



Mercy Hospitals Victoria Ltd

Continuity of Care Guidelines 2024



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Acknowledgements:

Victorian Midwifery Academics (MIDAC), Melbourne Victoria. (June 2016). Continuity of Care Experiences in Midwifery Curricula: Guidance for Victorian midwifery students, universities and placement providers.

WELCOME

Mercy Health welcomes you to our organisation. The following guidelines have been established to ensure the best possible experience for women and midwifery students through the Continuity of Care Experience (CoCE). In addition to following Mercy Health guidelines, it is the student's responsibility to ensure they are following the requirements for recruitment, consent and conduct as set out by their university.

Please contact the **Clinical Placement Coordinator** if you have any questions:

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ATTENDANCE AT ANTENATAL APPOINTMENTS

Midwifery students may attend Antenatal Clinics or Outpatient Services with a CoCE. It is requested that students follow these guidelines:

- The student should introduce themselves as a CoCE participant and gain consent from the Health Care Worker to attend the visit
- The student should provide the CoCE consent, a student identification card, Working With Children Check and Police Check upon request
- All students should be professionally presented and wear a name badge
- Students are **not permitted** to provide clinical care
- **The Registered Midwife or Doctor should note the name of the student and recruitment of the woman into the CoCE program in the Health Record**

ATTENDANCE AT ANTENATAL EDUCATION CLASSES - MHW

Midwifery students should email the Parent Education Team to obtain approval prior to attending Antenatal Education Classes with a CoCE. PEducation@mercy.com.au

If attendance is approved, it is requested that students follow these guidelines:

- The student should attend the Antenatal Education Class with CoCE woman, introduce themselves as a CoCE participant and confirm prior approval to attend from the Health Care Worker.
- The student should provide the CoCE consent, a student identification card, Working With Children Check and Police Check upon request
- All students should wear university approved uniform and wear a name badge (to differentiate CoCE students from support persons)

ATTENDANCE IN BIRTHING SERVICES

Midwifery students may attend Birthing Services with a CoCE. It is requested that the student follow these guidelines:

- The student should introduce themselves as a CoCE participant to the Registered Midwife and Associate Unit Manager and gain consent to attend
- The student should provide the CoCE consent, University Student Identification Card, Working With Children Check and Police Check upon request
- The student should present themselves professionally at all times and wear a name badge
- Students are **not permitted** to provide clinical care

ATTENDANCE IN PERIOPERATIVE SERVICES

ELECTIVE CAESAREANS – Midwifery students are permitted to attend the elective caesarean sections of CoCE women.

When attending the caesarean section of a CoCE woman, students must follow these guidelines:

- The student must introduce themselves as a CoCE participant to the Registered Midwife and Perioperative Services Staff
- The student should present themselves professionally at all times and wear a name badge
- The student should provide the CoCE consent, University Student Identification Card, Working With Children Check and Police Check upon request
- The student must sign "Consent, Release and Indemnity for Support Person at Caesarean Section" form, Medical Record - MR 0120-0
- Students are **not permitted** to provide clinical care
- The student must be **directly supervised** at all times
- The student must follow instructions
- The student must leave the Perioperative Services Department immediately on request by any member of the Hospital Staff

EMERGENCY CAESAREANS – In addition to the above guidelines for elective caesareans, midwifery students are permitted to follow CoCE women into Perioperative Services for emergency caesareans with the approval of the medical, midwifery and nursing staff managing the labour and birth.

ATTENDANCE IN ANTENATAL/POSTNATAL DEPARTMENT

Midwifery students may attend the Antenatal/Postnatal Department to follow up with a CoCE. It is requested that the student follow these guidelines:

- The student should introduce themselves as a CoCE participant to the Registered Midwife and Associate Unit Manager and gain consent to attend
- The student should provide the CoCE consent, University Student Identification Card, Working With Children Check and Police Check upon request
- The student should present themselves professionally at all times and wear a name badge
- Students are **not permitted** to provide clinical care

ATTENDANCE IN SPECIAL CARE NURSERY

Midwifery students may attend the Special Care Nursery to follow up with a CoCE. It is requested that the student follow these guidelines:

- The student should request and be granted parental consent to attend Special Care Nursery
- The student should introduce themselves as a CoCE participant to the Registered Nurse/Midwife and Associate Unit Manager and gain consent to attend
- The student should provide the CoCE consent, University Student Identification Card, Working With Children Check and Police Check upon request
- The student should present themselves professionally at all times and wear a name badge
- Students are **not permitted** to provide clinical care

STUDENT CLINICAL PLACEMENT and CoCE'S

Each university has guidelines regarding Continuity of Care Experiences. There are differences between the universities. Students are encouraged to contact to their university if clarification is required.

Any request for a variance to university guidelines is to be made directly to the university by the student. It is the responsibility of the university to approve any variances and communicate this with Mercy Health. Mercy Health will not approve changes outside of the university guidelines.

Students on placement at Mercy Health are not permitted to swap shifts, leave early or be absent from shifts for CoCE appointments without prior approval from the Clinical Placement Coordinator.

When a CoCE woman labours and births whilst the student is on clinical placement at Mercy Health, the student must follow their university guidelines. If the student's university permits them to be absent from clinical placement for labour and birth, the student must notify the **Clinical Support Midwives** via pager/phone and email the **Clinical Placement Coordinator** prior to leaving placement.

APPENDIX – ONE

CONTINUITY OF CARE EXPERIENCES

Experience in woman-centered care as part of continuity of care experiences.
The student is supported to:

- (i)** Establish, maintain and conclude a professional relationship while experiencing continuity with individual women through pregnancy, labour and birth, and the postnatal period, regardless of model of care.
- (ii)** Provide midwifery care within a professional practice setting and under the supervision of a midwife—in collaborative practice arrangements supervision by other relevant registered practitioners (for example, medical officer qualified in obstetrics, child health nurse or physiotherapist) may be appropriate.
- (iii)** Engage with a minimum of 10 women—engagement involves attending four antenatal visits, two postnatal visits and, for the majority of women, the labour and birth.
- (iv)** Maintain a record of each engagement incorporating regular reflection and review by the education or health service provider.

Reference:

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC). (2014). ANMAC - Midwife Accreditation Standards, page 24.

COVID_19

Midwifery students undertaking Continuity of Care (CoC) experiences are considered Authorised Workers and fall within the definition below:

- health practitioners, including medical, nursing, midwifery and allied health students on placement, when undertaking critical training and examinations
- Midwifery students should not be impeded from undertaking CoC experiences
- Students need to ensure they comply with all COVID-19 directions when visiting facilities
- covid-19@dhhs.vic.gov.au

APPENDIX - TWO

QUICK ANSWER GUIDE to Continuity of Care Experiences at Mercy Health

Question	Answer
Attend Antenatal Clinic and Outpatient Appointments	YES
Provide care in Antenatal Clinics	NO
Attend Antenatal Education Classes	With prior approval
Attend BSU for labour and birth	YES
Provide care/Accoucher birth	NO
Attend Elective/Emergency Caesarean Sections	YES
Provide Care in Elective/Emergency Caesarean	NO
Attend Antenatal/Postnatal Department and appointments	YES
Provide care in Antenatal/Postnatal Department	NO
Attend Special Care Nursery with CoCE consent	YES
Provide Care in the Special Care Nursery	NO

All students undertaking CoCE episodes at Mercy Health are to remain in an observational capacity, with the exception of students on a clinical placement shift during the episode of care.