality.

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- Evidence of competence assessment process and related documentation.

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- Evidence of research awareness and the application of research findings among relevant clinical practitioners.

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- Clearly written clinical learning outcomes and associated clinical competence assessment documents to support learners to achieve advanced practice and clinical competence, which are adapted to practice-specific competencies relevant to the particular specialist area of AMP.

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- Students, clinical supervisors, link lecturers, clinical midwife managers, RAMPs, allied professionals who facilitate learning, and all those engaged in the programme of education are familiar with the clinical learning outcomes and requirements for clinical competence assessment.

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- Evidence of current evidence-based policies, procedures, guidelines and processes to support practice-specific competence attainment.

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- Mechanisms to evaluate practice-specific competence attainment for AMP are established.

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## 2.3 Indicative Content

The HEI and the AHCPs facilitate the student to achieve the competencies for AMP through the provision of an evidence-based programme of education that meets the **Criteria for Registration as an Advanced Midwife Practitioner**. Acknowledging current changes in the provision of healthcare in Ireland and the evolution of scientific knowledge, curriculum design and development, needs to be flexible to reflect current evidence-based practice. The HEI and the healthcare provider must remain responsive to changing healthcare needs; hence, a broad guide to indicative content is provided that allows flexibility in meeting the **Criteria for Registration as an Advanced Midwife Practitioner**, and which is responsive to the evolving healthcare needs of the State, whilst retaining the philosophy of midwifery.

### Broad Guide to Indicative Content

#### Professional Values

- Frameworks for management of ethical dilemmas
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#### Clinical Decision-making

- Senior decision-making processes
  - Evidence-based frameworks/models to guide holistic assessments at advanced practice level
  - Advanced assessment skills, including advanced health assessment
  - Requesting and interpreting diagnostics to inform senior decision-making
  - AMP based on current evidence with emphasis on health education and health promotion
  - Evaluation of advanced practice care
  - Multidisciplinary care planning and therapeutic regimes
  - Case management principles and techniques
  - Innovative change in care
  - Governance for Quality and Safety
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## Knowledge and Cognitive

- Sourcing, appraising and synthesising relevant published literature
- Critical analysis skills
- Development of knowledge through scientific inquiry
- Clinical audit and advanced measurement for quality interventions, improvements, and outcomes
- Solutions-oriented approaches to evolving public/health policies including demographic shifts and changing social structures within the context of available resources
- Technological advances

## Communication and Interpersonal Skills

- Effective intra professional team communication
- Data analysis as relevant to advanced midwifery practice
- Principles of emotional intelligence and evaluative processes Developing national and international networks

## Management

- Models defining outcomes of organisational performance
- Improving systems of care
- Benchmarking of key performance
- Principles of collaborative practice and conflict resolution
- Effective change management
- Effective inter-professional approaches to care delivery through evaluation processes
- Logistical models for advanced practice delivery
- Critical analysis of change processes and change management principles and theories
- Analysis of risk assessment and management through evaluation processes
- Clinical scholarship
- Clinical supervision
- Principles of effective mentorship and coaching models

## Leadership

- Advanced professional leadership and professional accountability through critical appraisal

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- Advanced clinical leadership

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- Developing and delivering education programmes. Capacity for critical and independent learning vision for the future in terms of enhancing service

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- Identification of challenges and opportunities to enhance the service Quality Improvement Science including improvement methods and consensus-building management

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- Capability frameworks

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- Principles of health economics and effective use of resources

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- Resource allocation

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- Dissemination of audit and research findings.

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