



School of Health Professions Institute of Midwifery Bachelor degree programme



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Midwifery is a demanding and multi-faceted profession. In addition to specialist expertise, it also requires strong personal qualities. Midwives must be able to make decisions and act effectively in rapidly changing and complex situations. Empathising with expectant mothers and their families and providing them with help and support in challenging and life-changing circumstances are equally important aspects of what it means to be a midwife.

The academic training you will receive at the ZHAW, and the internationally recognised qualification you will earn on successfully completing your degree course, are an ideal preparation for the demanding profession of midwifery and the significant amount of individual responsibility midwives assume. A course of study at the ZHAW provides the cornerstone for a career in midwifery, be it in a healthcare institution, in a non-hospital context or an educational role.

We offer a course of study which is founded on scientific principles and is practical in its orientation. Our teaching is based on considered reflection on midwifery practice and recent scientific insights.

The profession in outline

A multi-faceted profession

Midwives are specialised maternity professionals. They support expectant mothers throughout their pregnancy, at birth and during the initial post-natal period. This is a profession involving a great variety of responsibilities, and it is correspondingly demanding.

During pregnancy, midwives carry out a number of tests and examinations as well as providing advice to the expectant mother. Midwives offer counselling on family planning, prenatal diagnostics and sexual health. They also provide ante-natal courses designed to prepare expectant mothers, couples and their families and friends for parenthood.

Midwives supervise childbirth, either at home or in a clinic. Depending on the course of the pregnancy and the birth itself, they will either be working independently or in close conjunction with medical practitioners. Midwives' duties include the early recognition of psychological or physical disorders induced by pregnancy and maternity. Where the course of pregnancy or birth deviates from the norm, the midwife will also monitor the progress of mother and child, either at home or in hospital, with the support of other medical specialists.

During the initial post-natal period, the midwife will advise the new family and support the couple in their new role as parents. Midwives also monitor the mother's recovery processes and the health of the new-born baby, as well as helping the nursing mother establish a breast-feeding relationship with her child.

The midwife plays a vital role in critical situations, including miscarriage or still-birth, and will be there to support the mother, the couple and their families and friends, helping them to overcome what has happened.

What makes midwives special

- Midwives are the medical specialists covering the entire life-phase leading to motherhood.
- Midwives base the decisions they make in their work on their scientifically based knowledge, their experience, critical thought, considered reflection and intuition.
- Midwifery focuses on dealing with physical, psychological and social processes.
- Midwives promote the health of mother and child alike, as well as helping the mother acquire the skills she needs and maintain her autonomy.
- The practice of midwifery makes a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the healthcare system.

Careers in midwifery

Typical fields of work

The multi-faceted training they have received means that ZHAW midwifery graduates are well qualified for direct practical work in hospitals, clinics, birth centres, private households, midwifery practices, breast-feeding advice centres, medical advice centres and medical teaching institutions.

Basis for further career progression

Once you have successfully completed your bachelor degree, a wide range of further training is available. You may also wish to prepare for enrolment in a master's degree programme in Midwifery (not yet offered at the ZHAW). Graduates who have accumulated several years of practical professional experience and have taken additional discipline-specific and teacher's training courses are also qualified to teach the theory and practice of Midwifery. Leadership and management roles are also a possibility, as is Midwifery research and work in the field of quality development.



Curriculum

Course structure


The full-time course of study, including additional module A, lasts four years. The syllabus is modular in structure. Periods of theoretical study at the ZHAW are interspersed with practical training assignments in various areas of midwifery. Teaching takes the form of lectures, study in small groups, practical exercises, e-learning assignments and clinical midwifery assignments lasting several weeks each.

Students' academic and practical achievements are recognised by the award of ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits. This system enables your degree and your grades to be assessed and compared within a Europe-wide accreditation system. The ZHAW devotes considerable effort to ensuring that its degree programmes are international in their orientation.

Syllabus objectives

ZHAW midwifery graduates have broad practical, theoretical and scientific knowledge in matters relating to family planning, pregnancy, childbirth, neonatal care and breast-feeding. They are able to:

- make informed judgments, to make decisions and to act with professional competence in simple and complex childbirth situations, both independently and in conjunction with other professional medical staff;
- apply appropriate measures and methods in a targeted manner, as well as contributing to their ongoing scientific development;
- publicly represent midwifery and its importance and contribute towards the highest standards of practice in midwifery;
- provide care and advice to mothers, couples and their families from a variety of cultural backgrounds in psychologically challenging situations;
- communicate effectively with their clients, with other members of their team and with practitioners from other professions and medical disciplines.



“The increased emphasis which universities of applied sciences place on theory must not result in practical training being ignored. Our clinical assignments ensure that students also get ideal practical preparation for their future work as registered midwives. We place great emphasis on providing students with the support they need in order to link their theoretical knowledge effectively with their practical experience. After all, we will continue to need registered midwives who have received sound training in the future, too.”

Dagmar von Rohr
Senior Midwife, Linth Hospital, Uznach

Prior education

Swiss specialist baccalaureate in healthcare (in German, "Fachmaturität Gesundheit")

Holders of a Swiss Federal certificate of vocational training and education in healthcare and a Swiss professional baccalaureate in healthcare and social work (in German, "Fachangestellte Gesundheit (FAGE) mit Berufsmaturität Gesundheit und Soziales")

Swiss general baccalaureate (in German, "gymnasiale Maturität") Additional module A** (= 2 months of practical work experience)

Other (non-healthcare) Swiss specialist baccalaureate (in German, "Fachmaturität")

Swiss professional baccalaureate (in German, "Berufsmaturität")

Study syllabus*

4 years = 180 ECTS (including additional modules A and C)

1st year is an assessment year, followed by main course of study in 2nd and 3rd years, followed by module C in 4th year

50% theoretical training (classroom lessons and independent study)
50% clinical assignments

Modules

Midwifery training

Women's health; Norms and norm deviations during pregnancy, during childbirth and in the post-natal period

Midwifery skills

Practical exercises

The role of the midwife

Defining the midwife/mother relationship; promoting good health; Advice and counselling; Ethics; Sociology; Midwifery law; Midwifery research; Evidence-based midwifery; Models and concepts in midwifery work; Quality management; The public face of midwifery; Midwifery policy

Medical foundations

Anatomy; Physiology; Pathology; Patho-physiology; Pharmacology; Microbiology; Hygiene; Genetics; Gynaecology; Neonatology; Paediatrics

Discipline-overarching modules

Foundations of inter-disciplinary practice; Communication / interaction; English; Working scientifically; The healthcare context; Preventive healthcare

Practical modules

8 clinical assignments of 10 weeks each

Qualification on graduation

"Bachelor of Science ZFH in Midwifery" degree, including registered midwife qualification (in German, "Hebammen FH")

"In future, obstetrics at the University Hospital will be confronted with an increasing number of highly complex situations which require special solutions. Greater demands will also be placed on midwives and these will require them to have more in-depth specialist knowledge. The training which universities of applied sciences offer enables the research necessary in this area to be carried out, thus extending knowledge and experience."

Barbara Brühwiler
Director of Nursing & Human Resources Management,
Zurich University Hospital



* Details of admission requirements can be found on page 9 (in German only).

** Further information on the additional modules can be found on www.gesundheit.zhaw.ch (in German only).

Admission requirements

Formal admission requirement

The ZHAW bachelor degree programme in Midwifery is intended for students interested in pursuing a soundly based practical and scientific course of study. The following secondary school certificates qualify students for admission:

- Swiss professional baccalaureate (in German, “Berufsmaturität”)
- Swiss specialist baccalaureate (in German, “Fachmaturität”)
- Swiss general baccalaureate (in German, “gymnasiale Maturität”)

Applicants holding a Swiss cantonal specialist secondary school diploma (in German, “Fachmittelschulabschluss”) are eligible for admission provided that no specialist baccalaureate (in German “Fachmaturität”) was offered in the canton concerned in the year their qualification was awarded.

Prior to commencing their studies, students are required to complete a two-month clinical assignment in a healthcare institution. This assignment is intended to provide students with an insight into the healthcare system. All prospective students for this course are required to complete this assignment before commencing their studies. The only students exempted from this requirement are holders of a Swiss Federal certificate of vocational training and education in healthcare who also hold a Swiss professional baccalaureate (in German, “Fachangestellte Gesundheit (FAGE) mit Berufsmaturität”).

Personal admission requirements

- You should have an interest in dealing with gender-specific and culture-specific issues relating to women and families.
- You should be capable of empathy with other people.
- You should be ready to assume substantial responsibility.
- You should be capable of analytical thought, have a good appreciation of causality and good observation skills.
- You should be a good team player, enjoy working with others and be able to address and resolve conflicts.
- You should be able to remain calm and collected in complex, rapidly changing situations and be able to act effectively when confronted by them.
- You should be able to address issues relating to pregnancy termination and be willing to support women considering such action.

Suitability assessment

All candidates will complete a suitability assessment for which a fee is payable. The suitability assessment results in a final decision on admission.



Academic calendar and financial matters

Academic calendar

Courses commence in September, in calendar week 38
 Application deadline mid-January
 Suitability assessments from February to April
 Course duration 4 years (including additional modules A and C)
 A detailed syllabus can be found on www.gesundheit.zhaw.ch (in German only).

Financial matters

Details of the course fees and of the clinical assignment remuneration paid to students before and during their course can be found on www.gesundheit.zhaw.ch (in German only). Information on study grants is published on www.ausbildungsbeitraege.ch (available in German, French and Italian only).

Additional information

Additional information, as well as the dates of the regular information events held for prospective students, can be found on www.gesundheit.zhaw.ch.



ZHAW

Why study at the ZHAW?

The ZHAW has accumulated a wealth of experience in conducting bachelor and master's degree programmes. A scientific approach to study, a research culture and a strong emphasis on practical applicability are central to its approach. At the School of Health Professions - whose B.Sc. in Midwifery programme is complemented by bachelor degree programmes in Nursing, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy – the courses of study themselves already put the concept of inter-disciplinary dialogue into practice, thus helping students prepare for an important aspect of their future professional careers. Students' clinical assignments during their course of study are organised by the ZHAW itself. We place great emphasis on ensuring that you get the support you need to help you reach your study objectives.

International orientation

Over 8,000 students are currently enrolled in ZHAW's eight Schools – Architecture, Design and Civil Engineering (A), Health Professions (G), Applied Linguistics (L), Life Sciences and Facility Management (N), Applied Psychology (P), Social Work (S), Engineering (T) and Management and Law (W). In addition to its teaching and continuing education activities, the ZHAW also carries out applied research and development work, as well as service and consultancy mandates. The ZHAW is one of Switzerland's largest multi-disciplinary universities of applied sciences, offering both an innovative and multi-faceted range of courses and a personal atmosphere – despite its size.

Attractive campus

- Students have access to well-stocked specialist libraries equipped with desks for individual study.
- Wireless LAN hotspots are available throughout the campus.
- The campus has several canteens offering a variety of food and beverages at reasonable prices.
- A wide range of sports activities are on offer, including instructor-led training and courses, tournaments and other events, most of which are available to students at no charge.
- The ZHAW provides childcare facilities to its students and staff at two day care centres in Winterthur.
- Students make their own accommodation arrangements. Details of accommodation available to students in Winterthur can be found on www.swowi.ch.

Gesundheit

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The university town of Winterthur

With a population of around 100,000, Winterthur is the sixth largest town in Switzerland. Thanks to the many young people living in Winterthur, partly as a result of the ZHAW, the town is lively at all times of day. Besides numerous clubs, restaurants and bars, Winterthur also offers theatres, museums and cinemas. During the year there are also a number of events extending over several days – such as the Albanifest, Afropfingsten (in English, “Afro-Whitsun”) and the music festival weeks – which really liven up the narrow streets around the centre of the town.

