

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY for the REGISTERED NURSE in the perioperative environment



The Perioperative Registered Nurse (RN) is an integral member of the multidisciplinary team and must demonstrate accountability and responsibility for the quality of nursing care delivered during the patient's perioperative experience. Sound knowledge and clinical competence in the provision of complex care ensures safe and effective outcomes for the patient and members of the multidisciplinary team.

The NSW OTA Inc Perioperative Career Development Pathway for the RN allows for:

- ease of identification of key aspects of perioperative nursing practice requiring ongoing development, and;
- a standardised approach in the achievement of competence and subsequent career progression for the perioperative nurse.

NSW OTA recognises that each perioperative facility offers different nursing roles and surgical specialities and therefore this is a generic pathway to be tailored for any individual facility as required.

Time frames outlined in this document are recommendations only, as each nurse will progress differently depending on prior learning achievements and part time or full time employment.

Assessment / competency are assessed using the facility's own assessment / competency tools.

ALL NURSES:

- Comply with ANMC, ANF, MoH and ACORN standards, guidelines, Codes of Conduct, Ethics and Professional Boundaries for the RN (see references)
- Complete facility specific annual mandatory training
- Attend annual performance development review with manager

NOVICE to perioperative nursing or NEW to unit perioperative nurse

Induction requirements and 0-3 months

- Complete structured induction to the perioperative unit
- Complete unit based induction package with associated assessment activities, awarding recognition of prior learning where appropriate
- Complete facility specific mandatory training
- Complete a self assessment tool to identify learning needs (taking into account recognition of prior learning), use as part of the performance development and review process
- Rotate through speciality / allocated area/s within the perioperative unit (instrument/circulating, anaesthetics and recovery) as required



ADVANCED BEGINNER PRACTICE

Participate in relevant professional development activities

3-12 months

Anaesthetics & Recovery Room

Demonstrate competence, as appropriate, in the following areas:

- Patient admission and verification
- Pre and postoperative patient assessment
- Clinical handover
- Medication administration
- Documentation of nursing care provided
- Infection control practices
- Patient positioning
- Management of patient with pain modalities eg: PCA, epidural
- Airway assessment and management
- Anaesthetic machine checking and troubleshooting
- Set-up and care of vascular access lines and devices

Manage patients who have received

- **Initially** minor elective surgery and / or anaesthetic
E.g. gynae, general, urology, dental
- **Progressing to** more complex elective surgery and / or anaesthetic including emergency and on call/out of hours.

Instrument/Circulating

Demonstrate competence in the following areas:

- Pre and postoperative patient assessment
- Patient assessment and verification
- Clinical handover
- Intraoperative medication administration
- Documentation of nursing care provided
- Infection control practices
- Patient positioning
- Aseptic technique
- Scrubbing, gowning and gloving
- Handling of instruments, accountable and other items
- Instrument care and handling
- Use of electrosurgery/laser during surgery

Rotate through allocated specialist areas:

- **Initially** minor elective surgery
E.g. gynae, general, urology, dental
- **Progressing to** more complex major elective surgery and eventually emergency surgery.

INTERMEDIATE PRACTICE

Participate in relevant professional development activities

12-24 Months

- Manage a cohort of routine elective surgery or routine general anaesthesia patients, with limited supervision
- Gain further experience caring for patients having complex, emergency or trauma surgery, or requiring more complex anaesthetic/recovery techniques, with supervision
- Work as a member of the after hours, on-call team
- RN acts in supervisory role of ENs and novice RNs
- Attend Preceptor Workshop and begin precepting student and novice perioperative nurses
- Take on specialty portfolio and act as a resource person for that area
- Identify areas of potential risk and work collaboratively to reduce effects
- Become a member of professional Perioperative Nursing body (NSW OTA and ACORN)
- Self initiate professional development opportunities, by attending:
 - unit based inservice
 - short courses or study days appropriate to speciality offered by internal or external providers
- NSW OTA Professional Days and conferences
- ACORN conferences
- Commence post graduate studies including Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma in Anaesthetic & Recovery Room or Perioperative Nursing courses as addressed in ACORN Standards

ADVANCED PRACTICE ROLE
2 Years and above

- Manage cohort of patients having complex elective and emergency surgery or complex anaesthesia/recovery, with limited supervision
- Care for the deteriorating patient with limited supervision
- Act in Team Leader Role with manager supervision
- Participate in quality improvement, practice development, and/ or research projects
- Consider working towards CNS status by:
 - Participating in National Standards and WHS projects
 - Contribute to local policy / guideline development for unit or sub- specialty areas
 - Contribute to working parties
- Teach learners in the clinical setting on an ongoing basis
 - Inservice presentation
 - Act as resource person for unit and ward areas
- Complete Post Graduate Studies
- Attend internal or external specialty practice courses
- Apply for CNS status



SPECIALISATION / EXTENDED PRACTICE ROLE
5 years and above

- If achieved, perform according to CNS status
- Comply with ANF Competency Standards for the RN
- Lead quality improvement, practice development, and/ or research projects
- Act as highly skilled clinician and resource person
- Perform advanced troubleshooting
- Act in higher grade duties
e.g. after hours in charge/ team leader /CNE/
NUM/CNC
- Involvement in specialty practice meetings and projects at unit and hospital based level
- Contribute to the development of unit, sub-specialty and hospital based policies and procedures
- Contribute to effective functioning of workplace environment through inventory control and ordering of specialty equipment
- Liaise with perioperative and intra hospital senior nursing management
- Liaise with medical staff , allied health staff, and company representatives
- Network with inter-hospital perioperative nurses
- Act as preceptor/ mentor to all levels of staff within unit
- Deliver informal/formal training sessions
- Engage in mentorship with superior
- Self-direct professional development and career progression by attending appropriate courses or tertiary studies (management, education or specialty focus)
- Involvement in professional body (NSW OTA and ACORN)

References and bibliography

- 1. ACORN Standards 14th Edition: Australian College of Operating Room Nurses
 - Accountability for Practice
 - Postgraduate Nursing
 - Professional Development
 - Advanced practice nursing and nurse practitioner roles

- Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council Inc. (ANMC) (2007). ANMC Guideline, [Delegation and Supervision for Nurses and Midwives](#).

- NSW Health [PD2013_045](#) Management of instruments, accountable items and other items used for surgery or procedures

- NSW Health [PD2014_036](#) Clinical Procedure Safety

- Australian Nursing Federation [National Competency Standard for the Registered Nurse](#)

- [Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia](#)
 - Professional Codes and Guidelines
 - Professional Standards
 - Position Statements
 - Codes of Professional Conduct
 - Decision making framework
 - National Standard Competency
 - Professional Practice guidelines

- NSW Ministry of Health Code of Conduct. Policy Directive [PD 2015_035](#).