

Career Profile: Midwife

A midwife is a qualified nursing sister who specialises in the care of women who give birth and the delivery of babies. She is a registered medical professional who will have studied general nursing, community health, psychology and midwifery in her initial nursing course. Most midwives work in hospital maternity units where they assist women during the pre-natal, birth and post-natal processes. Midwives can specialise in advanced midwifery and this is a requirement for anyone who wishes to go into private practice.

The typical activities a midwife would undertake include:

- examining patients during pregnancy
- advising pregnant women about diet and health practices
- conducting initial examinations on admittance to a labour ward
- staying with patients during labour to reassure them and administer medication
- referring pregnant patients to a gynaecologist when problems are detected during diagnosis
- administering stipulated emergency measures during delivery and arranging for immediate attention by a gynaecologist
- assisting with the delivery of babies and conducting postpartum examinations
- helping with the general treatment of mothers and babies
- advising mothers about post-natal care and care for their newborn babies.

Education Requirements

National Senior Certificate (NSC)

For a career in nursing students are advised to select English, Mathematics, Physical Science, Biology or Physiology. These are subjects that are particularly suitable for tertiary study.

Bachelor Degree

Bachelor of Nursing Science, BCur – (4 years)

A four year degree nursing programme that includes basic midwifery.

For advanced midwifery (a requirement for private practice) a Diploma in Advanced Midwifery (1 year) is also offered at some of the universities.

Offered at:

- [North-West University](http://www.puk.ac.za/fakulteite/gesond/verpleegkunde/index_e.html)¹ (School of Nursing Science, BCur)

¹ http://www.puk.ac.za/fakulteite/gesond/verpleegkunde/index_e.html

- [University of Johannesburg](#)² (Department of Nursing Sciences, [BCur](#) and National Higher Diploma in Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Science)
- University of Limpopo - [Turfloop](#) and [Medunsa](#) (Department of Nursing Sciences)
- [University of Pretoria](#)³ (Department of Nursing Science, BCur, and BCur (I and A) for Advanced Midwifery as one option)
- [University of Venda](#)⁴ (Department of Nursing Science, BCur)
- [University of the Witwatersrand](#)⁵ (Department of Nursing Education, BNursing and [Higher Diploma in Advanced Midwifery](#))⁶

Nurses and midwives have to register with the [South African Nursing Council](#)⁷. The website contains a list of approved nursing colleges. You can choose to follow the degree route or study for a nursing diploma through one of these colleges.

Possible Employers

- Department of Health, provincial hospitals and clinics
- Private hospitals and clinics, e.g. Mediclinic, Netcare, Life Clinics
- Private practice

Find out more

Find out more about midwifery:

- The website of the [South African Nursing Council](#)⁸. Midwives have to register with SANC. It also contains a list of approved nursing colleges.
- [Go Study](#)⁹ contains useful information about midwifery as a career.
- The [South African Doula Database](#)¹⁰ looks at for interesting developments in natural birthing.
- [CREATE Africa South](#)¹¹ covers topics for discussion on birthing and motherhood in the South African context.

² <http://www.uj.ac.za/nursing/Home/tabid/2620/Default.aspx>

³ <http://web.up.ac.za/default.asp?ipkCategoryID=4729&subid=4729&ipklookid=8&parentid=>

⁴ http://www.univen.ac.za/health_sciences/nursing_science.html

⁵ <http://web.wits.ac.za/Academic/Health/TherapeuticSciences/Nursing/UndergraduateProgramme.htm>

⁶ <http://web.wits.ac.za/Academic/Health/TherapeuticSciences/Nursing/PostgraduateRequirements.htm>

⁷ <http://www.sanc.co.za/>

⁸ <http://www.sanc.co.za/>

⁹ <http://www.gostudy.mobi/Careers/View.aspx?oid=456>

¹⁰ <http://doulas.co.za/>

¹¹ <http://www.cas.org.za/projects/Motherhood.htm#essential>

Are you suited to this career?

This quick quiz can help you to identify whether you are suited for this career.

Quiz	YES	NO
Are you interested in healing and caring for women during pregnancy and in childbirth?		
Do you enjoy working with people?		
Are you observant?		
Are you interested in solving problems?		
Do you have a practical approach to life?		
Are detail and accuracy in your work important to you?		
Are you able to communicate clearly with others?		
Are you considered to be a good listener?		
Can you work as a member of a team?		
Do you work well under pressure?		

If you have mainly yes answers it may be an indication that this is a career to consider.