

## MIDWIFERY EDUCATION IN CANADA 2010

### University Programs

Midwifery education programs leading to a baccalaureate degree in midwifery are currently offered at six Canadian universities:

- McMaster University (Hamilton ON): <http://fhs.mcmaster.ca/midwifery/>
- Laurentian University (Sudbury ON): <http://www.midwifery.laurentian.ca/>
- Ryerson University (Toronto ON): <http://www.ryerson.ca/midwife/>
- University of British Columbia (Vancouver BC): <http://www.midwifery.ubc.ca/midwifery.htm>
- Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (Trois-Rivières QC): <http://www.uqtr.quebec.ca/sage-femme>
- University College of the North (The Pas MB): <https://www.ucn.ca/ics>

McMaster, Laurentian and Ryerson Universities offer a single Ontario program as part of a consortium. Manitoba's University College of the North (UCN) is offering a new stream for students in southern Manitoba in addition to its Aboriginal midwifery education program in northern communities.

### Admission and Graduation Requirements

Canadian midwifery education programs are direct entry and do not require a prior nursing degree or diploma. Admission is based on secondary school eligibility and completion of prerequisite sciences and other courses with minimum grades or an overall average. Most midwifery programs recommend at least one year of university studies and/or related work or volunteer experience before applying. The admissions process usually includes a personal interview as well as assessment of academic eligibility.

The four-year curriculum includes required courses in health, social and biological sciences (anatomy and physiology, biochemistry, reproductive physiology, pharmacotherapy) and a series of midwifery care courses that integrate academic studies with clinical experience. Clinical courses taught by program faculty are combined with placements in midwifery practice settings, during which students develop clinical skills in prenatal, intrapartum, postnatal and newborn care under the supervision of midwife preceptors. Placements extend over five to six semesters with electives in interdisciplinary and international settings and a clerkship (internship) in the final year.

Graduation requirements include successful completion of academic courses and examinations, demonstration of competencies in all levels of the program, and attendance at a minimum of 60 births (40 as the primary care provider) in hospital and out-of-hospital settings. Most provincial/territorial regulatory authorities also require new graduates of midwifery education programs to write the national Canadian Midwifery Registration Examination (CMRE) before registration.

**Table 1. Midwifery Education Programs: Seats, Enrolment and Graduates (April 2010) <sup>i</sup>**

Midwifery Education Program	Funded seats (per year)	Current enrolment (all 4 years)	Graduates since program inception	Anticipated graduates 2010
McMaster	30	103	163	13
Laurentian	30	98	115	16
Ryerson	30	126	162	18
UBC	10	47	57	10
UQTR	24	74	52	18
UCN	14	10	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>75</b>

### Aboriginal Midwifery Education Programs

- *Kanáci Otinawáwasowin Baccalaureate Program (KOBP)*. This degree program, offered through Manitoba's University College of the North, incorporates traditional/indigenous knowledge and culturally appropriate learning pathways with contemporary health, social and biological sciences.
- *Nunavut Arctic College Midwifery Education Program*. This layered program rotates to sites in Nunavut (Rankin Inlet, Cambridge Bay and Iqaluit), providing students with a midwifery diploma and eligibility to sit the national registration examination on completion of Level 2. Level 3 offers an opportunity to obtain a baccalaureate degree via distance education and intensives at Laurentian University.
- *Nunavik Community Midwifery Education Program*. This community-based program integrates midwifery studies with maternity programs in health centres on Quebec's Hudson Bay coast (Puvirnituk, Inukjuak and Salluit). Midwives who have completed the program are eligible for full registration in Quebec.
- *Six Nations Aboriginal Midwifery Training Program*. This community-based program is offered through the Maternal and Child Health Centre on the Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve in southwestern Ontario.

### Assessment and Bridging Programs

The International Midwifery Pre-Registration Program (IMPP) offered by Ryerson University since 2001 is a 9-month, part-time program for internationally-educated midwives who have practised in the last five years and are fluent in English. The IMPP provides assessment, knowledge and skills enhancement, clinical placements and mentoring for the Ontario midwifery practice environment.

Since 2009 the Canadian Midwifery Regulators Consortium, in collaboration with the University of British Columbia, Mount Royal University (Alberta), University College of the North (Manitoba) and l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, has been piloting the Multi-jurisdictional Midwifery Bridging Program (MMBP) to assess and prepare qualified internationally-educated midwives for registration in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Northwest Territories and Nova Scotia. The MMBP has replaced Prior Learning and Experience Assessment (PLEA) programs in these jurisdictions. The program combines online distance education with in-person intensives and internships in students' chosen home communities.

L'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières is continuing an assessment and integration program for internationally-educated midwives (*Formation d'appoint pour les sages-femmes formées à l'étranger*) initiated in 2009. This program is limited to international francophone applicants recommended by the Ordre des sage-femmes du Québec.

**Table 2: Assessment and Bridging Programs (April 2010) <sup>ii</sup>**

Program	Funded Seats	Current enrolment	Graduates to date	Anticipated graduates 2010
IMPP	20	19	100	12
MMBP	24	22	7	N/A
UQTR	18	16	2	5
TOTAL	62	54	109	17

### Developments and Trends

- The Ontario government committed funding to increase midwifery education seats by 50%, beginning in 2008, bringing the current total across the consortium of McMaster, Ryerson and Laurentian Universities to 90 seats.
- The UBC midwifery program is undergoing a funding review by the university in collaboration with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development.
- Plans to expand the UQTR program are contingent upon the number of midwife preceptors available for students in clinical placements.
- Plans are ongoing to develop a new midwifery education program at Mount Royal University in Calgary, Alberta.
- Attrition rates in midwifery education programs appear to be stable and comparable to other health professional programs.
- Interest in midwifery education continues to be high, with the number of applicants far exceeding available seats. In 2008 and 2009 the Ontario Consortium received 650-700 applications.
- Ontario and UBC midwifery education programs are planning accelerated streams to enable registered nurses to complete a midwifery degree in a shorter timeframe.
- Over 90 students in midwifery education programs and bridging programs are expected to graduate in 2010.

<sup>i</sup> information provided by the respective university midwifery education programs.

<sup>ii</sup> information provided by the respective assessment and bridging programs.