



# Midwifery Student Guide

*Excellence in Action*

## **Rutgers School of Nursing**

### **Midwifery Student Guide**

The Midwifery Student Guide provides foundational information about the programs and nurse-midwifery-specific program requirements and references the Rutgers School of Nursing Division of Advanced Nursing Practice Student Handbook which includes resources, policies, and procedures. Students are responsible for the information shared within the Handbook and this Student Guide.

Please read both carefully to ensure a clear understanding of their contents. If you have any questions about either of these documents or program requirements and expectations, please discuss them with the Program Director, Dr. Julie Blumenfeld.

### **Student Acknowledgement Student Guide**

*Please email the signed attestation below to the Program Director, Dr. Julie Blumenfeld, [julie.blumenfeld@rutgers.edu](mailto:julie.blumenfeld@rutgers.edu).*

I have received the Rutgers School of Nursing Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery Student Guide. I have read the guide in its entirety, understand its contents, and have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions and have those questions answered.

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Student Name

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Student Signature

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Date

## Table of Contents

<b>Welcome .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b><i>Part 1: Introduction to the Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery Programs.....</i></b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Mission.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Philosophy.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Objectives.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Rutgers School of Nursing Policies and Procedures.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Faculty-Student Communication .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Balancing Work, Life, School, and Other Commitments .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Student Academic and Personal Challenges .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Rutgers School of Nursing Student Resources .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Student Engagement & Wellbeing .....	4
Student Wellness Program .....	4
Academic Support .....	4
Disability Services .....	4
<b><i>Part 2: Academics .....</i></b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Overview of Programs.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ACNM Core Competencies.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Academic Advisement.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Evaluation, Grading, and Academic Progression .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Objective Structured Clinical Exams (OSCEs) .....	6
Nurse-Midwifery Comprehensive Examination .....	6
<b>Course and Program Evaluation.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b><i>Part 3: Learning in the Clinical Setting .....</i></b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Requirements for Certification and Observation .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Clinical Clearance .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Clinical Site/Preceptor Selection and Placement .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Clinical Attendance and Hours.....</b>	<b>8</b>
Creating a Clinical Schedule.....	8
Excused and Unanticipated Absences .....	8
<b>Clinical Preparedness .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Clinical Evaluation.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Minimum Number of Patient Clinical Encounters.....	9
<b>Clinical Safety .....</b>	<b>10</b>
OSHA Compliance .....	10
Patient Privacy .....	10

Student Clinical Practice and Advanced Midwifery Skills .....	10
Fatigue and Sleep Deprivation .....	11
<b>Clinical Errors and Adverse Clinical Outcomes .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Student Malpractice Insurance Coverage .....	11
Reporting Clinical Errors or Adverse Outcomes .....	11
<b>Clinical Documentation and Tracking .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Documentation .....	11
Exxat .....	11
Experience Log and Timesheets .....	12
Student and Clinical Site and Preceptor Evaluations .....	12
<b>Acknowledgment of Clinical Sites and Preceptors .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b><i>Part 4: Professional Issues.....</i></b>	<b><i>12</i></b>
Professional Issues Days.....	12
Participation in Professional Activities and Organizations .....	12
Student Leadership Volunteer Opportunities .....	13
<b><i>Part 5: Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women’s Health/Nurse-Midwifery Program Faculty .....</i></b>	<b><i>15</i></b>

## Welcome

Welcome to the Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery programs at Rutgers School of Nursing! Our faculty look forward to supporting your academic journey as you acquire the knowledge, skill, and insight needed to become a confident, capable, and safe entry-level provider.

The Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery programs offer flexible and engaging learning environments. Our primarily synchronous, remote courses are balanced with intentional on-campus meetings, skills labs, and clinical simulations led by innovative faculty in our state-of-the-art midwifery simulation center. Clinical learning occurs at diverse, well-established, faculty-selected clinical sites across New Jersey and is designed to meet the learning needs of each student.

Our programs prepare students for a comprehensive career. Currently supported by generous funding from the New Jersey Department of Health, the New Jersey Midwifery Education Project prepares diverse clinicians to decrease health inequities and improve maternal health outcomes throughout the state. An added advantage of studying in New Jersey is the opportunity to be educated and trained in a state that supports access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care.

This Guide contains valuable information regarding these programs as well as School of Nursing policies. Please take time to review its contents, as I am confident you will find it useful. Again, welcome to the Rutgers School of Nursing, Midwifery Programs!



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Program Director, Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery  
Clinical Associate Professor  
Rutgers School of Nursing

## Part 1: Introduction to the Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery Programs

The Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery programs are accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME). In addition to embracing the Rutgers School of Nursing's mission, vision, and philosophy, the Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery programs have their own program-specific mission, philosophy, and objectives, as outlined below.

### Mission

The mission of the Nurse-Midwifery program at Rutgers School of Nursing is to educate students and advance the profession of midwifery through patient-centered, evidence-based practice, scholarship, service, and professional leadership and advocacy.

### Philosophy

The Nurse-Midwifery program at Rutgers School of Nursing stands on a strong foundation of excellence in education, scholarship, and clinical practice and the optimization of health and health equity. Our program and faculty affirm accessible, equitable, ethical, person-centered care that respects individuality, diversity, and physiologic processes. Our graduates are prepared to be independent providers of full-scope health care across the lifespan including pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period; sexual, reproductive, and gynecologic health; primary care; and care for the healthy neonate. Our faculty cultivate student skills to contribute to midwifery leadership, scholarship, interprofessional collaboration, and growth of the profession for individuals, families, and communities in a diverse world. Each student brings their unique perspective to the program, enhancing the learning environment. Faculty serve as mentors and role models for students and promote the joy of learning, the value of community engagement, and the significance of professional leadership and advocacy. Based on this philosophy, the Nurse-Midwifery program at Rutgers School of Nursing prepares graduates who embrace the midwifery model of care and become leaders in improving healthcare systems and individual health.

### Objectives

Graduates of the Nurse-Midwifery or Dual Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery program at Rutgers School of Nursing, will be able to:

1. Practice safe, independent, competent, and professional midwifery care as a beginning clinician in accordance with the [American College of Nurse-Midwives' Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice](#) and [Standards for the Practice of Midwifery](#).
2. Uphold the values of the profession of midwifery including supporting inclusivity; caring for and eliminating obstacles faced by individuals in marginalized communities; establishing and applying evidence-based care; emphasizing health promotion and patient education; and limiting interventions in normal physiologic processes.
3. Provide care that is equitable, ethical, culturally humble, and person-centered.

4. Contribute to the profession of midwifery through membership, participation, and leadership in professional organizations; service; and efforts to further professional organizational goals and priorities.
5. Collaborate with interprofessional healthcare teams, valuing all members and communicating respectfully, to deliver high quality care.
6. Pursue life-long learning and professional development as a nurse-midwife.

### Rutgers School of Nursing Policies and Procedures

Midwifery students are members of the Division of Advanced Nursing Practice and so adhere to policies and procedures outlined within the Division of Advanced Nursing Practice Student Handbook. This Handbook contains valuable information regarding expectations and policies that apply throughout each student's academic journey. It provides answers to commonly asked questions and serves as an excellent resource. Students should be familiar with the Handbook and especially the following policies and topics:

- Rutgers School of Nursing Standards of Conduct
- Academic Integrity
- Grades, Grading, and Academic Progression
- Services for Students with Disabilities
- Religious Accommodation
- Policy Prohibiting Discrimination and Harassment
- Anti-Racist and Anti-Bias Commitment
- Information Technology and Bring Your Own Device

### Faculty-Student Communication

Open dialogue between students and faculty is encouraged and contributes to the growth and development of the program and its students and faculty members. Email communication should only occur through students' and faculty's official Rutgers email accounts. While the School of Nursing policy is that faculty have 72 hours to respond to student emails, that response time is often quicker. Students should check their Rutgers email at least every other day to stay abreast of important updates, information, and potential schedule changes.

### Balancing Work, Life, School, and Other Commitments

Rutgers School of Nursing students have made a commitment to prioritize their education and learning. Program success demands hard work, focus, and dedication. Attendance at all classes and clinical experiences is expected as per the [Classroom and Clinical Attendance Policy](#). During the final semester of study, students (full- and part-time) must be prepared to complete a minimum of 26-hours per week in the clinical setting while also preparing for the midwifery comprehensive examination. Because of this program's intensity and rigor, students are discouraged from working full-time, especially during the final semesters when course load and clinical hour requirements and demands are extremely high.

### Student Academic and Personal Challenges

Although not unique to Rutgers Nurse-Midwifery/Dual Women's Health Nurse-Midwifery programs, academic, personal, and life challenges will inevitably arise during the program.

Depending on the nature of the concern, the student should contact the individual below to assist with accessing resources and developing a plan to meet their needs.

Type of Concern	Person to Contact
Course-related	Course faculty
Clinical	Preceptor and clinical faculty
Personal	Program Director

If a student has a course-related concern, they should first seek to resolve the concern with the course faculty. If, after meeting with the faculty member, the problem cannot be resolved, the student should reach out to the Program Director. If the Program Director is not available or the issue still cannot be resolved, the student may contact the Assistant or Associate Divisional Dean. Students should not reach out to the Program Director or Divisional Dean without first attempting to resolve the concern with the faculty member.

### Rutgers School of Nursing Student Resources

Rutgers School of Nursing has several student-focused support and resources as described below.

#### Student Engagement & Wellbeing

The [Senior Student Program Coordinator](#) is available to assist Division of Advanced Nursing Practice students with navigating School of Nursing processes such as registration and financial aid as well as student progression. The Coordinator may also be able to support students with school-related and personal matters. Please refer to the Handbook for more details.

#### Student Wellness Program

The [Student Wellness Program](#) is a free, confidential counseling service that helps students deal effectively with stressors and pressures related to school, as well as personal issues that may affect their well-being, home lives, or academic performance. Students may also benefit from Rutgers University [wellness resources](#).

#### Academic Support

Housed within the School of Nursing, academic support resources such as tutoring and academic coaching are available through the [Office of Academic Success](#).

#### Disability Services

The School of Nursing [Office of Disability Services](#) provides students with disability services, including confidential advising and accommodation services to allow students with physical, mental, and learning disabilities to complete their course of study at Rutgers School of Nursing. The school provides for confidential documentation and verification of student accommodations and communicates with faculty and staff regarding disabilities and accommodations.



## Part 2: Academics

### Overview of Programs

#### **Masters**

The **Nurse-Midwifery BS to MSN** program is 50 credits and requires a minimum of 945 clinical hours; students may be required to complete more than the minimum required hours to demonstrate competency as required for graduation and certification. This program is meant to be completed in 3 years.

#### **BS to DNP**

The **Nurse-Midwifery BS to DNP** program is 77 credits and requires a minimum of 945 clinical hours. The **Dual Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery BS to DNP** program is 80 credits and requires a minimum of 1080 clinical hours. Students may be required to complete more than the minimum required hours to demonstrate competency as required for graduation and certification. These programs are meant to be completed in 4 years.

#### **Post Master's Certificate**

The **Nurse-Midwifery Post-Master's Certificate** program is 32 credits and requires a minimum of 945 clinical hours. Students may be required to complete more than the minimum required hours to demonstrate competency as required for graduation and certification. This program is meant to be completed in 2 years.

The plans of study for each program are outlined here:

- [Nurse-Midwifery BS to MSN](#)
- [Nurse-Midwifery BS to DNP](#)
- [Dual Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery BS to DNP](#)
- [Nurse-Midwifery Post-Master's Certificate](#)

### ACNM Core Competencies

The nurse-midwifery curriculum is based on the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) [Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice](#). The Core Competences represent the essential knowledge and skills of certified nurse-midwives in the United States. They form the requirements for all midwifery education program accredited by ACME. The nurse-midwifery curriculum at Rutgers School of Nursing is regularly updated to ensure students meet these Competencies.

### Academic Advisement

The Program Director serves as faculty advisor for Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery students and provides academic and professional guidance throughout the course of study. The Program Director assists students to identify strengths and areas in need of improvement and establish short- and long-term academic and professional goals. To ensure students meet all program and degree requirements within the required timeframe, they must meet with the Program Director prior to course registration each semester. This

process ensures students understand and meet pre- and co-requisite and degree requirements. It is the student's responsibility to register for courses based upon the agreed plan of study. Any questions regarding the course of study should be discussed with the Program Director.

**Students who deviate from the Plan of Study without consulting the Program Director**

**jeopardize successful program completion and their graduation date.** In the case of unforeseen circumstances, plan of study modifications may be considered in collaboration with the Program Director.

### Evaluation, Grading, and Academic Progression

Grades represent student performance quality measured against faculty, program, and national standards surrounding knowledge, skill, and understanding. The program goal is for faculty to partner with students to ensure graduates are competent entry-level practitioners. Faculty and preceptors are committed to facilitating and optimizing student learning and skill acquisition. Nurse-Midwifery and Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery courses may have weighted grading (such as minimum cumulative course examination grades) that influence the calculation of course grades and academic progression. Students should carefully review course syllabi regarding grade calculations.

#### Objective Structured Clinical Exams (OSCEs)

The Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women's Health/ Nurse-Midwifery programs incorporate Objective Structured Clinical Exams (OSCEs) at regular intervals throughout the program. Requirements for successful OSCE completion are outlined in course syllabi.

#### Nurse-Midwifery Comprehensive Examination

All Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery students are required to take and pass (with a grade of  $\geq 79.5\%$ ) a comprehensive nurse-midwifery examination. This standardized examination covers all major topics in the Nurse-Midwifery programs including health assessment, pharmacology, pathophysiology, and primary, gynecological, antepartum, intrapartum, postpartum, and newborn care. Students who do not achieve a score of  $\geq 79.5\%$  on the first attempt will be required to meet with course faculty to develop a remediation plan. Students will be offered one additional opportunity to take a second (different) comprehensive examination and earn a passing score ( $\geq 79.5\%$ ). In the unfortunate circumstance that a student does not earn a passing score on the second attempt, the student will be required to meet with the course faculty and/or Program Director to discuss implications for academic progression and alignment with their professional goals.

### Course and Program Evaluation

Student feedback is highly valued and shapes the future of nurse-midwifery education at Rutgers School of Nursing. Ongoing course, clinical site, preceptor, and program evaluation by faculty and students is essential for program evaluation and improvement. This program integrates various evaluation tools to track student, faculty, and program success and outcomes. At the end of each semester, students are provided an opportunity to formally evaluate all courses and instructors via the Student Instructional Rating Survey (SIRS), a university-wide student survey. Preceptors and clinical sites are evaluated by faculty and students via the Exxat online clinical education placement and tracking system and evaluation

forms. In addition, upon program completion, graduating students are asked to participate in a program exit interview.

## Part 3: Learning in the Clinical Setting

### Program Requirements for Certification and Observation

Prior to registering for the first nurse-midwifery practicum course, all students must demonstrate current certification of both (1) Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP) by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and (2) intermediate-level fetal heart rate monitoring by the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN). Students assume responsibility for scheduling and completing these prerequisite requirements and paying any associated fees. Certifications should be emailed to [julie.blumenfeld@rutgers.edu](mailto:julie.blumenfeld@rutgers.edu)

Students are also required to submit attestation of either (a) prior experience as a registered nurse in hospital-based intrapartum care or (b) a minimum of 40 hours observation of hospital-based intrapartum care. This attestation can be a signed letter or printed email from a health care provider (i.e., CNM, CM, PA, APN, MD, DO, or nursing supervisor). Students completing the observation are expected to find their own sites and are required to complete a Clinical Placement Form for this observation-only experience. Attestation should be emailed to [julie.blumenfeld@rutgers.edu](mailto:julie.blumenfeld@rutgers.edu)

### School of Nursing Clinical Clearance

Prior to starting the practicum courses, students must meet all School of Nursing [clinical clearance requirements](#), including, but not limited to, all School of Nursing immunization and health requirements. Additionally, students must upload a current New Jersey RN license and CPR certification to Exxat.

### Clinical Site/Preceptor Selection and Placement

Preceptors are experienced midwives, advanced practice nurses, physician assistants, and physicians who volunteer their time to mentor, train, and educate midwifery students. Healthcare organizations collaborate with our University because they are committed to the growth of our profession. When students interact with staff and providers at clinical sites, they are ambassadors of the University and Rutgers Midwifery Program.

With the assistance of preceptors and site coordinators, the Program Director and faculty identify clinical sites. Clinical sites, preceptor, and placement decisions are based on several factors. Students may be asked for input regarding preferred geographic areas or additional considerations to facilitate site assignments. The goal is to provide the best match between students, preceptors, and clinical sites while ensuring students are placed with a site and preceptor that will ensure completion of course and program requirements and achievement of clinical competency. The faculty assess and give final approval of all clinical placements. To ensure students learn the specific role and scope of midwifery practice, ideally all preceptors will be midwives. If placement with a midwife is not possible, students may be matched with a

qualified non-midwife provider. Preceptors who are not certified nurse-midwives or certified midwives may not exceed 50% of student's total program clinical hours.

**Students should not contact any clinical site without approval of the Program Director.** Once the Program Director and student have agreed on a site the student must:

- Contact the preceptor to formally introduce themselves and thank them for the learning opportunity.
- Complete the 'My Request' form in Exxat. Note, prior to completing the request in Exxat students must be registered for the course associated with the clinical rotation. In order to complete this request form students will need both site and preceptor details including:
  - Site name and address
  - Preceptor name, phone number and email address
  - Preceptor license and certification #s
  - Preceptor CV
- Complete any additional forms, trainings and meetings as required by the clinical site. Some collaborators will want to meet the student prior to the start of the semester to get to know them and have site specific required onboarding. These meetings and requirements may be in-person or virtual. In-person meetings may require an additional visit to the clinical site prior to the first clinical day.

After all required documentation is submitted in Exxat and the student has met all clinical clearance requirements, an email will be sent to the preceptor from [notifications@exxat.com](mailto:notifications@exxat.com) with a link to a preceptor agreement. Once this preceptor agreement is signed, the clinical placement will be published in Exxat, and the student will receive a confirmation email; the status reflected in Exxat and the email notification will reflect "Agreement Submitted". The preceptor attestation articulates the last day a student may attend clinical at the site. If additional days are required, in agreement with the course faculty and preceptor/site, a request reflecting the new dates must be completed. Students may not attend clinical until the extended clinical agreement is published in Exxat and the semester has officially begun.

## Clinical Attendance and Hours

### Creating a Clinical Schedule

After receiving clinical clearance confirmation, students must contact their primary clinical preceptor to develop a schedule for the semester. Ideally, clinical days should be evenly spaced throughout the semester, leaving a few additional days at the end of the term in case they are needed to meet required clinical hours or competency goals as outlined in the course syllabus. The clinical schedule must be shared with the practicum course faculty at the start of the semester. Any changes to the clinical schedule must be approved by the primary preceptor and communicated to the course faculty. Clinical schedules are based on the schedule of the site and preceptor. Students are expected to adjust their work and personal schedules accordingly.

### Excused and Unanticipated Absences

Students should review the [Classroom and Clinical Attendance Policy](#) which outlines the official recognized grounds for absences such as illness, religious holidays, and severe inclement

weather. Work-related schedule conflicts, orientations, training sessions, etc. are not acceptable reasons to miss scheduled clinical and are deemed unexcused clinical absences. If a student anticipates not being able to attend clinical, they must personally notify their preceptor as soon as possible using the method of communication determined between the preceptor/site and student at the start of the semester. Students must make up any missed clinical hours. These hours should be scheduled in collaboration with the preceptor and are based on site/preceptor availability. Students who repeatedly miss scheduled clinical hours are required to meet with the Program Director and may be dismissed from the clinical site.

### Clinical Preparedness

Punctuality is essential in the clinical environment. Students are expected to attend every session of clinical practicum and arrive 15-30 minutes prior to the start of the clinical day to adequately prepare. Students should anticipate bringing the following items with them for their first clinical day:

- Rutgers School of Nursing name badge and/or lab coat
- Clinical site identification badge
- Stethoscope

Students are expected to share specific learning needs, and clinical experience objectives with the site preceptor(s) at the start of the experience and weekly thereafter. Additionally, students should communicate specific goals for each clinical day/experience with their preceptor. Identifying and discussing ways in which the overall objectives will be met should be ongoing during the semester-long experience.

### Clinical Evaluation

Midwifery education is competency-based. Competency is determined by faculty and preceptor evaluation of students' integration of didactic and clinical course content and ability to meet course and program objectives. The student, preceptor, and faculty participate in evaluating the student's clinical performance. Students are evaluated on an ongoing basis, with formal written evaluations at the midpoint and end of the semester. Students are responsible for facilitating mid- and end-of-semester virtual or in-person meetings with their primary preceptor and course faculty and submitting evaluation documentation on time.

Students must receive a satisfactory performance rating by the final clinical evaluation of the semester to earn a passing practicum grade. If at any point during the semester the preceptor or course faculty notes a student is not making satisfactory progress, a meeting will be scheduled to develop an individualized learning plan. Additional clinical hours or experiences may be required to ensure the student meets competency goals. The syllabus for each course provides the specific requirements for each clinical course and evaluation frequency.

### Minimum Number of Patient Clinical Encounters

As per accreditation guidelines, by the completion of the Midwifery Program Rutgers students must complete a minimum number of clinical experiences as outlined below to facilitate attaining competency in each area.

Type of Care Encounter	Minimum Number of Clinical Encounters
Gynecological, sexual, and reproductive health	80
Primary care	40
Antepartum care	100
Intrapartum care (excluding births)	60
Births	35
Postpartum care	50
Newborn care	30

## Clinical Safety

### OSHA Compliance

Students are required to adhere to OSHA requirements including utilization of personal protective equipment including gloves, gown, eye protection, and mask when indicated, regardless of whether the preceptor adheres to this practice.

### Patient Privacy

Patient privacy is governed by the US Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Information about patients or their circumstances must not be shared outside the clinical context or published anywhere, including social media sites. HIPAA training and ongoing compliance is mandatory for all Rutgers Health Sciences students.

### Student Clinical Practice and Advanced Midwifery Skills

The preceptor must be notified prior to any hands-on patient care. There are specific situations and skills that may require direct preceptor involvement or oversight. For example:

- Patients evaluated by students must also be evaluated by the preceptor, and the preceptor must acknowledge the patient status and approve the plan of care.
- Students are not permitted to provide orders.
- Artificial rupture of membranes or internal monitor placement must be observed by the preceptor.
- The preceptor must be present for all births. At the start of the intrapartum and integration semesters, students and preceptors must explicitly discuss the steps that would be taken should a precipitous birth occur without a preceptor present. In the unlikely circumstance a student attends a birth without the clinical preceptor, the course faculty must be notified.

The following skills are beyond the basic midwifery competencies taught in this program and may not be performed by a student, even under the guidance of a preceptor:

- Vacuum extraction
- Surgical first assist (If the preceptor is the surgical first assistant, a student may scrub into a cesarean birth and observe.)
- Circumcision
- Colposcopy

- Repair of third- or fourth-degree perineal lacerations

#### Fatigue and Sleep Deprivation

Faculty and preceptors are dedicated to ensuring students have worthwhile and safe clinical experiences. Sleep deprivation can interfere with optimal learning and safe practice. Part of ensuring students are learning in a safe manner is adherence to the [American College of Nurse-Midwives Position Statement, Fatigue, Sleep Deprivation and Safety](#). After 16 hours of active time on-duty, midwifery students must have a period of at least 4 hours of uninterrupted rest. Students are strongly encouraged to obtain 7 hours of uninterrupted sleep on a regular basis. Students who feel tired or are sleep-deprived should sleep prior to operating a motor vehicle.

#### Clinical Errors and Adverse Clinical Outcomes

##### Student Malpractice Insurance Coverage

Students are covered by the University student malpractice insurance policy when they have a fully executed clinical preceptor agreement in place, are completing practicum at the approved clinical site with the stipulated preceptor(s) during the specified dates, and are providing professional and safe, quality care as outlined in the program and course objectives. Students may elect to privately purchase additional malpractice insurance in addition to the University policy.

##### Reporting Clinical Errors or Adverse Outcomes

A student who recognizes they have made a clinical error must report the situation to their preceptor and faculty as soon as the error is noticed so that necessary measures can be taken to ensure subsequent patient safety. In the unfortunate event a student witnesses or experiences an adverse outcome in the clinical setting, the student must notify the clinical course faculty as soon as possible. Course faculty will help the student process the experience and refer them to additional resources as indicated. If the student is unsure whether an event qualifies as an adverse outcome, the student should assume it is and notify course faculty.

#### Clinical Documentation and Tracking

##### Documentation

Patient care and documentation within the healthcare record must be completed in a timely manner and prior to the preceptor and student leaving the clinical site. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the preceptor reviews and co-signs all student documentation in the official patient record. When documenting in the patient record, students must indicate the following credentials after their signature "RN, Nurse-Midwife Student." If students are not permitted to chart in the patient record, the student should complete documentation with no patient identifiers outside of the medical record for the preceptor to review and provide feedback.

##### Exxat

All students enrolled in clinical programs are required to purchase Exxat (EXXAT Prism), a cloud-based education management platform. Students receive orientation to Exxat and its clinical placement and tracking system before the first clinical course. All patient logs and timesheets

surrounding direct and indirect patient care hours, evaluations, and program-related forms are completed and stored in Exxat.

#### Experience Log and Timesheets

As you progress through the program, you are required to track your number of clinical experiences and hours at your clinical site. This is needed for professional certification eligibility and program accreditation. It also serves as a mechanism to assess the quantity of experiences generally available at each clinical site.

#### Student and Clinical Site and Preceptor Evaluations

Students are required to complete midterm and final practicum evaluations with their preceptor. Prior to asking for a preceptor's evaluation students are required to self-evaluate. Evaluations should include a discussion of students' strengths and areas in need of improvement. Additionally, at the end of each clinical placement, students are required to complete a preceptor and site evaluation form. This student feedback is confidential and essential to program development.

#### Acknowledgment of Clinical Sites and Preceptors

At the close of the semester, students should send a formal thank-you note to the clinical preceptor(s) and site administrator expressing appreciation for the time and effort extended on their behalf.

## Part 4: Professional Issues

#### Professional Issues Days

To learn about and discuss issues unique to midwifery and prepare for smooth transition to midwifery practice, student nurse-midwives must attend two regional events organized by the Northeast Midwifery Education Consortium (NEMEC). These events occur on two occasions throughout the midwifery clinical courses and are outside of regularly scheduled class time. These events may take place at Rutgers or another university within the consortium or virtually. Any associated costs/fees to attend these events are the responsibility of the student.

#### Participation in Professional Activities and Organizations

Rutgers School of Nursing prepares Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery graduates to make positive contributions to the profession(s). To this end, all students are encouraged to participate in professional organizations and activities including becoming a member of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM). Attendance at national, regional, and local affiliate meetings provides insight into current professional issues and an opportunity to meet and network with midwives, including potential mentors and employers. Students are also encouraged to attend the ACNM Annual Meeting. ACNM offers scholarship and volunteer opportunities to students to cover the cost of registration, travel, lodging, and meals associated with this conference. Please visit the ACNM website to learn more about the Annual Meeting and student opportunities for involvement in ACNM.



## Student Leadership Volunteer Opportunities

Students have the opportunity to gain valuable volunteer experience and represent Rutgers midwifery by serving as a liaison in numerous valuable student leadership positions within Rutgers School of Nursing, the midwifery program and the American College of Nurse Midwives:


- 1. Student Committee Member: Rutgers School of Nursing, Committee on Advanced Nursing Practice Programs.** The Committee on Advanced Nursing Practice Programs student member represents the interest of students to this committee which is responsible for assisting the faculty with implementing policies and achieving the missions of the School regarding Advanced Nursing Practice programs, curricula, student issues not otherwise addressed by University policy, admission, retention and graduation. The responsibilities of this committee are to:
  - Oversee systematic program reviews for all Advanced Nursing Practice programs in keeping with the Evaluation Plan of the School
  - Ensure that Advanced Nursing Practice curricular components are consistent with the School's mission, philosophy, and curricula terminal objectives
  - Review and approve course content and resources for program currency and integrity, assuring compliance with professional nursing standards and guidelines
  - Recommend curriculum revisions to the Committee on Curriculum and Evaluation for presentation to the faculty for a vote
  - Monitor, formulate and recommend policies governing Advanced Nursing Practice programs
  - Collaborate with the Committee on Curriculum and Evaluation in the development, maintenance and implementation of the Evaluation Plan for the School
  - Determine, recommend, and review the criteria by which applicants are screened, interviewed and admitted
  - Review and approve applications for admission to the Advanced Nursing Practice programs in consultation with the specialty directors
  - Prepare a slate of candidates for graduate degrees for faculty approval
  - Set bench-marking goals for student outcomes and monitor achievement of the goals
- 2. Student Committee Member: Rutgers School of Nursing, Committee on Curriculum and Evaluation.** The Committee on Curriculum and Evaluation student member represents the interest of students to this committee. The responsibilities of this committee are to:
  - Review and coordinate recommendations by Divisional Committees on Curriculum, providing a schoolwide perspective
  - Prepare a summary of all proposed curriculum changes and place this document on the agenda of the faculty meeting as a consent calendar for faculty approval
  - Assure that all School curricula are in compliance with applicable accreditation standards

- Develop and maintain a dynamic evaluation plan (“Evaluation Plan”) for the School that is consistent with the University and School’s missions and goals, and addresses student, faculty, curriculum, administration, resources and accreditation requirements
  - Conduct or supervise surveys or studies, analyze data and make recommendations, or provide reports as needed or requested by the Dean or components of the School
  - Facilitate the utilization of evaluation data in decision-making within the School
- 3. Student Committee Member: Rutgers School of Nursing, Committee on Research and Scholarship:** The School of Nursing Committee on Research and Scholarship student member represents the interest of students to this committee responsible for responding to changes that may impact research or scholarship in the School, as well as aiding in the development of policies that promote and facilitate a productive research and scholarship environment that encompasses research and scholarship infrastructure, process and outcomes. The responsibilities of this committee are to:
- Facilitate and make recommendations concerning the research and scholarship infrastructure in the School
  - Participate as appropriate as a panel member for the review of grant applications awarded internally by the School and make recommendations concerning such applications to the Dean or designee
  - Participate in the development and maintenance of the Evaluation Plan of the School in matters pertaining to research/scholarship and resource allocation
  - Encourage and facilitate the mentorship of research/scholarship of faculty and students within the School and with interdisciplinary partners
  - When requested by the Dean, review, clarify and recommend School-level participation or non-participation in intramural and extramural research proposals
  - Plan educational research and scholarship forums and programs for faculty development
- 4. Representative: Rutgers School of Nursing, Graduate Student Council (GSC).** The GSC Representative represents the interests of all graduate students in the Division of Advanced Nursing Practice. The responsibilities of the representative to this committee are to:
- Represent the Nurse-Midwifery program on the Council
  - Collaborate with the representatives from each of the 14 graduate nursing specialties and programs
  - Function as a liaison between the graduate student body and Rutgers School of Nursing administration
- 5. Student-Faculty Liaison, Rutgers School of Nursing, - Nurse-Midwifery Program:** The Rutgers Nurse-Midwifery Student-Faculty Liaison serves as a student representative within the Rutgers nurse-midwifery community. Responsibilities of the liaison are to:

- Convey student needs, interests, and concerns to the Program Director
  - Coordinate student nominations for ACNM faculty and preceptor awards
  - Facilitate and organize a social event each semester for members of the midwifery program faculty and student body
6. **Rutgers Liaison, American College of Nurse-Midwives Student and New Midwives Committee (SANMC):** The ACNM SANMC Liaison serves as the point of connection between Rutgers students and the governing structures of ACNM. Responsibilities of the liaison are to:
- Disseminate information from ACNM to Rutgers students
  - Answer Rutgers student inquiries related to ACNM resources and events
  - Inform Rutgers students about NJ Affiliate opportunities
  - Serve as a point of contact between students and the NJ Affiliate
  - Collect information on student priorities and concerns and communicate these issues to ACNM in the form of the annual Student Report
  - Onboard the next student who will take over the ACNM SANMC liaison role to Rutgers-specific processes and resources

## Part 5: Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery Program Faculty

While students will learn from various faculty with varied experience and expertise across non-specialty courses, the following faculty members currently teach within the Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery program.

	<p>Julie Blumenfeld, DNP, CNM, FACNM, FAAN (she/her)  Program Director, Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women's  Health/Nurse-Midwifery  Clinical Associate Professor</p>
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Dr. Blumenfeld is a New Jersey native and lifelong resident who grew up in Bergen County and has practiced midwifery for over two decades in Trenton. Her clinical practice is primarily focused on serving the Spanish-speaking population in Trenton. In addition to her clinical responsibilities, Dr. Blumenfeld is dedicated to serving the community in Trenton. Since 2001, she has worked in a variety of roles in the city serving at-risk infants, children, youth, and families.

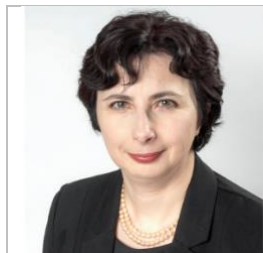
Dr. Blumenfeld is a passionate advocate for creating lasting change through health policy. She is the Chair of the New Jersey Maternal Mortality Review Committee, serves on the New Jersey Maternal Care Quality Collaborative, the state's maternal health task force, and the state's Board of Medical Examiners Midwifery Liaison Committee. Dr. Blumenfeld is active in the American College of Nurse-Midwives and currently serves as Chair of the College's State

Government Affairs Committee and President of its New Jersey Affiliate. In recognition of her contributions to midwifery policy, she received the American College of Nurse-Midwives Health Policy Award in 2023. Dr. Blumenfeld is a fellow of the American College of Nurse-Midwives and the American Academy of Nursing. Since 2023 Dr. Blumenfeld has worked with the New Jersey Department of Health to develop the New Jersey Midwifery Education Project, a multi-million-dollar grant to Rutgers Nurse-Midwifery program, to grow and diversify midwifery in New Jersey.



Robyn Schafer, PhD, CNM, FACNM (she/her)  
Assistant Professor

Robyn Schafer, PhD, CNM, FACNM, is a nurse-midwife, educator, and scholar dedicated to advancing person-centered, evidence-based reproductive and perinatal care. She is an Associate Professor at Rutgers School of Nursing, where she has taught in the Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women's Health/Nurse-Midwifery programs since 2019. Dr. Schafer holds a Master of Education from Boston University, a Master of Science in Nursing from Yale University, and a PhD in Nursing Science from Vanderbilt University. She is a Fellow of the American College of Nurse-Midwives and maintains advanced certifications as a Certified Nurse Educator and Internationally Board-Certified Lactation Consultant. As a midwifery educator, Dr. Schafer draws on adult learning theory and student-centered strategies to prepare compassionate, competent clinicians. Her research uses qualitative and mixed-methods approaches to examine clinical decision-making, risk perception, and informed choice in reproductive and perinatal health. She lives in northern New Jersey with her family.




Irina Benenson, DNP, APN, FNP-C (she/her)  
Associate Professor

Dr. Irina Benenson serves as an associate professor in the Division of Advanced Nursing Practice, Rutgers University School of Nursing. She teaches clinical courses in the BS to DNP program and the Nurse-Midwifery and Dual Women's Health Nurse-Midwifery programs that includes advanced pathophysiology and primary care. A nationally certified family nurse practitioner, Dr. Benenson has worked for many years providing direct care for patients in inpatient and outpatient care settings. She maintains her clinical practice as a primary care

nurse practitioner at the New Jersey Family Practice Center affiliated with New Jersey Medical School, where she precepts nurse practitioner students from a variety of programs.

Dr. Benenson's scholarship focuses on improving healthcare outcomes of individuals with chronic medical conditions, especially hypertension. She is a lead author of more than 20 manuscripts and abstracts. She has presented at numerous international, national, and regional conferences. Her scholarly efforts have received international recognition and her research has been cited in several news outlets and more than thirty professional journals across the globe. Dr. Benenson is a recipient of 2018 New Jersey Health Foundation Excellence in Teaching Award and 2022 Outstanding Preceptor Award from the American College of Nurse-Midwives. Acknowledging her leadership to improve hypertension care, Dr. Benenson was elected as a New Jersey chapter leader for the *Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association*.

	Jennifer Short, DNP, CNM (she/her) Adjunct Faculty
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Dr. Jennifer Short, a North Carolina native who has called New Jersey home since 2003, is a certified nurse-midwife practicing in a large collaborative group and attending births at a community hospital in Central New Jersey. Dr. Short started her career in women's healthcare in Trenton as a labor nurse. During that time, she also trained as a doula and received her lactation counselor certification. Following her passion, she continued her education and training to become a CNM. Dr. Short's midwifery career began at a large academic hospital where she worked in the clinic and the hospital, caring for patients, and facilitating training and supervision of OB/GYN residents. In 2017, Jennifer joined her current practice in Mercer County to provide full-scope midwifery care in her community. Wanting to further her practice, she continued her education and earned her Doctorate in Nursing Practice, with a special focus on the safe reduction of cesarean sections. She also advanced to the Director of Midwifery in her practice. Her passions include physiologic birth, supporting the LGBTQI community, working with teenagers/first gynecological exams, and trauma-informed pelvic care.

Dr. Short joined the Rutgers Nurse-Midwifery program as adjunct faculty in 2022. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, she is also working with the New Jersey Midwifery Education Project to establish a state-of-the-art Midwifery Simulation Lab and to create meaningful on-campus clinical experiences for nurse-midwifery students at Rutgers School of Nursing.



Erin Fink, MSN, CNM, WHNP-BC, PMHNP-BC (she/her)  
Adjunct Faculty

**Erin-Ellen Dillon Fink CNM, PMHNP-BC** is a certified nurse-midwife and psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner who is passionate about providing trauma-informed, patient-centered, and holistic care across the reproductive lifespan. She works full-time at a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), where she offers both full-scope gynecologic care and integrated reproductive psychiatric services to a diverse and underserved patient population.

In 2024, she completed a prestigious fellowship in Reproductive Psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital, deepening her commitment to reducing stigma and expanding access to comprehensive mental health care throughout all stages of reproductive life. Her approach is grounded in a belief that mental, physical, and emotional well-being are deeply interconnected, and she is dedicated to creating care experiences that honor the whole person.

In addition to her work at the FQHC, she practices as a midwife catching babies at a hospital in Pennsylvania and is the founder of a private practice based in New Jersey that specializes in reproductive psychiatry and hormone replacement therapy. Her practice emphasizes compassionate, evidence-based care that meets patients where they are and evolves alongside their needs.

She holds additional certification in menopause care. Her clinical interests include trauma-informed pelvic care, hormonal transitions, perinatal mental health, and the intersection of reproductive justice and psychiatric care. She joined Rutgers as an adjunct faculty in 2024 and has enjoyed working with the future of the midwifery profession.