

# Fort Worth Midwifery

Student Midwife Series  
www.fortworthmidwifery.com

## Questions to ask your prospective preceptor

You should go to your interview with a prospective preceptor with a list of questions ready to ask. The worst thing that you can do is go in blind and not know what you want to ask beforehand. You will always forget that important questions you swear you won't forget.

Plus, preceptors want to know that you are serious about being a student. If you present yourself as organized you will look 1000x better than the student who just shows up expecting the midwife to do all the hard work.

1. **What is their midwifery style?** Are they more hands off or hands on? How does that work with your view of midwifery? I encourage you to give them a try even if you do not think you will like how they practice. You might find that it is not as bad as you think or that you even like their style. It might even help you know what you do not want to do as a midwife and that's okay! You aren't chained to this midwife, you can find a different preceptor later.
2. **Are they an approved preceptor?** In midwifery training you have to be an approved preceptor (meaning teacher) for your signatures to carry any weight on school documents. If you do the PEP process or go to a school that uses NARM paperwork your preceptor will need to be a NARM approved preceptor. If you go to a school like the Association of Texas Midwives that use their own paperwork approved by NARM so your preceptor will need to be an approved preceptor through that school. The midwife will know if they are approved or not but it is always best to check with your school or NARM by emailing them and asking if that midwife is a current preceptor of theirs and if not, how they can apply to be one.
3. **Have they trained students before?** This is important to know. If they have never trained anyone it will be as new to them as it is to you which is not always a good thing. Just because they are a good midwife does not mean that they are a good teacher. Likewise, just because they have trained students before does not mean that they are a good teacher.
4. **How many students have they graduated?** Why have previous students quit? This is not a black and white question. An amazing preceptor of mine who taught me a lot of what I know has never had a student finish to become a midwife. This does not reflect on her ability to teach. The reason she has not finished a student is because they all quit due to financial strain. Do you know how much it costs to be a student midwife?
5. **Do they have references from students who they have trained?** Do you have access to those?
6. **What amount of time is required in the office and for appointments?** Do you see clients 3 days a week and have an in service staff day the 4<sup>th</sup> day? Do they do appointments on Monday's and Tuesday's only? Don't forget that you will also have unexpected over flow days due to clients being rescheduled do to births and 2 day postpartum visits added in. This also goes with the next question.
7. **What do they expect of you?** Are you expected to work one day a week in the office learning the business side of midwifery? Are you required to help clean the birth center? Do other chores around the office? Know when there are not healthy boundaries and when to walk away.
8. **What is the dress code?** This differs per midwife. Some want you in scrubs whenever you interact with clients. Some want you in business casual for office days and scrubs for births. Some do not care what you wear and encourage yoga pants and t-shirts. Do not rush off and buy a special wardrobe until you know the answer to this question. You do not want to spend money on navy blue scrubs when they only wear aqua blue scrubs.
9. **How does time off work?** Do they rotate on call schedule for their students? What about 1 or 2 week long vacations with your family? This question is so, so important. It is healthy to take time off in this line of work.
10. **What is their client load?** Do they only have 1 birth a month, meaning 12 births a year? You'll take way longer to finish your clinical requirements than a student at a busy practice that attends 12 births a month. Also worth asking – how many births a month will be your primaries when the time comes. Just because they have 12

# Fort Worth Midwifery

Student Midwife Series  
www.fortworthmidwifery.com

clients due a month does not mean they will all be your primary under supervision. It is hard to know how busy of a practice your life can hold when you haven't experienced the lifestyle previously but know your limits.

11. **How many births are you required to go to?** Just because they attend 12 births a month does not mean you will be required to go to all 12. It may be split up between several students. If they only attend 24 births a year, or 2 a month you may be required to attend them all.
12. **How long is a typical apprenticeship with them?** This links to several questions above. If they are a slow 12 births a year practice that will take you a minimum of 4.5 years to get all your requirements in if 0 clients miscarry, transport, leave mid-pregnancy or labor so fast you do not make it to the birth. If you attend 8 births a month you could be done when the required 2 year apprenticeship is up.
13. **How many students do they have at a time?** How do they juggle who goes where and gets what client if two of you are in the same phase? What if they take on a student with more experience than they have? Will they jump ahead of you or start behind you?
14. **Can you cross train with other midwives?** If they are a lower volume practice you might have to cross train so it does not take 6 years to finish your required student numbers. If they say yes, will they be first priority or second if you get called to a birth while you're on your way to another birth with someone else? *I've had 9 preceptors through my 4 years of training if you're curious on how I managed that circus.*
15. **How do they teach you skills?** Do they let you do hands on practice with their consenting clients or expect you to already know how to do things? Do they do skill days where you practice skills that you need help with?
16. **How do they help you handle the hard times?** There are bound to be rough births and times you get scared. Are they good communicators and debrief the hard times with you or do they expect you to bottle it up?
17. **Do they have a non-compete clause for the local area after you become a midwife?** This could limit you to where you can practice in the future. It may not be helpful not but it could uproot your family later on.