

Notice of Scope of Practice and Prescribed Qualifications for the Practice of Anaesthetic Technology in New Zealand

Pursuant to sections 11 and 12 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003, the following notice is issued by the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand ("the Council").

This notice sets out the scope of practice and qualifications for the practice of anaesthetic technology in New Zealand as required by sections 11 and 12 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 ("the Act").

The scope of practice and qualifications were agreed by the Council following a consultation undertaken in 2011 on the registration and recertification frameworks for the profession of anaesthetic technology.

This notice takes effect from 1 April 2012.

The Profession of Anaesthetic Technology

Anaesthetic technology is the provision of peri-operative technical management and patient care for supporting the provision of quality health care and safe anaesthetic services in New Zealand accredited health facilities.

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

- anaesthetic related research and development;
- applied science and anaesthetic technology education;
- advanced patient monitoring;
- collection of samples for diagnostic investigation; and
- management.

Scope of Practice

The profession of anaesthetic technology contains one scope of practice of an anaesthetic technician.

Pursuant to section 11 of the Act, the Council specifies the anaesthetic technician scope of practice as:

An anaesthetic technician is a member of an anaesthetic care team, working collaboratively with other health professionals.

An anaesthetic technician:

- Utilises technical and clinical judgment to assess peri-operative requirements and provide patient care and assistance during all aspects of anaesthetic administration and during anaesthetic related procedures.
- Cannot prescribe and/or administer agents used for general anaesthesia and/or sedation independently. Administration of anaesthetic agents can only occur in an assisting role under the direction of a medical anaesthetist¹ or intensive care specialist.
- Provides support to the medical anaesthetist or intensive care specialist and collaborates and works alongside other health professionals during peri-operative, interventional and investigative procedures.
- Provides anaesthetic assistance in operating departments, radiology and MRI units, intensive care, obstetric and emergency departments and any other area where anaesthesia is administered.
- Provides support for the safe transportation of patients, both within the hospital environment and/or between hospitals or surgical healthcare facilities.
- Works as a team member alongside other health workers.
- Provides physical and emotional support to the patient 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 Anaesthetic Technicians describe the skills and activities of an anaesthetic technician.

Prescribed Qualifications

Pursuant to section 12 of the Act, the following qualifications are prescribed for registration as an anaesthetic technician:

1. 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 Council.
2. A course of training and/or examinations combined with relevant and specialised anaesthetic technology experience that, in the opinion of the Council, is substantially equivalent to the course of the New Zealand prescribed qualification.
3. Certification in anaesthetic technology by an authority outside New Zealand, combined with relevant and specialised anaesthetic technology experience and/or the successful completion of an anaesthetic technician examination, all of which are approved and/or accredited by the Council and that, in the opinion of the Council, is sufficient for registration as an anaesthetic technician.
4. Applicants who hold registration as an anaesthetic technician with the New Zealand Anaesthetic Technicians Society as at 31 May 2011 will be granted registration as an anaesthetic technician with the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand. This pathway to registration is available until 30 April 2012.

5. At the expiry of the above clause all non-registered anaesthetic technicians will be required to provide evidence that they hold a relevant qualification as approved by the Council and as set out in clauses 1-3 above.
6. New Zealand registered and enrolled nurses who have at least five years post-nursing-qualification specialised anaesthetic technology experience in a New Zealand health facility, including the five-year period preceding 1 April 2012, may apply for registration as an anaesthetic technician. The nurse may be required to undergo a work-based assessment as approved by the Council. This pathway to registration will be available through to 31 March 2013.
7. At the expiry of the above clause all registered and enrolled nurses who wish to practise as an anaesthetic technician will be required to provide evidence that they hold a qualification as approved by the Council and as set out in clauses 1-3 above.

Dated at Wellington this 5th day of September 2011.

MARY DOYLE, Registrar, Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand.

Key to Annotations

¹ In this context "medical anaesthetist" includes anaesthetists in training.

² This may include working alongside people who are unregistered and or unqualified.

S-h3M
