

Revised Definitions for the Practice of Perioperative Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand

The Practice and Profession of Perioperative Practitioners

In Aotearoa | New Zealand, Perioperative Practice is the provision of perioperative technical management and patient care for supporting the provision of quality health care and safe perioperative and anaesthetic services in New Zealand accredited health facilities. Perioperative Practitioners work with other health practitioners including anaesthetists, nurses, and surgeons and are a crucial part of the medical team responsible for providing a high standard of care at all stages of surgery.

Perioperative Practitioners work within both the public and private health sectors in Aotearoa New Zealand. In a small number of circumstances, practitioners may work in the health sector but outside of the direct care of people. For example, in management, regulation, quality, safety or education.

Activities included in this definition, but not limited to, are:

- Perioperative care in the disciplines of anaesthesia, pre- and post-anaesthesia care, surgical scrub and circulating roles
- Advanced patient monitoring
- Collection of samples for diagnostic investigation
- Contributing personnel to emergency response teams
- Pre- and post-operative related research and development
- Anaesthetic related research and development
- Applied science and perioperative practice education
- Applied science and anaesthetic technology education; and
- Management and leadership.

Practitioners have a responsibility to ensure they only practise in those areas in which they have demonstrated competency.

The profession of Perioperative Practice contains one scope of practice of Perioperative Practitioner. Practitioners may practise under a number of *workplace titles* including *but not limited to*: Perioperative Practitioner, Perioperative Practitioner - Anaesthetics, Anaesthetic Technician/Technologist, Operating Department Practitioner. The scope of practice of Perioperative Practitioner is inclusive of these workplace titles.

The Council specifies the Perioperative Practitioner scope of practice as: A Perioperative Practitioner is a member of the anaesthetic and surgical care team, working collaboratively with other health professionals.

A Perioperative Practitioner:

- Utilises technical and clinical judgment to assess perioperative requirements and provide patient care and assistance during all aspects of anaesthetic administration and during anaesthetic related procedures.
- May administer medications in accordance with written or verbal prescriptions made by a suitably qualified medical practitioner or those noted as legal prescribers of medications.¹
- Provides support to the medical anaesthetist or intensive care specialist and collaborates and works

¹ Perioperative Practitioners must ensure they practice within their area of skill, competency, and education. Practitioners must adhere to the principles of sedation as set out in the Council's "[Sedation Guidelines](#)"

alongside other health professionals during perioperative, interventional, and investigative procedures.

- Practices in operating departments, radiology and MRI units, intensive care, maternity and emergency departments, and any other areas where anaesthesia is administered, or emergency management of the airway or haemodynamically unstable patient care is conducted.
- Provides support for the safe transportation of people receiving surgery, both within the hospital environment and/or between other hospitals or healthcare facilities.
- Works as a team member alongside other health workers.
- Anticipates and prepares the equipment, monitoring, and other requirements specific to each anaesthetic or surgical procedure.
- Practices in theatre, PACU, 'pre-admission' clinics, ICU, civil emergency response teams, New Zealand Medical Assistance Team (NZMAT).
- Provides physical and emotional support to the person undergoing surgery to enhance the safe outcome of anaesthetic procedures.
- Anticipates and prepares the equipment, monitoring, and other requirements specific to each anaesthetic procedure.

The Council's Competencies for Perioperative Practitioners describe the skills and activities of a Perioperative Practitioner.

With appropriate education, Perioperative Practitioners may practise across the perioperative space, including insertion of PICC lines, work in theatre in scrub, circulating and traditional anaesthetic technician roles as well as pre-operative care and PACU.

Scope of Practice: Perioperative Practitioner

Perioperative Practitioners ("Practitioners") collaborate closely with clinicians in providing patient care, as well as monitoring the effectiveness of treatment and therapy. They do this through the provision of perioperative technical management and patient care that supports the provision of quality surgical care and safe anaesthetic services in New Zealand accredited health facilities. They are skilled in perioperative care in the disciplines of surgical support, anaesthesia, pre- and post-anaesthesia and in the use and maintenance of sophisticated anaesthetic equipment. Practitioners establish quality assurance programmes to monitor and ensure patient care is a fundamental skill and ensure they engage in lifelong learning.

Practitioners may use their educational preparation and clinical expertise to practise within their area of competency, as well as to manage, teach, evaluate, and research anaesthetic and perioperative practice. Practitioners will ensure they develop their practice through continuing education, experience, and ongoing competence development.

Practitioners with a qualification specialising in Perioperative Practice typically practice in anaesthetics and perioperative care. Their breadth and depth of education may allow them to practise across the perioperative environment. Perioperative Practitioners may, with appropriate education and demonstrated competence, insert PICC lines, work in theatre in scrub, circulating and traditional anaesthetic technician roles as well as pre-operative care and PACU.

Practitioners must ensure they practise safely and effectively within their area(s) of competence and do not practise in areas in which they are not proficient. Practitioners must exercise professional judgement by undertaking any necessary education and/or gaining experience before moving into a new practice area.

Prescribed Qualifications

For the purpose of registration, a practitioner must hold one of the following:

New Zealand Graduates

- a. A bachelor's degree in Perioperative Practice issued by a New Zealand university accredited by the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand; or
- b. A graduate diploma in anaesthetic technology issued by a New Zealand university accredited by the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand; or
- c. A tertiary qualification in anaesthetic technology from a New Zealand university combined with relevant and specialised anaesthetic technology experience and successful completion of an anaesthetic technician examination, all of which are accredited and/or approved by the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand; or
- d. A course of training and/or examinations combined with relevant and specialised anaesthetic technology experience that, in the opinion of the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand, is substantially equivalent to the course of the New Zealand prescribed qualification; or
- e. New Zealand registered and enrolled nurses who have at least three years' post-nursing-qualification experience specialised in perioperative practice or anaesthetic technology in a New Zealand health facility, and may be required to pass an examination set by the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand; or
- f. **A New Zealand degree or higher in a relevant human health science linked to perioperative practice, or anaesthesia and approved by the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand; and**
 - **A pass in an examination for perioperative practitioners set by the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand.**

Overseas educated Practitioners

- a. Certification in perioperative practice/anaesthetic technology by an authority outside New Zealand, combined with relevant and specialised perioperative experience and/or the successful completion of an anaesthetic/perioperative examination, all of which are approved and/or accredited by the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand and that, in the opinion of the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand, is sufficient for registration as a perioperative practitioner; or
- b. A graduate perioperative practice/anaesthetic technology/operating department practitioner qualification assessed by the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand as substantially equivalent to the prescribed New Zealand qualification; or
- c. **A bachelor's or postgraduate degree in a relevant anaesthesia discipline linked to perioperative practice, and approved by the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand combined with appropriate clinical experience; and**
 - **A pass in an examination for perioperative practitioners set by the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand.**