



Interim Position Statement by the Perioperative Nurses College (PNC) of New Zealand (NZNO) on the knowledge and skills considered to be pre-requisite requirements for entry into a formal orientation programme within Post Anaesthetic Care Unit (PACU); Operating Room (OR) and Medical Imaging Nursing (MINZ)

(Statement Pending Endorsement at the PNC AGM October 2020)

26th of August 2020

Background:

The PNC recognises that the perioperative workforce in New Zealand needs to be flexible and able to meet the needs of our diverse and ageing patients in Aotearoa. As our patients present with increasing co-morbidities and procedures become more complex, the pressure on the perioperative environment will increase. (Health Quality & Safety Commission New Zealand, 2018). The PNC has always been committed to working collaboratively as interprofessional team members with the aim of providing best practice and optimal outcomes for patients (Perioperative Nurses College (PNC), 2016).

Nurses are a versatile and adaptable workforce; their educational programmes prepare them to meet the needs and the challenges of the perioperative continuum.

Their suitability for practice is clearly demonstrated by the range of areas that Perioperative nurses work across: including, but not limited to: Surgical Outpatient departments; Pre-admission; Enhanced Recovery After Surgery Nurse; Day Stay Nurse; Registered Nurse Assistant to the Anaesthetist; Circulating Nurse; Scrub Nurse; Registered Nurse First Surgical Assistant; Medical Imaging Nurse; Post Anaesthetic Care Unit Nurse; Surgical Ward Nurse and Nurse Practitioner. A nurse orientated to PACU, OR or Medical Imaging programmes provides competent patient care and assists in providing a flexible workforce that can adapt to these different areas of practice.

The Health Quality & Safety Commission New Zealand (2018) identified that people undergoing surgery should receive proactive perioperative care from a multidisciplinary team, this will enable the early detection and management of comorbidities. Nurses are the only health care professionals working across the entire spectrum; they have the most patient contact and are therefore ideally placed to identify potential complications, practice inter-professionally and be proactive in maintaining Patient safety.

This statement specifically addresses:

1. What are the fundamental, underpinning professional and educational requirements for a healthcare professional entering the speciality of PACU, OR programme or Medical Imaging for the first time?
2. What clinical and non-clinical assessment skills are required before entering a formalised orientation programme within these areas?

3. Who will supervise the practice of new entrants undergoing orientation programmes?

Statement:

1. The perioperative environment is an evolving workplace. There are legal, technical and capacity challenges that are increasing as we have patients presenting for surgery with advanced age and increasing co-morbidities. Health Professionals working in the perioperative continuum need to be able to have an empathetic and full understanding of the diverse cultural, physical and emotional needs of patients presenting for surgery.

Understanding and experience of medication management, the implications of comorbidities on physiology, the legal and ethical complexities of informed consent and nursing assessment skills are all vital educational components of undergraduate nursing programmes. The utilisation of these skills reduces the risks of adverse outcomes for surgical patients (Health Quality & Safety Commission New Zealand, 2018). Nurses develop a comprehensive understanding of the effects of disparities in access to health care and how this causes poorer surgical outcomes for Maori patients (PNC, 2016)

Nursing undergraduate educational programmes support the student experience of patient assessments that are focussed on a holistic approach incorporating the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi; the central role of whanau for many Maori as a principle source of strength, support, security and identity (Ministry of Health, 2014). He Korowai Oranga, New Zealand's Māori Health Strategy is key to undergraduate nursing education programmes, the PNC supports this throughout the perioperative continuum.

To enter new to PACU, OR or Medical Imaging educational orientation programme, any candidate must have experience of planning patient care, support, and circumstances beyond the perioperative environment.

Better patient care in PACU, OR or medical imaging is provided when staff, who in addition to the basic educational programme provided, have skills and experience in planning patient care, support, and circumstances beyond the perioperative environment.

2. A knowledge and use in practice of the principles of biological, physiological, behavioural, social, and nursing sciences to plan and implement care to achieve desired patient outcomes. This must occur whilst working with other members of the team. The knowledge and skills relating to wound care, investigations/procedures and their after-effects are needed to support and be an advocate for patients undergoing any interventional/surgical procedures.

The ability to provide effective therapeutic communication (both patient and whanau/carers), patient education, discharge planning and interprofessional team liaison.

Within the PACU, OR and Medical Imaging setting, Enrolled Nurses (EN) contribute to nursing assessments, care planning, implementation and evaluation of care for health consumers and/or families/whanau. At all times, the registered nurse maintains overall responsibility for the plan or care (Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2020). The Enrolled Nurse may undertake a modified or full orientation course. With or acknowledging within a model of care which reflects patient acuity and comorbidity e.g. not in stage 1 PACU or not 2 EN's conducting a count process together.

3. Be under the guidance of and work with an identified, senior nurse who can ensure that the New Zealand Nursing Council Code of Conduct domains and their applications to the perioperative environment are supported.

Recommendations:

The PNC (NZNO) are secure in the knowledge that Nursing Undergraduate Education programmes are fit for purpose and that nurses who graduate from the programmes in New Zealand are well prepared to enter an orientation programme to OR, PACU and Medical Imaging.

We recommend that District Health Boards and Private Hospitals across New Zealand embrace this flexible, qualified workforce and welcome them into their perioperative departments.

Career progression opportunities for nurses throughout the Perioperative Continuum is clearly laid out in the PNC's Knowledge and Skills Framework (2009) which provides employers, theatre managers, educators, nurses, and students with the full range of capabilities required and opportunities for this skilled, flexible workforce.

References:

Perioperative Nurses College. (2016). *New Zealand Perioperative Nursing Knowledge and Skills Framework*. Wellington. New Zealand: New Zealand Nurses Organisation

Health Quality & Safety Commission New Zealand. (2018). *Seventh Report of the Perioperative Mortality Review Committee*. Retrieved from <https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/> 9 August 2020

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Nursing Council of New Zealand. (2020). *Tikanga Whanonga-Code of Conduct*. Retrieved from <https://www.nursingcouncil.org.nz/> 9 August 2020