



## **Knowledge & Skills Framework**

# **REGISTERED NURSE ASSISTANT TO THE ANAESTHETIST**

*FOR*

**OPERATING THEATRES**

*IN*

**NEW ZEALAND**

**NEW ZEALAND NURSES' ORGANISATION (INC)  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR:**

**Knowledge & Skills Framework for**

**REGISTERED NURSE ASSISTANT TO THE ANAESTHETIST**

**For Operating Theatres in New Zealand**

**New Zealand Nurses' Organisation**

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Published 2014  
PO Box 2128  
Wellington

Ph. 04-493-9533  
Fax 04-382-9993  
Email [nurses@nzno.org.nz](mailto:nurses@nzno.org.nz)

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## ***SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION***

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### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

There is a long standing association between anaesthetists and nurses providing anaesthetic assistance<sup>1</sup>. It is part of New Zealand's nursing history and is within the registered nurse (RN) scope of practice (Appendix 1: RN Scope of practice). The registered nurse assistant to the anaesthetist (RNAA) provides nursing care to the patient and supports the anaesthetist during patient induction, maintenance and emergence of general anaesthesia as well as sedation, regional and local anaesthetic procedures.

In 2011, anaesthetic technicians were regulated by the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (2003). This does not restrict or change the scope of registered nurses providing anaesthetic assistance. Some registered nurses have chosen to obtain dual registered nurse registration (via the Nursing Council of New Zealand, NCNZ) and anaesthetic technician registration (via the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand, MSCNZ). However there is no regulatory requirement for nurses to hold dual registration. Nurses who are not registered as an anaesthetic technician must not use the title 'Anaesthetic Technician'. (Appendix 2: Joint Statement: Anaesthetic Nursing, MSCNZ and NCNZ, 2012).

Under the direction of the Joint Communication statement from the MSCNZ and NCNZ (2012) 'the Perioperative Nurses College of the New Zealand Nurses Organisation has agreed to develop a definition and competencies/skills/standards for anaesthetic nurses".

The purpose of this document is to meet this obligation. This will assure a national standard regarding the competencies, skills and knowledge required by a RNAA to provide safe nursing care in the field of anaesthetic assistance.

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<sup>1</sup> Kluger MT, Bukofzer M, & Bullock M (1999). Anaesthetic assistants: their role in the development and resolution of anaesthetic incidents. *Anaesth Intensive Care*, 27(3), 269-74.

## 1.2 PROJECT MILESTONES

### 2012: Inception

- *Joint Communication Statement from Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand and the Nursing Council of New Zealand*

Under the direction of this Joint Communication statement (MSCNZ & NZNC, 2012) “the Perioperative Nurses College of the New Zealand Nurses Organisation has agreed to develop a definition and competencies/skills/standards for anaesthetic nurses”.

### 2013: Development

- *Knowledge & Skills Framework for the competent registered nurse functioning as an anaesthetic assistant*

There were 2 rounds of consultation on the Knowledge & Skills Framework for RNAA, via Survey Monkey. There were a total of 115 groups or individuals who offered feedback across both consultations.

- *Advisory group established to make recommendations to PNC on the education and assessment pathway of a RNAA course.*

Advisory group membership included:

- 1 PNC convener + 3 PNC members
- 1 representative from industry with a current training perspective
- 1 NZ representative from the Australian & New Zealand College of Anaesthetists
- 1 representative from the New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists
- 1 representative from NZ Private Surgical Hospital Directors of Nursing Group
- 1 representative from the Directors of Nursing DHB (invited)
- 1 NZNO, professional nursing advisor. Ex-officio

To assist the advisory group’s work a Survey Monkey questionnaire was distributed to 42 theatre nurse managers of public and private hospitals. There were 30 responses. The questionnaire enquired about types of anaesthesia; specialty services, staff mix, and level of interest in an RNAA 1 year course.

## **2014: Consultation**

- *Key stakeholder engagement*

A draft Knowledge & Skills Framework: Registered Nurse Assistant to the Anaesthetist document was widely circulated to key stakeholder organisations (Appendix 3) as a consultation document. There were 15 responses from organisations or their subsidiaries. The feedback was reviewed and considered by PNC national committee in preparation for this final document.

The Knowledge and Skills Framework: Registered Nurse Assistant to the Anaesthetist was tabled at PNC Annual General Meeting 2014 as a Policy Remit and voted by the PNC membership.

PNC approached Auckland University of Technology to develop and provide a one year RNAA course. The Certificate of Proficiency: Registered Nurses Assistant to the Anaesthetist paper will be delivered through AUT's post graduate nursing programme.

## **2015: Implementation**

- *First intake for the Auckland University of Technology, Certificate of Proficiency: Registered Nurse Assistant to the Anaesthetist paper.*

### **1.3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

*The Perioperative Nurses College<sup>NZNO</sup> thanks all those who have contributed to the development of this document. There has been substantial engagement from many professional groups. However the Perioperative Nurses College of NZNO specifically acknowledge the following PNC members: Leigh Anderson, Sian Mitchell, Dr Isabel Jamieson, Diane McClelland, Scott Hunter, Fiona Unaç and Berice Beach; and external advisors Dr Nigel Robertson, Dr Ted Hughes, Dr Phil Eames, Carey Campbell, Denise Kivell, and Suzanne Rolls.*

## 1.4 Perioperative Nurses College NZNO - Position Statement on Registered Nurse Assistant to the Anaesthetist

### **Definition:**

The registered nurse assistant to the anaesthetist practises within the registered nurse scope of practice. The nurse is competent to provide nursing care to the patient undergoing anaesthesia. They function in a supportive role to the anaesthetist during induction, maintenance and emergence of general anaesthesia, as well as sedation, regional and local anaesthetic procedures. The nurse collaborates with interprofessional team members to ensure best outcomes for perioperative patients

The Perioperative Nurses College acknowledge that the RNAA role is within the existing RN scope of practice. Safety for the public, the nurse and the service provider are paramount considerations in formalising the knowledge and skills for the RNAA. It will assist in the recognition and transportability of nursing skills nationally in RNAA roles.

Registered nurses providing anaesthetic assistance are guided by the RNAA Knowledge & Skills Framework. This framework builds upon holistic comprehensive nursing knowledge in the field of anaesthesia assistance. The specialty based nursing criteria is aligned to the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (2012) PS08 document 'Recommendations on the Assistant to the Anaesthetist'.

The Perioperative Nurses College PNC endorses that the assistant to the anaesthetist is an essential member of the health care team and an anaesthetic assistant must be rostered for every case where an anaesthetist administers anaesthesia. When a perioperative nurse is rostered as the assistant to the anaesthetist, the nurse "must be wholly and exclusively responsible to that anaesthetist" (ANZCA, 2012, PS08, p.2).

### **Disclaimer**

The Perioperative Nurses College NZNO assumes no responsibility for the practises or recommendations of any member or other practitioner, or for the policies and procedures of any practice setting. Nurses function within the limitations of legislation and institutional policy.

## 1.5 Professional continuum of the Perioperative Nurse

### 1.5.1 Registered nurse

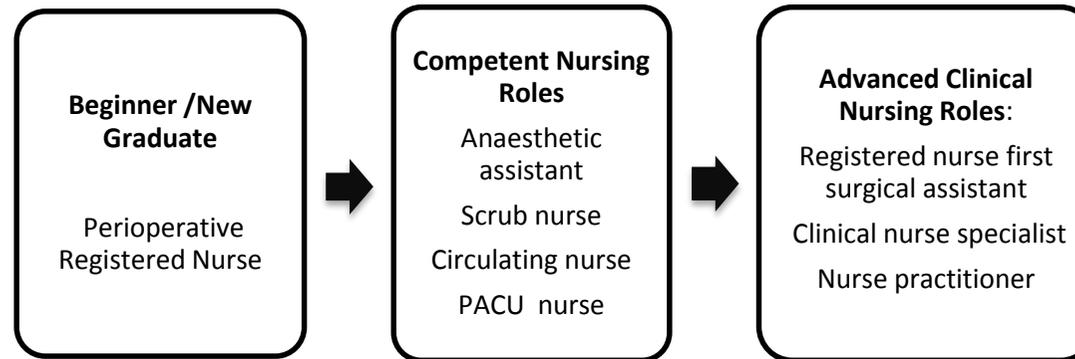


Figure 1: Registered nurse perioperative professional continuum

The registered nurse assistant to the anaesthetist is a competent registered nurse providing specialty nursing practice within the field of perioperative nursing.

The ANZCA (2013) PS59, 'Statement on Roles in Anaesthesia and Perioperative Care' provides a framework for discussion on the roles and responsibilities of health professionals in anaesthesia and perioperative care. PNC agrees that "new or extended roles within the anaesthesia and perioperative care team should be developed, implemented and evaluated in a systematic and consistent way" (ANZCA, PS59, p.1).

The New Zealand RNAA is not a new or extended clinical nursing role. It is an existing nursing role within the registered nurse scope of practice. The RNAA is professionally aligned to other perioperative nursing roles such as scrub nurse, circulating nurse and PACU nurse.

**5.1.2 Enrolled nurse:** The Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand has provided a pathway for enrolled nurses who are experienced in anaesthesia assistance to obtain anaesthetic technician (AT) registration. New Zealand enrolled nurses are able to provide anaesthesia assistance in accordance with the enrolled nurse scope of practice. However the Perioperative Nurses College strongly recommends that enrolled nurses with anaesthetic assistant experience explore AT registration.

This document pertains to registered nurse assistant to the anaesthetist only.

## ***SECTION 2: Knowledge & Skills Framework Registered Nurse Assistant to the Anaesthetist***

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### **2.1 Introduction**

The RNAA Knowledge & Skills Framework was developed following extensive review of the literature and two rounds of consultation via Survey Monkey. There were a total of 115 groups or individuals who offered feedback across both consultations. There was a third round of consultation with key stakeholder organisations (appendix 3). There were 15 responses from organisations or their subsidiaries. The feedback was reviewed by PNC national committee in preparation for this final document.

The RNAA Knowledge & Skills Framework builds upon the core competencies of a registered nurse working in perioperative settings. The bold italic entries are specialty based practice criteria for the RNAA role.

Registered Nurses are regulated health practitioners (HPCAA, 2003) who meet the requirements for registration by the Nursing Council of New Zealand. RNs are required to maintain competency and professional development particular to the areas they are practising in. Anaesthetic assistants must demonstrate ongoing competency and professional development to the regulatory authority with whom they have an annual practising certificate (APC). Currently nursing APC costs \$110 pa, with prescribed practising hours and professional development.

## 2.2 Knowledge & Skills Framework for the Registered Nurse Assistant to the Anaesthetist

The registered nurse assistant to the anaesthetist practises within the registered nurse scope of practice. The nurse is competent to provide nursing care to the patient undergoing anaesthesia. They function in a supportive role to the anaesthetist during induction, maintenance and emergence of general anaesthesia, as well as sedation, regional and local anaesthetic procedures. The nurse collaborates with interprofessional team members to ensure best outcomes for perioperative patients

Nursing Council Domain 1 Professional Responsibility	Minimal Skills/Clinical Examples <b><i>Bold italic = new skills</i></b>	Knowledge (Source of knowledge) <b><i>Bold italic = new knowledge</i></b>
1.1 Accepts responsibility for ensuring that his/her nursing practice and conduct meets the standards of the professional, ethical and relevant legislated requirements	Nursing registration updated annually Portfolio meets requirements set by Nursing Council Maintains patient privacy and confidentiality Works within scope of practice Has a collegial relationship with Anaesthetist and other perioperative team members Understands scope of practice of others within perioperative team Maintains a professional portfolio	Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (2003); Medicines Act (1981); Code of Health and Disability Consumer Rights (1996); Privacy Act (1993); Health Information Privacy Code (1993); Human Rights Act (1993); Health & Safety in Employment Act (1992). Nurses Code of Conduct (NCNZ, 2012) NZNO Standards for Professional Nursing Practice (2012) NZNO Code of Ethics (2012) NZNO Guidelines for Nurses on Administration of Medicines (2014) Workplace policy and procedures
1.2 Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi to nursing practice	Cares for patients using the Treaty concepts as a model Involves and supports Tangata Mauiui/whanau/family in decision making and care	Treaty of Waitangi / Te Tiriti o Waitangi Undergraduate/post registration Treaty of Waitangi / Te Tiriti o Waitangi education Nursing Council of NZ Competencies for Registered Nurses Guidelines for Cultural Safety, the Treaty of Waitangi and Maori Health in Nursing Education and Practice (NCNZ, 2011) Workplace Tikanga policy and procedures Reflection

<p>1.3 Demonstrates accountability for directing, monitoring and evaluating nursing care that is provided by nurse assistants, enrolled nurses and others</p>	<p>Directs and supervises healthcare assistants and enrolled nurses taking into account their competence and to perform both nursing and non-nursing tasks appropriately</p> <p>Participates in Professional development assessments of staff as required by employer</p>	<p>NZ Nursing Council Competencies for Registered Nurses Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (2003) Guideline: Delegation of care by a registered nurse to a health care assistant (NCNZ, 2012) Medicines Act (1981) Workplace policy and procedures Work place policy on Delegation</p>
<p>1.4 Promotes an environment that enables client safety, independence, quality of life and health</p>	<p>Performs a thorough and continuous nursing assessment of each patient to ensure changing clinical needs are identified and met including risk management</p> <p><b>At all times provides support to the Anaesthetist</b></p> <p>Provides thorough nursing handover</p> <p>Maintains holistic perspective of patient perioperative journey</p> <p>Initiates/Leads or participates in the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist</p> <p><b>Performs a level 2 anaesthetic machine check prior to commencement of list</b></p> <p><b>Performs a level 3 anaesthetic machine check between patients</b></p> <p><b>Maintains anaesthetic equipment as required and at the end of the list</b></p> <p><b>Ensures storage, preparation and use of all drugs, fluids and other substances administered during anaesthesia is appropriate and safe</b></p>	<p><b>Assessed as competent to perform a level 2 and 3 machine check in accordance with ANZCA (2012) PS31-Guidelines on Checking Anaesthesia Delivery Systems</b></p> <p>NZ Resuscitation Council ACLS Level 6</p> <p>Completes training in electrical safety, gas cylinder management</p> <p>Workplace Infection Control policies</p> <p>NZNO Guidelines for Health &amp; Safety (2014)</p> <p>NZNO Guidelines for Nurses on Administration of Medicines (2014)</p> <p>Workplace policy and procedures</p> <p>ANZCA (2012) PS55. Recommendations on minimum facilities for safe administration of anaesthesia in operating suites and other anaesthetising locations.</p>
<p>1.5 Practices nursing in a manner that the client determines as being culturally safe</p>	<p>When possible meets the client preoperatively and in partnership with patient encourage participation and independence in the perioperative environment</p> <p>Ensures clients wishes for return of tissue is communicated to appropriate perioperative team members and is documented</p> <p>Understands fundamentals of culturally appropriate care and incorporates into nursing care plans</p>	<p>Undergraduate Cultural Safety Education</p> <p>Externally provided Cultural Safety Education</p> <p>In-services on Cultural Safety</p> <p>Reflection</p> <p>NZ Nursing Council Competencies for Registered Nurses</p> <p>Workplace Infection Control Manual</p> <p>Guidelines for Cultural Safety, the Treaty of Waitangi and Maori Health in Nursing Education and Practice (NCNZ, 2011)</p>

Nursing Council Domain 2 Management of nursing care	Minimal Skills/Clinical Examples	Knowledge (Source of knowledge)
2.1 Provides planned nursing care to achieve identified outcomes	<p>Provides nursing assessment and care during anaesthesia/local/regional/sedation administration, maintenance and emergence</p> <p>Ensures patient dignity is maintained at all times and acts as the patient's advocate during perioperative procedures</p> <p>Performs(where assessed as competent) peripheral line insertion</p> <p><b>Can demonstrate safe and appropriate assistance for the provision of general, regional, local anaesthesia; peripheral nerve blocks, regional nerve blocks and sedation.</b></p> <p><b>Is competent in emergency care including CPR, assisting the anaesthetist with management of the difficult airway and failed intubation, anaphylaxis, malignant hyperthermia, local anaesthetic toxicity</b></p> <p><b>Can demonstrate safe and appropriate use of standard and non standard airway equipment</b></p> <p><b>Can demonstrate the safe and appropriate use of invasive and non invasive monitoring equipment</b></p> <p><b>Demonstrates the safe and appropriate assistance with the insertion of intravenous and arterial catheters including intravenous lines, arterial lines, peripherally inserted central lines and catheters.</b></p> <p><b>Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of pharmacology related to anaesthesia</b></p> <p><b>Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of emergency equipment associated with anaesthesia</b></p> <p>Demonstrates safe and effective use of intravenous fluids and blood products and their giving sets under the direction of an anaesthetist</p> <p>Identifies unique patient considerations when assisting with positioning patient that minimises risk of injury to patient yet maximises facilitation to intervention</p> <p>Anticipates post-operative pain management and equipment required</p> <p>Implements pain relief modalities as required under the direction of an anaesthetist</p>	<p>Completes training in management of Central Venous Access Devices, Epidurals, Intravenous Therapy and Intravenous Cannulation</p> <p>NZ Resuscitation Council ACLS Level 6</p> <p>Workplace Orientation and Preceptorship</p> <p>Undergraduate Nursing training</p> <p>Nursing Entry to Practice Programme</p> <p>Workplace Infection Control Manual</p> <p>PNC standards</p> <p>Difficult airway course</p> <p>Point of Care testing modules</p>

	<p><b>Recognises the differences between anaesthetic specialties</b></p> <p>Shares patient related information with Anaesthetists and wider perioperative team</p>	
2.2 Undertakes a comprehensive and accurate nursing assessment of clients in a variety of settings	<p>Assesses patients preoperatively using standardised assessment tools e.g. preoperative check in pain scores, utilised for assessing pain and mobility prior to transfer to the operating table</p> <p>Understands physical and psychosocial factors which affect surgery and anaesthesia</p> <p>Observes patient for changes and anticipates requirements to treat adverse events</p> <p>Operates Point of Care testing tools like thromboelastograph (TEG), blood sugar level and Haemocue and documents results appropriately</p>	<p>Workplace Orientation and Preceptorship</p> <p>Undergraduate Nursing training</p> <p>Nursing Entry to Practice Programme</p> <p>Recommended Practices for Positioning the Patient in the Perioperative Practice Setting</p> <p>Point of Care testing modules</p>
2.3 Ensures documentation is accurate and maintains confidentiality of information	<p>Documents nursing actions accurately in patient notes.</p> <p>Documents controlled drugs appropriately</p> <p>Seeks clarification on any aspect of the anaesthetist's anaesthetic record that the nurse is unsure about</p> <p>Stores written patient information appropriately</p>	<p>Workplace Orientation and Preceptorship</p> <p>Undergraduate Nursing training</p> <p>Nursing Entry to Practice Programme</p> <p>Privacy Act (1993)</p> <p>Health Information Privacy Code (1994)</p>
2.4 Ensures the client has adequate explanation of the effects, consequences and alternatives of proposed treatment options	<p>Explains plan of care to the patient before cares are given</p> <p>Participates in emergencies and unanticipated anaesthetic crisis's</p> <p>Ensures the patient has informed consent and that consent is documented</p>	<p>New Zealand Resuscitation Council ACLS level 6</p> <p>Workplace Orientation and Preceptorship</p> <p>Undergraduate Nursing training</p> <p>Nursing Entry to Practice Programme</p>
2.5 Acts appropriately to protect oneself and others when faced with unexpected client responses, confrontation, personal threat or other crisis situations	<p>Wears appropriate personal protective equipment</p> <p>Works with the Anaesthetist to assess the patient throughout their procedure in readiness to respond to emergencies.</p> <p>Understands resources available to facilitate safe patient care where restraint is required</p> <p>Nurses assisting the anaesthetist are orientated to workplace policy and practice in regards to emergency management</p> <p>Undertake mandatory updates and/or audits for safe practice in emergency management</p>	<p>Workplace Infection Control Manual</p> <p>Workplace Orientation and Preceptorship</p> <p>Undergraduate Nursing training</p> <p>Nursing Entry to Practice Programme</p> <p>Workplace Restraint Policy</p> <p>NZ Resuscitation Council ACLS Level 6</p> <p>Workplace mandatory updates</p>
2.6 Evaluates client's progress toward expected	<p>Understands normal physiology and vital signs</p> <p>Able to measure and interpret vital signs</p>	<p>Undergraduate Nursing training</p> <p>NZ Resuscitation Council ACLS level 6</p>

outcomes in partnership with clients	<p>Able to assess pain</p> <p>Able to interpret basic ECGs</p> <p><b><i>Understands normal responses to anaesthesia</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Recognises abnormal responses to anaesthesia and surgery and understands steps needed to correct</i></b></p> <p>Works in partnership with the patient/whanau/family to achieve pre-planned outcomes</p> <p>Documents and re-evaluates care within a nursing framework</p>	<p>Workplace Orientation and Preceptorship</p> <p>Undergraduate Nursing training</p> <p>Nursing Entry to Practice Programme</p> <p>Point of Care testing modules</p>
2.7 Provides health education appropriate to the needs of the client within a nursing framework	<p>Provides support and education to the patient prior to induction of anaesthesia and during local/regional anaesthesia</p>	<p>Workplace Orientation and Preceptorship</p> <p>Undergraduate Nursing training</p> <p>Nursing Entry to Practice Programme</p>
2.8 Reflects upon, and evaluates with peers and experienced nurses, the effectiveness of nursing care	<p>Debriefs after critical events appropriately</p> <p>Uses recognised reflection frameworks to reflect on nursing care e.g. John 1994, as part of the nursing team</p> <p>Participates in quality improvement initiatives</p> <p>Takes part in the audit process and quality improvement activities</p>	<p>Workplace Orientation and Preceptorship</p> <p>Undergraduate Nursing training</p> <p>Nursing Entry to Practice Programme</p>
2.9 Maintains professional development	<p>Maintains a professional portfolio which demonstrates competencies</p> <p>Involved with staff appraisals and peer review</p> <p>Seeks feedback from anaesthesia team.</p> <p>Is professionally affiliated</p> <p>Attends conferences and education sessions</p> <p>Seeks opportunity to engage in post graduate education and professional development</p>	<p>Workplace Orientation and Preceptorship</p> <p>Undergraduate Nursing training</p> <p>Nursing Entry to Practice Programme</p> <p>NZ Nursing Council Competencies for RNs</p> <p>RN Professional Development Recognition Programme</p>

Nursing Council Domain 3 Interpersonal Relationships	Minimal Skills/Clinical Examples	Knowledge (Source of knowledge)
3.1 Establishes, maintains and concludes therapeutic interpersonal relationships with client	Demonstrates collaborative practice Respectful of patients and colleagues Demonstrates effective written and spoken communication	Workplace Orientation and Preceptorship Undergraduate Nursing training Nursing Entry to Practice Programme NZ Resuscitation Council ACLS level 6
3.2 Practices nursing in a negotiated partnership with the client where and when possible	Discuss plan of care with the anaesthetist and the patient Adapt plan of care in accord with Anaesthetist and patient needs and wishes Documents plan of care and care given appropriately	Workplace Orientation and Preceptorship Undergraduate Nursing training Nursing Entry to Practice Programme
3.3 Communicates effectively with clients and members of the health care team	Demonstrates appropriate written and verbal communication at all times Able to communicate effectively with the Anaesthetist and other team members during an anaesthetic crisis Provides full and adequate hand over between pre-op, operating theatre and PACU	Workplace Orientation and Preceptorship Undergraduate Nursing training Nursing Entry to Practice Programme Point of Care testing modules SBAR technique for communication: a situational briefing model. Cambridge, MA, Institute for Healthcare Improvement (2006)

Nursing Council Domain 4 Inter-professional health care & quality improvement	Minimal Skills/Clinical Examples	Knowledge (Source of knowledge)
4.1 Collaborate and participates with colleagues and members of the health care team to facilitate and coordinate care	<p>Able to act appropriately during an anaesthetic crisis</p> <p>Understands the 'chain of command' and demonstrates use of appropriate communication channels</p> <p>Recognises own knowledge and skills and where to obtain assistance when required</p> <p>Works collaboratively with Anaesthetist and other interprofessional colleagues</p> <p>Demonstrates respect for all interprofessional colleagues</p>	<p>Workplace Orientation and Preceptorship</p> <p>Undergraduate Nursing training</p> <p>Nursing Entry to Practice Programme</p> <p>NZ Resuscitation Council ACLS level 6</p> <p>SBAR technique for communication: a situational briefing model. Cambridge, MA, Institute for Healthcare Improvement (2006)</p>
4.2 Recognises and values the roles and skills of all members of the health care team in the delivery of care	<p>Recognises the roles of the wider perioperative team and those from outside the perioperative department</p> <p>Collaborates and refers as appropriate</p>	<p>Workplace Orientation and Preceptorship</p> <p>Undergraduate Nursing training</p> <p>Nursing Entry to Practice Programme</p>
4.3 Participates in quality improvement activities to monitor and improve standards of nursing	<p>Identifies areas for improvement and participates in quality improvement programmes</p> <p>Identifies health and safety issues and alerts colleagues and managers to these</p>	<p>Workplace Orientation and Preceptorship</p> <p>Undergraduate Nursing training</p> <p>Nursing Entry to Practice Programme</p> <p>Professional Development Programme</p>

## **SECTION 3: Education and Assessment of Registered Nurse Assistant to the Anaesthetist**

### **3.1 Background**

The principles of knowledge, observation, supervised practice and competence assessment applies to all nursing roles.

Both perioperative nurses and anaesthetic technicians provide assistance to the anaesthetist in the conduct of anaesthesia. Diploma and Graduate Certificate level training is provided by Auckland University of Technology (AUT) which nurses are able to access provided they are employed in a Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand accredited training hospital.

Nurses working outside these hospitals are trained 'on the job' through in-house orientation and preceptorship programmes. Response to a Perioperative Nurses College survey in late 2013 indicated there were at least 67 nurses working predominantly in the private sector who perform the role of the anaesthetic assistant on this basis. This is assumed to be a conservative figure as not all hospitals responded to the survey.

To date, experienced perioperative nurses have prepared for the role of RNAA by a variety of methods including

- Self directed learning
- Anaesthetist mentoring and supervision
- In-house training programmes
- Conference and seminar attendance
- Audit

#### **Current training spectrum for registered nurses providing anaesthetic assistance**



Currently in New Zealand there is no specific anaesthetic assistant nursing course which builds upon holistic comprehensive nursing knowledge in the field of anaesthesia assistance. To address this gap the Perioperative Nurses College plan to endorse a one year nursing course in anaesthetic assistance. The specialty based nursing criteria will incorporate the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (2012) PS08 document 'Recommendations on the Assistant to the Anaesthetist'.

PNC are recommending a fit for purpose anaesthetic assistant course to provide an alternative pathway for registered nurses to demonstrate RNAA specialty competencies. There is no mandatory requirement for RNAs to enrol in such a course; however the PNC recommends that registered nurses providing anaesthetic assistance undertake formal education and training.

Under the direction of the Joint Communication statement from the MSCNZ and NCNZ (2012) “the Perioperative Nurses College of the New Zealand Nurses Organisation has agreed to develop a definition and competencies/skills/standards for anaesthetic nurses” (Appendix 2). PNC has met this obligation. However, PNC assumes no responsibility for the practises or recommendations of any member or other practitioner, or for the policies and procedures of any practice setting.

### **3.2 Perioperative Nurses College Recommendations for a Registered Nurses Assistant to the Anaesthetist Course**

Qualification: Certificate of Proficiency (Registered Nurse, Assistant to the Anaesthetist)

Purpose Statement:

This certificate of proficiency recognises the knowledge and skills of a registered nurse providing assistance to the anaesthetist. It is aimed primarily at registered nurses with perioperative nursing experience. It builds upon holistic comprehensive nursing knowledge in the field of anaesthesia assistance. The qualification meets the criteria of the Perioperative Nurses College of NZNO (2014), Knowledge and Skills Framework for Registered Nurse: Assistant to the Anaesthetist. It also meets the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetist (2012) document 'Recommendations on the Assistant to the Anaesthetist'.

The qualification is designed to assess theory and clinical application of anaesthesia and analgesia modalities; anaesthetic equipment; and management of surgical and anaesthetic crises. Nurses completing this qualification are able to contribute to optimal patient care by assisting the anaesthetist during induction, maintenance and emergence of general anaesthesia as well as sedation, regional and local anaesthetic procedures.

This qualification is a certificate of proficiency from a Nursing Council of New Zealand accredited educational institution.

Course Duration: Two semester, one year paper

Tertiary Provider Requirements:

- Registered and Accredited with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.
- Accredited with the Nursing Council of New Zealand.
- Meets the ANZCA, 2012 PS08 'course of instruction' recommendations. This includes seeking input from anaesthetists in curriculum development, preparation and delivery of lectures, practical supervision and assessments.

Pre-requisites for enrolment:

- New Zealand registered nurse with current annual practising certificate.

One year full time (or part-time equivalent) graduate nursing experience in perioperative settings (scrub nurse, circulating nurse +/- PACU) in the past three years

- Must be employed in a perioperative setting during the duration of the course. It is recommended that nurses new to the anaesthetic assistant role orientates<sup>2</sup> / works at least 30 hours a week as a RNAA during the duration of the course. For nurses with at least one year full time (or part-time equivalent) current experience as a RNAA the hours may be less as agreed in the mentorship and assessment agreement signed by the Nurse, the Mentor/Assessor, the Perioperative Nursing Manager and Chief Anaesthetist.
- Must be fully orientated to the perioperative environment including pre-operative patient check-in procedures, patient care planning and documentation, IV certification, hazard identification and management and patient/staff safety procedures.
- Current New Zealand Resuscitation Council advanced life support certificat. Level 6 (within the past 2 years).

#### Employer responsibility:

- The Perioperative Nursing Manager must provide a letter of support confirming that the registered nurse has meet the pre-requisites and will be rostered for a minimum of 30 hours a week in an anaesthetic assistant role during the course duration (or the agreed minimum hours a week if the nurse has at least one year full time [or part-time equivalent] current experience in the RNAA field).
- The Perioperative Nursing Manager and Chief Anaesthetist will appoint a workplace Mentor and Assessor to ensure the registered nurse is able to complete the workplace clinical work book. The Mentor/Assessor will have a minimum of two years current experience in an anaesthetic assistant role and be a workplace preceptor. The mentorship and assessment agreement will be signed by the Nurse, the Mentor/Assessor, the Perioperative Nursing Manager and Chief Anaesthetist.

#### Learning outcomes:

Will reflect the specialty based practice criteria on the RNAA Knowledge and Skills Framework and incorporate the recommendations in the ANZCA (2012) PS08 document.

- The RNAA will demonstrate knowledge of the theory and clinical application of anaesthesia and analgesia modalities including relevant physics, chemistry, pharmacology, anatomy, physiology, clinical measurement and microbiology.
- The RNAA will demonstrate knowledge of clinical processes and patient care that contribute to assisting the anaesthetist with providing optimal anaesthesia care.
- The RNAA will demonstrate knowledge and competent practice in the preparation, set up, clinical application and care of equipment and consumables used in anaesthetic practice.

- The RNAA will demonstrate knowledge and competent practice in the management of surgical and anaesthetic crises.

Assessment:

The Tertiary Provider will facilitate a combination of on-line learning modules and on-site study days.

Assessment will include a clinical work book for practical assessment of core knowledge and skills; written assignments; and an exit exam.

Nursing candidates completing a registered nurse assistant to the anaesthetist course are not required to sit the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand registration examination (currently administered by the New Zealand Anaesthetic Technicians' Society [NZATS]). The NZATS examination is a regulatory requirement for Anaesthetic Technician registration with the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand. Registered nurses are regulated by the Nursing Council of New Zealand under the registered nurse scope of practice.

Completing the RNAA course requirements will confirm that the registered nurse has achieved the competency criteria on the RNAA Knowledge and Skills Framework.

**Approved by NZNO Board of February 2015**

***SECTION 4: REFERENCES***

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Many sources are listed in the Knowledge section of the Knowledge and Skills Framework for the Registered Nurse Assistant to the Anaesthetist.

**The key documents / sources of information are:**

Australian College of Operating Room Nurses [ACORN] (2014). *ACORN Standards for Perioperative Nursing: Including nursing roles, guidelines and position statements*. Author: Adelaide, Australia

Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists [ANZCA] (2012). Professional Standards PS08: Recommendations on the Assistant to the Anaesthetist. *Retrieved from:* [www.anzca.edu.ac/resources/professional-documents](http://www.anzca.edu.ac/resources/professional-documents)

Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists [ANZCA] (2012). Professional Standards PS31: Guidelines on Checking Anaesthesia Delivery Systems. *Retrieved from:* [www.anzca.edu.ac/resources/professional-documents](http://www.anzca.edu.ac/resources/professional-documents)

Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists [ANZCA] (2012). Professional Standards PS55 (2012) Recommendations on minimum facilities for safe administration of anaesthesia in operating suites and other anaesthetising locations. *Retrieved from:* [www.anzca.edu.ac/resources/professional-documents](http://www.anzca.edu.ac/resources/professional-documents)

Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists [ANZCA] (2013). Statement on roles in Anaesthesia and Perioperative Care at Standards PS59. *Retrieved from:* [www.anzca.edu.ac/resources/professional-documents](http://www.anzca.edu.ac/resources/professional-documents)

Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand & Nursing Council of New Zealand (2012). *Joint Statement: Anaesthetic Nursing*. *Retrieved from:* [www.nursingcouncil.org.nz/Publications/Consultation-documents](http://www.nursingcouncil.org.nz/Publications/Consultation-documents)

New Zealand Nurses Organisation (2014). *NZNO publications: Various resources including core documents on education and professional development, policy, practice, legal and regulatory issues*. *Retrieved from:* [www.nzno.org.nz/resources/nzno-publications](http://www.nzno.org.nz/resources/nzno-publications)

Nursing Council of New Zealand (2014). *NCNZ standards and guidelines for nurses: Various resources including code of conduct, registered nurse scope of practice, delegation guidelines, cultural safety, Treaty of Waitangi and Maori health*. *Retrieved from:* [www.nursingcouncil.org.nz/Publications/Standards-and-guidelines-for-nurses](http://www.nursingcouncil.org.nz/Publications/Standards-and-guidelines-for-nurses)

Perioperative Nurses College of the New Zealand Nurses Organisation (2014). *PNC Standards*. *Retrieved from:* [www.nzno.org.nz/groups/colleges/perioperative\\_nurses\\_college/standards](http://www.nzno.org.nz/groups/colleges/perioperative_nurses_college/standards)

## **APPENDIX 1: New Zealand Registered Nurse Scope of Practice**

Registered nurses utilise nursing knowledge and complex nursing judgment to assess health needs and provide care, and to advise and support people to manage their health. They practise independently and in collaboration with other health professionals, perform general nursing functions and delegate to and direct enrolled nurses, healthcare assistants and others. They provide comprehensive assessments to develop, implement, and evaluate an integrated plan of health care, and provide interventions that require substantial scientific and professional knowledge, skills and clinical decision making. This occurs in a range of settings in partnership with individuals, families, whanau and communities. Registered nurses may practise in a variety of clinical contexts depending on their educational preparation and practice experience.

Registered nurses may also use this expertise to manage, teach, evaluate and research nursing practice. Registered nurses are accountable for ensuring all health services they provide are consistent with their education and assessed competence, meet legislative requirements and are supported by appropriate standards. There will be conditions placed in the scope of practice of some registered nurses according to their qualifications or experience limiting them to a specific area of practice.

Nursing Council of New Zealand (2012).

## APPENDIX 2



### **Joint Communication: Anaesthetic nursing Medical Sciences Council and Nursing Council of New Zealand**

In 2011 the Medical Sciences Council consulted on the scope of practice, qualifications, and registration process for anaesthetic technicians. The regulation of anaesthetic technicians will commence on 1 April 2012.

Nurses who work in anaesthetic nursing can continue to be registered with the Nursing Council of New Zealand and perform an anaesthetic nursing role. The regulation of anaesthetic technicians does not restrict or change the scope of anaesthetic nursing. Nurses undertaking an anaesthetic nurse role must continue to demonstrate they are competent to practice through training, education, and/or a competence assessment. Nurses who choose not to register as an anaesthetic technician must not use the title “Anaesthetic Technician”.

The Perioperative Nurses College of the New Zealand Nurses Organisation has agreed to develop a definition and competencies/skills/standards for anaesthetic nurses. Some nurses may choose to register as an anaesthetic technician; these nurses are required to meet the standards outlined by the Medical Sciences Council. The two Councils will work together to ensure continuing competence requirements for both professions are not onerous for dual registered practitioners. If discipline, health, or competence issues arise for a dual registered nurse, the Councils will share information and work together where possible.

Nurses applying to become anaesthetic technicians may be required to undertake a competence assessment before registration. The details of this have not been determined yet by the Medical Sciences Council but it is anticipated that it would only apply to a small number of applicants and there would be no extra cost to the applicant.

The Medical Sciences Council is considering allowing nurses more time (until 2014) if they wish to register as an anaesthetic technician.

## **APPENDIX 3: STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION**

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The Perioperative Nurses College NZNO has consulted widely. Stakeholder feedback was sought from:

- Auckland University of Technology
- Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (New Zealand Board)
- College of Nurses Aotearoa NZ
- District Health Board: Directors of Nursing
- Health Workforce New Zealand
- Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand
- National Nurses Consortium New Zealand
- New Zealand Nurses Organisation: (Chief Executive, President, Kaiwhakahaere)
- New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists
- New Zealand Anaesthetic Technicians' Society
- Nursing Council of New Zealand
- Nurse Education in the Tertiary Sector
- Nurse Executives of New Zealand
- Office of the Chief Nurse, Ministry of Health
- Perioperative Nurses College Membership
- Private Surgical Hospital Association, Directors of Nursing Group
- Te Kaunihera o Nga Neehi Māori o Aotearoa (National Council of Māori Nurses)
- Te Rūnanga o Aotearoa, NZNO
- Theatre Managers and Educators Group (TMEC)