



BECOMING A PRECEPTOR MCMASTER PRECEPTOR INFORMATION LETTER

Thank you for your interest in becoming a preceptor. This letter is intended to outline key considerations as you take on the role of clinical preceptor.

McMaster Midwifery Education Program:

McMaster is one of two universities in a consortium that offers a Midwifery Education Program in Ontario. We offer clinical placements of varied durations to our midwifery students during their four-year undergraduate program.

The university's obligation is to provide quality educational settings and to provide the resources for effective teaching. The McMaster MEP will:

- Assess the qualifications of clinical teacher applicants and their ability to provide the necessary volume and location of practice for students to attain course objectives.
- Provide the preceptor orientation and continuing education.
- Set forth the mutual obligations of the universities and preceptors in a written contract.
- Provide recognition for clinical preceptors:
 - Stipends for each month of student placement will be made available.
 - A category of faculty appointment, such as clinical associate or clinical adjunct, will be proposed in the future for persons who demonstrate excellence and a continuing commitment to the clinical preceptor role.
- Provide the objectives for the student's experiences and the criteria for student evaluation.
- Develop and maintain ongoing liaison with clinical preceptors and teaching practices.
- Make available the necessary resource persons and materials to carry out the clinical preceptor responsibilities (this includes insurance protection for carrying out teaching activities);
- Develop an ongoing assessment and feedback process for clinical preceptors and teaching practices
- Arrange a suitable method of resolving student-preceptor conflicts that involves all the interested parties.

Clinical teaching

Clinical teaching is the fundamental core of the Midwifery Education Program. Students learn the skills, judgment and art of midwifery care by practising under the supervision of a skilled midwife. The goal of the program is to ensure students have high quality clinical supervision in

practices across the province. Our students represent the future of the midwifery profession in Ontario and all midwives have a collective investment in their education.

The universities that participate in the educational consortium recognize the importance of the clinical component of the program and the crucial role of clinical preceptors in providing clinical placements. While a small group of faculty employed by the universities will continue to have responsibility for overall course development, coordination and administration, a large network of clinical teaching faculty is also essential.

This concept of a teaching network is very important because of the organization of midwives' practices. While a designated midwife will be accountable for the assessment and evaluation of a student, many midwives in the practice may also be involved with the student. Therefore, it is useful to think of the entire practice group as a "teaching practice" that includes one or more designated clinical preceptors.

Role of the Preceptor

The role of the clinical preceptor has evolved since the first students moved through the Program and will continue to evolve.

Being a preceptor has a few unique responsibilities:

- Understanding and supporting the course objectives that guide the student's learning while in the practice.
- Explaining the role of students to clients and the rationale for student participation in midwifery care.
- Providing opportunities for students to observe and learn the skills of midwifery care.
- Providing direct instruction to students about how to do certain procedures.
- Providing opportunities for discussion about clinical decision making, findings, etc.
- Evaluating students' skills and abilities, providing feedback and direction.
- Completing the necessary written and oral evaluations at specified time periods of the placement (twice per academic term).
- Accepting ongoing evaluation of teaching and supervision skills from students and midwifery colleagues.
- Collaborating with university based faculty to ensure monitoring of student progress.
- Participating in the orientation and continuing education program developed for clinical preceptors

Preparing to take a student

Requirements for becoming a preceptor include attendance at a new preceptor workshop and anti-oppression workshop. You will be notified of the dates and locations of the new preceptor workshop and other continuing education opportunities to facilitate your ongoing professional development as a clinical teacher. It is expected that preceptors will be off call in order to participate in the workshop. Coverage

should be arranged within the practice to allow this. If a practice has more than one preceptor, midwives may wish to choose differing locations and dates (if available) to facilitate coverage. Additional resources such as the Guide to Teaching and Learning, and the Preceptor Handbook will be provided to you for further reading and preparation.

Talking to your clients

Midwives are respectful of their clients' right to choose who is involved in their care. Midwives who are preceptors also need to ensure that clinical teaching opportunities are available to students. Preceptors can facilitate the acceptance of students in several ways. Some suggestions follow:

- At initial interviews, explain that your midwifery practice includes students and that clients will meet students during the course of their visits to the practice. Do this in a positive way that emphasizes how important it is to you and the midwifery profession.
- Prepare clients who are already receiving care for the arrival of students. For example, stating that, "In June, a student will begin working in our practice. It would be great if she could sit in on your appointments and get to know you", can pave the way for the student.
- Point out the advantage that a student brings because she has a fresh point of view, is enthusiastic and eager to learn, and may bring ideas of her own about how to contribute to a woman's positive experience. Even the newest of students will have contributions to make.
- Encourage clients to consider themselves as involved in the teaching of the student. Some clients may feel pleased to consider that they are contributing to the education of students and that they are creating opportunities for more clients to experience midwifery care in the future.
- Avoid apologizing about having a student involved. It is helpful to avoid phrases like, "this may seem like an imposition, but we have a student here today..."
- Acknowledge that the client's wishes will be respected and that they have the option to change their mind about the presence of a student. Students will be understanding and accepting of this possibility.

Organizing Practice Arrangements

The student should attend prenatal and postnatal visits with the preceptor and, on some occasions, with other practice members. Similarly, the student can participate at births with any of the members of the teaching practice. However, the preceptor remains responsible for providing feedback and evaluating the student's performance.

The student must arrange with the preceptor and practice group the specific dates to be off-call. Students must have a minimum of four days, including two weekend days, off-call per month. Students in Normal Childbearing will have an additional four days off-call, normally to be taken immediately after the midterm exam or in the middle of the placement.

The student is off-call 24 hrs for scheduled tutorials. Any alternations need to have tutor approval.