



Edge Hill University  
CAREERS CENTRE

# **Interview Questions for Midwifery Posts**

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Updated by Des Hope  
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## INTERVIEWS FOR MIDWIFERY POSTS: WHAT TO EXPECT

Most of this information was gained by talking to Midwifery Managers in the local area and asking them what sort of information they would seek from newly qualified midwives seeking their first post. Obviously interview questions will vary from place to place and as new initiatives emerge they will also be of importance in interviews, but hopefully this will give you a flavour of topics to brush up on.

### Prior to the interview

Where the opportunity is offered, you should try to make an informal pre-interview visit. You really can learn things to help you with your application and it also gives you chance to look at the unit or ward and help you to decide whether you would like to work there. It may also help you at interview when you are trying to transfer your experiences to answer the questions related to the job for which you have applied. It is likely that the Ward Manager will show you around on an informal visit so you ought to have the chance to ask questions.

Once you have received the application form and supporting information, you can start to look at how you can match yourself to the person specification and job details. For each post for which you apply you should get a job description and person specification at least plus perhaps extra information about the Trust itself. When thinking about matching yourself to the job requirements, you should also go back to look at the original advertisement to see what was stated there. Also look at the Trust's web site – this may provide information about current trends and priorities.

Before you start to complete the application form and supporting information, you need to think carefully about the job in question. (More information on how to do this is contained in '**How to apply for a Midwifery Post**'). When your application is looked at by the interviewing panel, they will be **creating interview questions around the Person Specification selection criteria.**

### The Interview

Preparation before the interview is essential – Interviewers may even ask what you have done to prepare for the interview. For example:

- Have you visited the ward or the unit.
- Are you familiar with the person specification and job description.
- Have you read anything about the area to which you are applying.
- Have you spoken to people who work in similar areas of expertise.
- What do you know about the Trust itself and its policies and achievements?

The personnel department ought to be able to provide further information on the Trust or organisation. Keep your eyes open also for articles in professional journals and newspapers for topical issues. Unprepared candidates can be irritating to the interviewer and indicate a possible lack of commitment. You should certainly have

taken a copy of your CV and application form so that you can familiarise yourself with it before the interview together with evidence of any achievements. Do not plan your answers word for word as this is likely to make your answers seem stilted and would probably mean that you would be trying hard to make your learned answers fit the questions regardless of what the questions are and would make them think that you cannot think on your feet and be flexible. Just think about some of the themes and areas clarify your thoughts and opinions but do not overplan.

It is important to look smart. This does not mean you have to go out and buy a whole new outfit. It is more important to wear something in which you feel comfortable and not self-conscious.

There are not likely to be any trick questions – most reasonable people will realise that you will be nervous and they are not trying to catch you out. They would prefer you to be as much your normal self as you can. The interview panel will probably consist of two or three people and can be as short as twenty minutes or as long as an hour. Everyone will be assessed against the same criteria. Interviewers do not really want to see you struggling – they will try to help you out with extra prompt questions. Also, if you are unsure of what the interviewer is getting at, don't be afraid to ask them to rephrase or clarify or, if you feel you need a moment or two to collect your thoughts, ask for a couple of seconds thinking time. This is better than just saying the first thing that comes into your head.

Above all, look carefully again at the job description and person specification before your interview. Often the questions will be built around both of these eg if one of the duties is to 'implement innovative practice' then you might in a question about this, talk about your project for instance.

Take along your portfolio to the interview and be able to comment on it if asked – whether this be about reflecting back on areas studied in your training, professional development, personal objectives you have set yourself, particular interests from training, your achievements, learning outcomes, where to go from here, your philosophy of care.

It is good to keep up with current issues in the news and recent developments. A good way of doing this is to look at Midwives Chronicle and MIDIRS.

**BE ENTHUSIASTIC** – that is so important. You may be feeling nervous but try to smile and make eye contact with the interviewers.

## **Questions You May Be Asked At Interview & Issues/Trends to Be Aware Of**

### **General**

- Tell us about yourself
- Why did you decide to become a midwife?
- What do you think makes you a good midwife?
- What do you consider to be your strengths as a midwife?
- Do you have any weaknesses?
- What would you say are your strengths as a team member?
- How do you recognise and cope with stress?
- Tell us about your midwifery training – what did you enjoy the most?
- What would you say was your major achievement during your training?
- Can you give us some examples of good practice that you saw whilst on placement?
- What did you find the most difficult?
- Why have you applied for this post?
- Why have you applied for this trust/hospital etc
- What skills can you bring to this post?
- What do you see as the main challenges?
- What evidence have you got to demonstrate that you have the criteria that we are looking for in this post?
- How do you monitor and evaluate your professional competence?
- Think of a time when you had to handle a difficult situation or problem, describe it to us, how you dealt with it and what the outcome was.
- What are your future career plans?
- What would you like to ask us?

### **Specific Questions for Midwifery**

- If you have a problem with a patient who do you go to?
- What interesting articles/research have been most influential to your practice?
- What are your areas of special interest?
- Questions on team midwifery and the multi disciplinary approach to care
- “What if” e.g. a baby’s heart is dangerously high, the doctor doesn’t think it is a problem – what do you do?
- What do you understand by accountability?
- What will be your priorities in the first six months?
- How would you monitor standards of care?
- How would you deal with controlled drug dependency?
- What would you do if a woman was in the second stage of labour and contractions stopped?
- What would you do if a woman at term was admitted with a slight vaginal blood loss and was discharged by a junior doctor?
- If a woman had a post partum haemorrhage immediately following the delivery of a baby, what would you do?

## Issues & Trends

- Need awareness of recent changes in the profession e.g. a woman centred approach offering greater choice and continuity of support
- Evidence that your training has equipped you with the skills and knowledge to perform your specialist role
- A full understanding of physical, psychological and emotional processes of pregnancy and childbirth
- Ability to lead, manage and co-ordinate care services (post grade 6)
- Good knowledge of local issues and drivers – hospital specific
- How practice has been informed by reflection and portfolio development
- Transition from student to professional midwife
- Issues of supervising others
  
- How would you like to see the National Service Framework being implemented in this area/unit?
- What do you see as the key drivers in this area? (low risk birthing units, vulnerable groups, increasing cultural issues relating to asylum seekers and refugees, drugs/alcohol, identified main public health issues e.g. post natal depression, smoking cessation, domestic violence, teenage pregnancy and breast feeding).
- What are your views on Changing Childbirth?
- What do you think you need from a preceptorship and how might you use it to consolidate your training? (These might include support, identified mentor, on going reflective practice, in house training, further supervised clinical practice etc)
- What do you understand by supervision?
- What do you see as the importance of supervision in this role?
- When would you feel a need to contact a supervisor?
- Many units are involved in various initiatives e.g. the Baby Friendly Initiative to increase rates of breastfeeding, so you might be asked what you know or your views on local initiatives where you are applying.
- Think of an incident that was unsettling. What did you learn from it that you have incorporated into your portfolio learning and into improving your general practice?
- Should midwives become more involved with issues of for example domestic violence?
- Given that this hospital does not have the budget to send you on external training courses how do you feel you will attend to the needs of your own continuing professional development? (This relates to ongoing objectives, portfolio management, in service training etc)
- You are working with a senior midwife whose practice raises some issues with you. What would you do?
- It is your first time on a new ward – how would you start to build a good team rapport with your new colleagues?
- How do you feel midwives will fit into Primary Care groups?

- How do you think midwives can be influenced by clinical governance?
- How do you think midwifery can contribute to health improvement programmes?
- What do you think the role of a midwife will look like in ten years time? (E.g. more community focus, public health issues etc?)

### **Questions from you**

There is always an opportunity given at the end of an interview to ask questions yourself. It is not compulsory that you do so, but it is an opportunity to find out a bit more. I would use this chance to find out things you genuinely want to know rather than just to ask questions for the sake of it. It is a time to be positive – you could ask about opportunities for personal and professional development, preceptorship, any possibilities of internal rotation if applicable, induction programmes, clinical supervision etc. If anything has not been clarified during the interview, you could also take the chance to sort this out here. Make sure, however, that you are not asking things that have obviously already been answered in the course of the day or in the information sent out to you. It sometimes helps to have written down the questions you may want to ask to jog your memory at the time.

### **After the interview**

Whatever happens at the interview, do not agonise over what you either did or did not say. Each interview is a learning experience. One thing it might be useful to do, however, is to note down some of the questions you were asked for future reference and if there was anything that particularly confused you because you just had not thought about it prior to interview – then give it some thought now and develop your ideas should the area come up again in subsequent interviews.

If you are not successful and are not offered the post, it can be for a wide variety of reasons. Try to get some post interview feedback from the panel who can give constructive feedback if there are any weak areas and point out also what you have done well. Ask the person who telephones to let you know the results of the interview if they can give you some feedback there and then or whether they could ring you back with some. Or, if you are notified by post, there will be a contact name on the letter with whom you could speak.



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