



**MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL
OF NEW ZEALAND**

TE KAUNIHERA PŪTAIAO HAUORA O AOTEAROA

Competence Standards for Anaesthetic Technicians in Aotearoa New Zealand

Revised November 2018

*The Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand
is responsible for setting the standards of
competence for Anaesthetic Technicians in
Aotearoa New Zealand under the Health
Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003*

Policy Title	
Reference Number	2018-Nov-V3-MSC Competence Standards (AT)
Scope	This policy applies to all anaesthetic technicians for the purpose of registration and recertification with the Medical Sciences Council

Associated Policy Documents	
Document Title	Reference Number
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Introduction

The Medical Sciences Council is established under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act). The Council has a primary responsibility in protecting the health and safety of the public by ensuring Anaesthetic Technicians are competent and fit to practise. Setting standards for practitioners' education and competence is a critical strategy for enabling the latter.

Competence standards need to be dynamic to reflect evolving changes to professional practice. The Council manages this through a regular schedule of review that is inclusive of a public consultation process.

2017 Review

In 2017 the Council undertook a public consultation on a proposal to redefine the parameters of the Anaesthetic Technician scope of practice so as to improve patient outcomes through a more flexible workforce.

The Council has decided that further investigation is needed to explore other options that would better enable a more flexible Anaesthetic Technician workforce. This means that the current description of the Anaesthetic Technician remains unchanged at this point in time.

When considering the consultation feedback in respect of the revised competence standards the Council noted that the first four domains – (1) Professional and Ethical Conduct; (2) Communication and Collaboration; (3) Evidence-Based Practice and Professional Learning; and (4) Safety of Practice and Risk Management – apply equally to the current Anaesthetic Technician scope of practice, as they did to the proposed Perioperative Practitioner scope. The main point of difference in respect of the competence standards for the current and proposed scope definitions are those described for Domain 5.

Taking into consideration the consultation feedback, and in alignment with the decision to retain the status quo for the scope definition, the Council has undertaken a further revision of the competence standards to ensure alignment with the current definition of an Anaesthetic Technician.

The enclosed revision of the *Competence Standards for Anaesthetic Technicians* sets out the entry-level competencies that are required for this scope of practice.

The Council has sought to future-proof its competence standards through the adoption of an overarching framework based on the principles of flexibility and versatility. This is essential for anaesthetic technology practice which occurs within a healthcare environment that is continually evolving, and is subject to ongoing advancements in technology. In addition the revised competencies framework is articulated in a framework that is similar to many other regulated health professions within Australasia.

These competence standards are a “living document” and will continue to undergo a regular schedule of review to ensure the standards continue to be fit for purpose over time.

Competence Standards

Competence standards are a description of the ability of an Anaesthetic Technician to practise safely and effectively in a variety of contexts and environments. Competence is influenced by many factors including, but not limited to, the practitioner's qualifications, clinical experience, professional development and their ability to integrate knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and judgements within a practice setting. A critical value of competence standards is their capacity to support and facilitate professional practice and growth.

The standards adopted by the Council are expressed as entry-level competencies and behaviours. However it is expected that all practitioners will successively build on these competence standards to levels expected of experienced practitioners.

The competence standards identify the minimum knowledge, skills and professional attributes necessary for practice. During any one procedure it is expected practitioners will demonstrate elements of practice across a number of broadly-defined domains of competence. This recognises that competent professional practice is more than a sum of each discrete part. It requires an ability to draw on and integrate the breadth of competencies to support overall performance.

Context of the Competence Standards

The competence standards are directly linked to the Anaesthetic Technician scope of practice.

Anaesthetic Technicians in Aotearoa New Zealand practise within a legislated regulatory framework under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003. Defining a scope of practice serves to protect the health and safety of the public through the use of a protected professional title. Only individuals who hold current registration with the Medical Sciences Council are permitted to use the professional title of *Anaesthetic Technician*.

Application of the Competence Standards

The Council's competence standards are intended to be sufficiently flexible and versatile to be relevant to a variety of stakeholders.

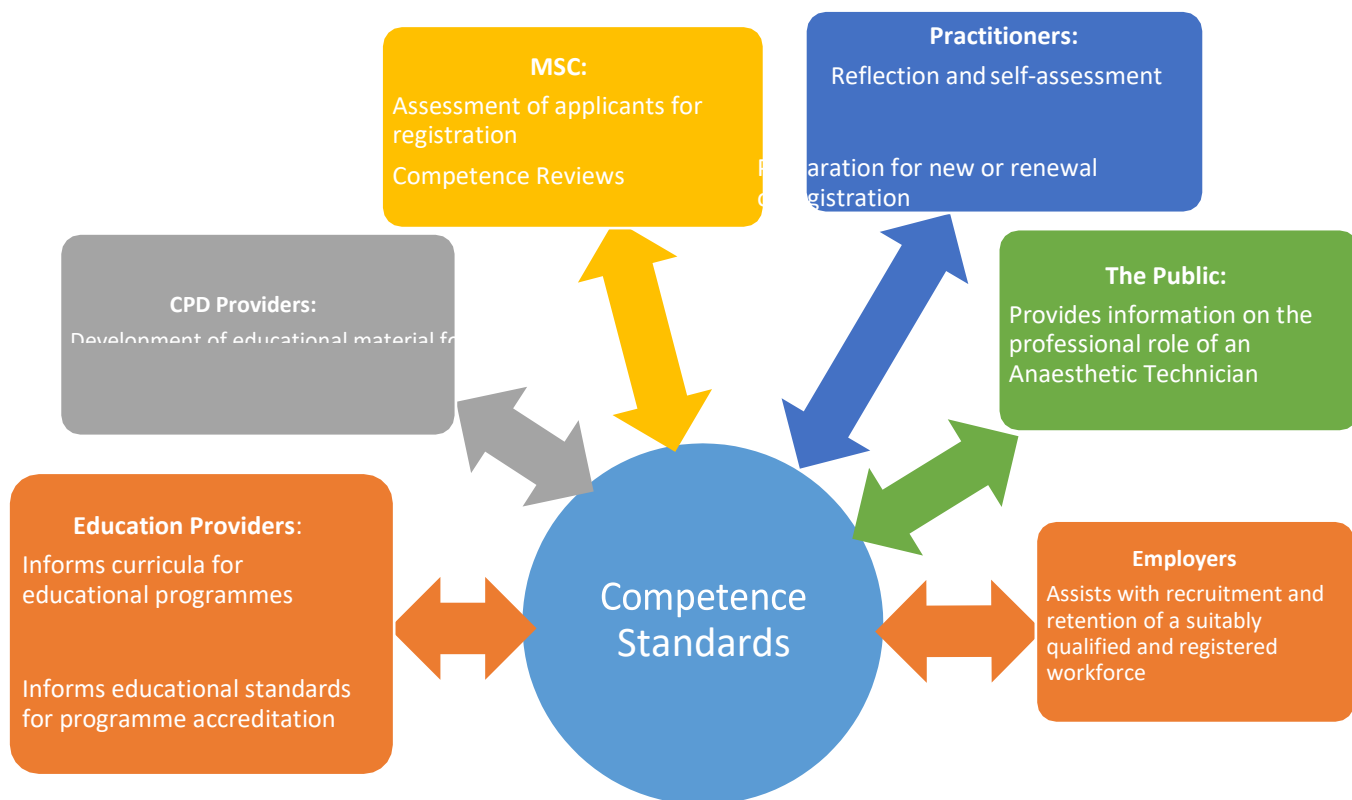
The Council uses the competence standards as a reference point of professional competence when exercising their statutory functions under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003, including for:

- Registration of practitioners qualified through an approved anaesthetic technology programme in Aotearoa New Zealand
- Registration of practitioners who completed their initial qualification in other countries
- Recertification of practitioners who are registered and are returning to practice
- Evaluation of a registrant whose level of competence to practise may pose a risk of harm to the public (e.g. if the Council receives a complaint or notification about that registrant)

Individual practitioners should use the standards to guide their professional development including using a reflective approach to identify their particular learning needs based on the competencies required for the Anaesthetic Technician scope of practice.

Providers of pre-registration education programmes are expected to use the competence standards to inform the development of graduate curricula. This will assist new registrants in understanding the professional competencies required of them once registered.

The competence standards can also be a useful resource reference/benchmark for other regulatory authorities, healthcare professionals, professional bodies, the public, and other stakeholders.



Structure of the Competence Standards

The competence standards have been articulated so as to be sufficiently broad-based to allow for universal applicability across a variety of practice settings, while at the same time being sufficiently focused to articulate the particular competencies specific to anaesthetic technology practice.

Domains Key competencies are arranged within a number of integrated themes called <i>Domains</i> . There are five domains of competence: Domain 1: Professional and Ethical Conduct Domain 2: Communication and Collaboration Domain 3: Evidence-Based Practice and Professional Learning Domain 4: Safety of Practice and Risk Management Domain 5: Anaesthetic Technician
Each domain is then expanded on at three levels:
Key Competencies
The knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and judgements Anaesthetic Technicians require to practise safely and effectively in a range of contexts and situations
Competency Indicators
Indicator statements include descriptors of the behaviours that characterise a practitioner's competence in practice: Demonstrates Understanding: The practitioner needs to understand the underpinning knowledge pertaining to specific areas of anaesthetic technology practice but is not required to perform the procedures. Applies Knowledge: The practitioner is required to apply their detailed knowledge to perform procedures and engage in professional and safe practice. These are the <i>doing</i> elements. Indicators are neither comprehensive nor exhaustive – they provide examples of evidence of competence.
Notes
Notes have been included against some of the indicator statements Notes beginning with “ Must ” indicate that all in the list are mandatory to be assessed against Notes beginning with “ May ” indicate that any in the list are can be included to be assessed against but not all are mandatory

Competence Standards for Anaesthetic Technicians in Aotearoa New Zealand

An Overview of the Competencies Domains

Domain 1: Professional and Ethical Conduct

This domain covers practitioners' responsibility to be professional and ethical and to practise within the current medico-legal framework. It includes their responsibility for ensuring patient confidentiality/privacy is maintained at all times while recognising the potential role as a patient advocate

Domain 2: Communication and Collaboration

This domain covers practitioners' responsibility in utilising appropriate, clear and effective communication and their responsibility for ensuring they function effectively as a member of a health team at all times

Domain 3: Evidence-Based Practice and Professional Learning

This domain covers practitioners' responsibility to engage in evidence-based practice and to critically monitor their actions through a range of reflective processes. It includes their responsibility for identifying, planning and implementing their ongoing professional learning needs

Domain 4: Safety of Practice and Risk Management

This domain covers practitioners' responsibility to protect patients, others and the environment from harm by managing and responding to the risks inherent in both healthcare and perioperative (anaesthetic technology) practice. It includes their responsibility for ensuring high quality professional services are provided for the benefit of patients and other service users

Domain 5: Anaesthetic Technician

This domain covers the knowledge, skills and capabilities practitioners need to practise as an Anaesthetic Technician.

Domain 1: Professional and Ethical Conduct

Code	Key Competencies	Code	Competency Indicators	Notes
Dom1. Com.1	Practise in an ethical and professional manner consistent with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements, and knowledge of service provisions and resource management	Dom1. Com.1a	Apply knowledge of legal responsibilities	Must include an understanding of responsibilities contained in NZ legislation and regulations, specific responsibilities to maintain confidentiality, confirm informed consent, documentation, and exercising duty of care
		Dom1. Com.1b	Manage personal, mental and physical health to ensure fitness to practise	Must include competence, professionalism, including a sense of responsibility and accountability, self-awareness and professional values, sound mental health and the capacity to maintain health and wellbeing for practice
		Dom1. Com.1c	Apply knowledge of mandatory and voluntary reporting obligations	Must include making a notification about the health (impairment), conduct or performance of a registered health practitioner who may be posing a risk of harm to the public, as well as their own impairment to practise
		Dom1. Com.1d	Apply knowledge of the Medical Sciences Council's <i>Code of Ethics</i> to their practice	
		Dom1. Com.1e	Provide relevant information to the patient and apply knowledge of appropriate methods to obtain informed Consent	Must include organisational policies and protocols
		Dom1. Com.1f	Apply knowledge of the New Zealand health system	May include knowledge of service provision and resource management arrangements, the structure and role of public and private providers and reporting requirements
		Dom1. Com.1g	Apply knowledge of the principles underpinning ethical practice within the New Zealand health environment	Must include respect of the rights of the individual, respect of the autonomy of the individual, cause no harm, and advance the common good

Competency Indicators		Notes	
Demonstrate Understanding	Understanding underpinning knowledge relating to practice. Does not necessarily undertake the procedures	Must	All in the list are mandatory to be assessed against
Apply Knowledge	Needs detailed knowledge that is applied within practice	May	Any in list can be included to be assessed against but not all are mandatory

Code	Key Competencies	Code	Competency Indicators	Notes
Dom1. Com.1	Practise in an ethical and professional manner consistent with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements, and knowledge of service provisions and resource management	Dom1. Com.1h	Apply knowledge of appropriate levels of autonomy and professional judgement in a variety of perioperative practice settings	<p>Must include recognition that the determination of clinical appropriateness is the responsibility of the anaesthetist</p> <p>Must include reference to ANZCA professional documents related to anaesthetic technology practice</p>
Dom1. Com.2	Provide each patient with an appropriate level of dignity and care in a range of settings in partnership with patients, families/whanau, and communities	Dom1. Com.2a	Apply knowledge of the influence of socio-cultural factors on patient attitudes and responses to perioperative services	<p>Must include socio-cultural factors related to cultural and linguistic diversity, age, gender, disability, socio-economic, geographic locations</p> <p>Must include application of the Treaty of Waitangi with an understanding of its principles within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand and anaesthetic technology practice and its practical application within the profession</p> <p>Must uphold tikanga best practice guidelines when working with Maori patients and their whanau</p>
		Dom1. Com.2b	Apply knowledge of appropriate professional behaviour in patient interactions	Must include behaviour that is non-discriminatory, empathetic and respectful of socio-cultural differences
		Dom1. Com.2c	Apply knowledge of appropriate boundaries between patients and health professionals	Must include understanding of the legal, ethical and professional boundaries involved with the use of social media and in interpersonal relationships between the practitioner and the patient
Dom1. Com.3	Assume responsibility and accept accountability for professional decisions	Dom1. Com.3a	Apply knowledge of appropriate responses to unsafe or unprofessional practice within their scope of practice	
		Dom1. Com.3b	Apply knowledge of organisational policies and guidelines with professional standards within their scope of practice	
		Dom1. Com.3c	Apply knowledge of relevant quality systems appropriate to their scope of practice	May include workplace-specific systems and protocols, and relevant NZ publications

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Code	Key Competencies	Code	Competency Indicators	Notes
Dom1. Com.4	Advocate on behalf of the patient when appropriate within the context of the practitioner's scope of practice	Dom1. Com.4a	Apply knowledge of the principles of patient advocacy and their application to anaesthetic technology services	May include supporting and promoting the rights and interests of individuals, assisting individuals to achieve or maintain their rights and representing their needs. Advocacy strategies include representing the patient, supporting the patient to represent their own interests and ensuring people are empowered to voice their perspectives
		Dom1. Com.4b	Apply knowledge of when it may be appropriate to intervene on the patient's behalf	
		Dom1. Com.4c	Apply knowledge of responsibilities to consult with other members of the health care team about the suitability and application of the proposed anaesthetic technology procedure when appropriate	Must include an understanding of the relative risks and benefits to patients of the range of interventions and/or treatments used within anaesthetic technology practice

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Domain 2: Communication and Collaboration

Code	Key Competencies	Code	Competency Indicators	Notes
Dom2. Com.1	Communicate clearly, sensitively and effectively with the patient and their family/whanau or carers	Dom2. Com.1a	Apply knowledge of ways to establish rapport with the patient to gain understanding of their issues and perspectives	May be influenced by English language skills, health literacy, age, health status, culture
		Dom2. Com.1b	Apply knowledge of ways to communicate with the patient and/or carers to collect and convey information	
		Dom2. Com.1c	Apply knowledge of communication strategies to engender trust and confidence and respect patient confidentiality, privacy and dignity	
		Dom2. Com.1d	Respond to patient queries or issues as appropriate	Must include awareness of knowledge limitations and need to refer to other registered health practitioners as required
		Dom2. Com.1e	Apply knowledge of likely communications barriers specific to individual patients and/or carers	Must include the practitioner demonstrating an awareness of the ways their own culture and experience affect their interpersonal style and having an awareness of strategies to ensure this does not present an impediment
		Dom2. Com.1f	Apply knowledge of appropriate adjustments to communication style to suit the particular needs of the patient including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	Must include active listening, use of appropriate language and detail, use of appropriate verbal and non-verbal cues and language, and confirming that the other person understood
		Dom2. Com.1g	Apply knowledge of how to engage third parties to facilitate effective communication when required	May include communication with family/whanau, significant others, carers, interpreters, legal guardians and medical advocates
		Dom2. Com.1h	Apply knowledge of informed consent	Must include understanding that informed consent is a person's voluntary decision about healthcare that is made with knowledge and understanding of the benefits and risks involved

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Code	Key Competencies	Code	Competency Indicators	Notes
Dom2. Com.2	Collaborate with other health practitioners	Dom2. Com.2a	Apply knowledge of effective and respectful working relationships with health practitioners	Must include professional ethics and inter-disciplinary communication
		Dom2. Com.2b	Apply knowledge of professional roles and responsibilities of healthcare team members and other service providers	May include registered health practitioners, accredited health professionals, licensed health professionals, and unregistered healthcare workers
		Dom2. Com.2c	Apply knowledge of accepted protocols and procedures to provide relevant, accurate, and timely verbal and written communication	Must consider the information needs of the audience and use of the appropriate medical terminology and applying knowledge of organisational protocols

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Domain 3: Evidence-Based Practice and Professional Learning

Code	Key Competencies	Code	Competency Indicators	Notes
Dom3. Com.1	Apply critical and reflective thinking to their clinical practice	Dom3. Com.1a	Describe the clinical situation and identify information required to respond to the situation	
		Dom3. Com.1b	Apply knowledge of appropriate methods to collect and assess evidence	Must include an understanding of commonly used quantitative and qualitative research methods
		Dom3. Com.1c	Apply knowledge of the identification, access or collection of information from credible sources	
		Dom3. Com.1d	Apply knowledge of how to assess the adequacy of information to answer the issue under inquiry	
		Dom3. Com.1e	Apply knowledge of clinical reasoning and reflective processes to identify implications for practice, including limitations of practice and recognition of need to consult	<p>Must include skills in questioning, analysing, synthesising, assessing, and cognitive reasoning, and the critical appraisal of literature and evidence.</p> <p>Must include structured and/or informal reflection to review and integrate knowledge and findings into practice.</p> <p>May include review of detailed plans or proposals, informal updates and journal articles</p>

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Code	Key Competencies	Code	Competency Indicators	Notes
Dom3. Com.2	Identify ongoing professional learning needs and opportunities	Dom3. Com.2a	Apply knowledge of legal and professional responsibilities to undertake continuing professional development (CPD)	
		Dom3. Com.2b	Apply knowledge of personal strengths and limitations to identify learning required to improve and adapt professional practice	
		Dom3. Com.2.c	Apply knowledge of strategies for identifying learning needs of self and others to deliver improved patient outcomes	
		Dom3. Com.2d	Apply knowledge of planning and implementation strategies to address professional and development needs	May be provided by the professional community and the broader healthcare network/practice
Dom3. Com.3	Participate in the education of others	Dom3. Com.3a	Apply knowledge of communication strategies to facilitate understanding and learning both within an individual and group context	
		Dom3. Com.3b	Apply knowledge of assessment, evaluation and feedback	May include a registered Anaesthetic Technician providing clinical supervision to other Anaesthetic Technicians and other health practitioners and students as appropriate to their clinical role and knowledge

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Domain 4: Safety of Practice and Risk Management

Code	Key Competencies	Code	Competency Indicators	Notes
Dom4. Com.1	Practise safely, appropriate to the scope of practice	Dom4. Com.1a	Apply knowledge of New Zealand legislation and/or guidelines of international best practice in the safe use of anaesthetic technologies	
		Dom4. Com.1b	Apply knowledge of the principles of risk management relevant to anaesthetic technology practice	
		Dom4. Com.1c	Apply knowledge of risk control systems and procedures	Must include an understanding of principles of relevant quality control systems and application to risk management
		Dom4. Com.1d	Apply knowledge of safe anaesthetic technology practice	
Dom4. Com.2	Protect and enhance patient safety	Dom4. Com.2a	Apply knowledge of patient identification procedures to confirm the correct match of patient with intended procedure	
		Dom4. Com.2b	Apply knowledge of maintaining and communicating patient information to ensure accuracy and confidentiality	Must include organisational protocols and legislative requirements for maintaining patient records Must include safe storage and transmission of electronic patient information
		Dom4. Com.2c	Apply knowledge of risks associated with patient transfers	Must include organisational protocols and procedures
		Dom4. Com.2d	Apply knowledge of risk of infection	Must demonstrate understanding of transmission modes of infections (host, agent and environment), established practices for preventing the transmission including effective hand hygiene, aseptic techniques, and ability to implement NZ Ministry of Health infection prevention and control guidelines

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Code	Key Competencies	Code	Competency Indicators	Notes
Dom4. Com.3	Maintain safety of self and others in the work environment	Dom4. Com.3a	Apply knowledge of legal responsibilities for health and safety of self and others	Must include the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
		Dom4. Com.3b	Apply knowledge of the safety hazards in the workplace and apply knowledge of responsibilities for notification	Must include protocols or instructions, legislation and regulations
		Dom4. Com.3c	Apply knowledge of the identification and implementation of safety management procedures	Must include organisational policies and procedures
		Dom4. Com.3.d	Apply knowledge of anaesthesia related hazards and control measures to ensure the safety of others in the workplace	Must include organisational policies and procedures
		Dom4. Com.3e	Apply knowledge of reporting incidents in accordance with protocols, procedures and legal requirements	Must include organisational policies and procedures

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Domain 5: Anaesthetic Technician

Code	Key Competencies	Code	Competency Indicators	Notes
Dom5. Com.1	Apply knowledge of anatomy and physiology relevant to anaesthetic technology practice	Dom5. Com.1a	Apply knowledge of anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology changes in a range of surgical health conditions	Must include assessment, response, and evaluation of haemodynamic and other body system changes relevant to the perioperative episode of care
		Dom5. Com.1b	Apply knowledge of normal and abnormal physiological responses to a range of anaesthesia conditions and interventions	Must include pain, infection, altered levels of consciousness, fluid and electrolyte imbalances, acid-base imbalances, shock, sepsis, medication actions, interactions and side effects
Dom5. Com.2	Apply knowledge of principles of surgical and interventional procedures within an anaesthetic technology context	Dom5. Com.2a	Apply knowledge of correct and safe positioning of patients	Must include knowledge of preventative measures for venous thrombosis embolism, pressure injury, and bundles of care
		Dom5. Com.2b	Apply knowledge of anaesthesia to support the anaesthetist during the induction, maintenance and emergence of anaesthesia	Must include general anaesthesia, sedation, regional and local anaesthesia
		Dom5. Com.2.c	Apply knowledge of health status assessment	

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Code	Key Competencies	Code	Competency Indicators	Notes
Dom5. Com.3	Apply knowledge of patient care within an anaesthesia context	Dom5. Com.3a	Apply knowledge the principles of patient care	Must include emotional and cultural wellbeing, understanding how fears, socio-economic, physiological and pharmacological factors can impact on perioperative patient stress and recovery Must include patient assessment and care plan, monitoring, admission and discharge
		Dom5. Com.3b	Apply knowledge of health status assessment using a range of assessment and diagnostic tools	Must include early warning score, serum levels, fluid balance chart, cardiac rhythm analysis, pain scores, sedation scores
		Dom5. Com.3c	Apply knowledge of patient specific risk factors that may contribute to adverse effects	
		Dom5. Com.3d	Apply knowledge of the transportation of perioperative patients	Must include inter and intra hospital and safety requirements including documentation and handover
Dom5.Com.4	Apply knowledge of the safe and appropriate use of anaesthesia equipment	Dom5. Com.4a	Apply knowledge of anaesthesia equipment to confirm that it is in a safe, clean and operational state in accordance with professional guidelines	Must include preparation of the anaesthetic machine, ancillary, monitoring, intravenous administration, warming, emergency and resuscitation equipment Must include professional guidelines as per ANZCA and NZATS Must include cleaning, decontamination and/or sterilisation, storage, care and maintenance of anaesthetic equipment, and appropriate disposal of single use items
		Dom5. Com.4b	Apply knowledge of the identification and appropriate action to correct unacceptable condition or operation of equipment	Must include knowledge of fundamental troubleshooting including electronic applications, to ensure continuation of patient safety
		Dom5. Com.4c	Apply knowledge of protocols to record and report conformance and non-conformance of equipment	

Code	Key Competencies	Code	Competency Indicators	Notes
Dom5. Com.5	Apply knowledge of emergency management	Dom5. Com.5a	Apply knowledge of life-threatening situations to contribute to appropriate interventions within the perioperative team environment	Must include emergency plans, communication lines, and organisational protocols Must include management of anaphylaxis, CICO, MH, haemorrhage, LA toxicity. Current NZRC CORE Immediate
Dom5. Com.6	Apply knowledge of patient record keeping and documentation	Dom5. Com.6a	Apply knowledge of legislative responsibilities relating to ownership, storage, retention and destruction of patient records and other practice documentation	
		Dom5. Com.6b	Apply knowledge of patient information systems	May include National Health Index (NHI system), electronic medical records, risk management systems
		Dom5. Com.6c	Apply knowledge of the verification and management of information	
Dom5. Com.7	Apply knowledge of pharmacology within the anaesthesia environment within the limitations of their scope of practice	Dom5. Com.7a	Apply knowledge of safe dispensing of medicines	Must include organisational policies and protocols
		Dom5. Com.7b	Demonstrate knowledge of safe medication management (prescription, dispensing, and administration) principles	Must include Medicines Act, organisational policies and protocols
		Dom5. Com.7c	Demonstrate knowledge of pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics	Must include medications commonly administered in the perioperative environment
Dom5. Com.8	Demonstrate knowledge of other roles within the operating department environment	Dom5. Com.8a	Demonstrate knowledge of the principles underpinning the practice of other roles within the operating department environment	Must include scrub role, post-anaesthesia care, circulating role

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