



NEW ZEALAND
NURSES
ORGANISATION

New Zealand Nurses' Organisation (Inc.)

Submission to the

Clinical Training Agency, Ministry of Health

**Draft Specification for a Pilot Midwifery First
Year of Practice Programme**

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Introduction

The New Zealand Nurses' Organisation (NZNO) represents 39,000 health workers on both professional and industrial issues across the public, private and community sectors. NZNO has approximately **900 midwife members**, the majority of whom work as employed midwives, either in a core, team or continuity of care capacity. NZNO also represents a small number of independent LMCs. NZNO has an active midwifery network and midwife delegate support system in major maternity facilities. NZNO has consulted with its midwife members in preparation of this submission.

General Comment

NZNO welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the specifications for this important initiative for midwives entering practice. Currently there is a paucity of entry to practice programmes for midwives and so support throughout the first year of practice varies from midwife to midwife. NZNO fully supports an accessible, structured and funded programme of support, assistance and mentoring of newly qualified midwives. Evidence suggests that similar programmes enable professionals entering the workforce to consolidate their skill base more quickly and aids in recruitment and retention. These are important factors in achieving a sustainable midwifery workforce.

Specific Comment

1. *General provisions* – NZNO is generally in support of the provisions. It is not clear in the document whether the 80 hours provision for education and development is inclusive of the eight face-to-face meetings with the mentor or whether it is in addition to this. 3.4.3 indicates that the 80 hours is in addition to the eight meetings with the mentor. If the 80 hours education and development is inclusive of the meetings with the mentor, then NZNO supports the provision; if it is in addition to the meetings with the mentor, then NZNO recommends that further consideration be given to the number of hours (80) as it may not be realistic in view of annual leave, orientation time to other practise settings, meetings with mentors and so on over the 10 to 12 month period.
2. *Learning framework and practise settings* – these specifications are supported by NZNO.
3. *Mentorship* – NZNO's concern centres on the reliance of a significant commitment to the programme by the mentors and the resulting implications for them in terms of work/life balance, sustainability of the model over time and the potential for burnout of those who are already over-committed. The document is silent on any payment for mentoring services.
4. *Expected Outcomes* – NZNO endorses the expected outcomes.

Conclusion

NZNO supports the introduction of a pilot first year of practice programme for midwives.

NZNO is concerned about the ongoing sustainability of the programme as it is currently proposed on two counts:

- the singular reliance of the programme on the good will of mentors who will be required to commit significant time over and above their practice to this programme, and
- the feasibility of meeting the 80 hours professional development and education requirement, on top of the mentorship meetings, rotation to other practice settings, MSR process, annual leave and so on.

NZNO recommends that the specification is revised and adjusted accordingly by the Expert Advisory Group.

NZNO thanks the Clinical Training Agency for the opportunity to submit on this important development for midwives.