



Australian Anaesthetic Healthcare Practitioners/Anaesthetic Technicians: Scope of Practice

Statement of Inclusion:

AAAHP understands that in Australia, varying states and territories demonstrates Anaesthetic Assistants as having varying backgrounds and study pathways to becoming nationally qualified assistants. This can include, but is not limited to, titles such as; Anaesthetic Technician, Anaesthesia Technician, Anaesthetic Heath Practitioner, and Anaesthetic Healthcare Practitioner. Both titles have received ANZCA endorsement as demonstrated in a statement from 2023. Therefore, for the purpose of this document, both Anaesthetic Healthcare Practitioner (AHP) and Anaesthetic Technician (AT) titles will be referenced to include both titles currently used and recognised nationally.

Purpose:

An AHP/AT role is the provision of preoperative technical management and patient care for supporting the provision of quality health care and safe anaesthesia services in Australian accredited health facilities. As defined by SWAPNET, an AHP's/AT's 'scope of practice is defined by their qualifications, experience, competence and ability to practise safely and effectively'. This document's purpose is to clearly define and outline the scope in which AHP's/AT's national practice within.

Scope:

AHP's/AT's who hold a nationally accredited qualification provide anaesthetic assistance wherever general, regional, local and sedation anaesthesia is administered by an anaesthetist. This includes AHP's/AT's currently undertaking nationally recognised VET training programs.

Who work as a member of the peri-operative anaesthesia team to prepare the environment for safe induction, maintenance, and emergence of anaesthesia while continually ensuring safe quality patient care. Directly assisting and immediately supporting the anaesthetist in the provision of all aspects of anaesthesia care.

Who work under the direct and supervision of the anaesthetists and under the direction of other accredited medical officers and work lawfully, ethically and morally in accordance with relevant site policies, procedures, and legislative guidelines.

And operate within the scope of practice and standards of conduct specific to the medical/healthcare facility, has met the requirement of the employing medical/health care facility, and having met the workplace education requirement as per ANZCA PS08(A)

Position statement on the assistant for the anaesthetist 2016.



Background:

The presence of qualified AHP/AT during the stages of anaesthesia is crucial to the delivery of safe, quality and effective anaesthesia to patients. The practical, theoretical, and professional components of anaesthetic assistance are a key responsibility for a AHP/AT.

In the role of an AHP/AT, there are essential tasks to be conducted in the perioperative environment.

These tasks include, but are not limited to:

- Anaesthetic related research and continuous professional development
- Applied science and anaesthetic technology education
- Advanced patient monitoring
- Collection of samples for diagnostic investigation
- Provision of assistance in accordance with individual state and federal legislative, regulatory and governing levels
- Conducting work in a professional manner which is in direct alignment with the Anaesthetist requirements and the values, conduct, ethics and duty of care expected of the individual AHP/AT
- Documentation

Scope Requirements for Anaesthetic Healthcare Practitioners/Anaesthetic Technicians:

An AHP/AT promotes the well-being of the patient throughout the anaesthetic phase through the application of evidence-based practice and critical thinking.

- An anaesthetic technician advocates for their patients, promotes well-being is not a great term in sense of legal documentation.
- This reads as through the anaesthetist technician makes direct decisions about patient care individually which is misleading
- They provide care under the direction of “a medical anaesthetist, intensive care specialist, or any accredited medical officer” Throughout all phases of anaesthesia utilising the application of evidence-based practices and individual critical thinking.
- The inclusion of “any accredited medical officer” is required throughout the document as this makes the inclusion for anaesthesia providers who are not medical anaesthetists such as rural generalists, or medical superintendents in rural health facilities.

AHP's/AT's:

- Utilise technical and clinical judgement to assess peri-operative requirements and apply in practice
- Anticipate and prepares equipment, monitoring, and other requirements specific to each anaesthetic procedure
- Provides patient care and assistance during all aspects of anaesthetic administration and anaesthetic related procedures in accordance to role requirements and anaesthetist instruction



- Cannot independently prescribe or administer agents used for general anaesthesia and/or sedation. Administration of anaesthetic agents can only occur in an assisting role under the direct supervision of a medical anaesthetist, intensive care specialist, or any accredited medical officer
- Provide support, assistance and collaboration to the anaesthetist or intensive care specialist and work productively alongside other health professionals during peri-operative, interventional, and investigative procedures.
- Provide anaesthetic assistance in operating departments, medical imaging units (MRI, Radiology), intensive care, obstetric and emergency departments, endoscopy units, ECT units and any other areas where anaesthesia is administered
- Maintain and check all anaesthesia equipment in accordance with policy, company guidelines and in accordance with ANZCA college documents PG31(A), PS55(A), and PG28(A)
- Provide support for the safe transportation of patients, both within the hospital environment and/or between other hospitals or healthcare facilities
- Undertake higher skill duties, if accredited. within the scope of the training. Proof of successful obtainment of accredited higher skill completion must be verified and retained.
- Maintain a safe environment by:
 - Adhering to all safety precautions, including electrical safety precautions
 - Accurately preparing, setting up and checking anaesthetic and monitoring equipment
 - Cleaning, preparing, and maintaining anaesthetic equipment
 - Ensure that all required documentation is accurate and completed in a professional and timely manner

With reference to ANZCA PS08: Position statement on the assistant of the anaesthetist 2016, AHPs/Ats should be able to demonstrate performance of the following:

(7.1) Standards:

- Explain and adhere to anaesthesia standards and protocols
- Apply workplace and occupational health & safety regulations
- Liaise with other health professionals and healthcare workers
- Discuss legal responsibilities including privacy and confidentiality

(7.2) Anaesthesia Equipment:

- Describe the care, use and servicing of all equipment related to the provision of anaesthesia services including:
 - Anaesthesia delivery systems and ventilators.
 - Monitoring equipment including ultrasound devices.
 - Airways devices including fibre-optic instruments.
 - Intravascular devices.
- Describe the cleaning and sterilisation of equipment related to the provision of anaesthesia services.
- Describe the various infection control issues for staff, patients, and equipment.



- Apply measures to prevent pollution.

(7.3) Safety:

- Apply in practice the national safety standards, regulations and legislations for the following to reduce hazard potential:
 - Electricity
 - Radiation
 - Lasers
 - Gas cylinders and pipelines
 - Biological fluid exposure
- Ensure staff and patient safety when utilising equipment in anaesthetising locations.

(7.4) Anaesthesia Techniques:

- Discuss anaesthesia techniques involving all areas of perioperative practice including:
 - Preparation and participation in surgical safety checklists
 - Monitoring
 - Patient positioning
 - Induction
 - Securing the airway
 - Maintenance
 - Emergence
 - Patient transfer

(7.5) Regional and Local Anaesthesia:

- Describe regional and local anaesthesia, including all commonly used techniques for regional and local blockade.
- Discuss the guideline for the management of major regional analgesia as articulated in ANZCA professional document PG03(A).

(7.6) Sedation:

- Describe the principles of sedation and/or analgesia for diagnostic and interventional medical, dental, or surgical treatment as articulated in ANZCA professional document PG09(G).

(7.7) Invasive Techniques and Ultrasound:

- Assist the anaesthetist with invasive techniques including insertion of peripheral, central venous and pulmonary artery catheters, and arterial lines.
- Assist the anaesthetist with ultrasound techniques for nerve and vascular location.
- Outline the ongoing management of pulmonary artery catheters and arterial lines.
- Discuss the following:
 - Intercostal tube drainage.
 - Endoscopy of the airways.
 - Rapid infusion devices.



(7.8) Therapeutics:

- Describe the safe storage, preparation and use of all drugs, fluids and other therapeutic substances administered during anaesthesia.
- Assist with the preparation of drugs, fluids and therapeutic substances as directed by the anaesthetist.
- Assist the anaesthetist with the safe handling of controlled / restricted drugs.

* ANZCA outlines its support for all anaesthetic assistants to practice safe handling of controlled/restricted drugs as a core competency in document PS08(A)BP. However, the matter is beyond the scope of PS08(A), so individual referral and application of your individual working states or territories legislation and regulations for your drug administration, possession and disposal rights must be followed and applied.

(7.9) Emergency Care:

- For the following emergency situations:
 - Cardiopulmonary resuscitation
 - Management of the difficult airway, failed intubation and “can’t intubate, can’t oxygenate”
 - Cardiac defibrillation and cardioversion
 - Peri-operative blood management strategies
 - Anaphylaxis
 - Malignant hyperthermia
 - Local Anaesthetic Toxicity
- Recall the appropriate algorithms for crisis management.
- Describe the role of the anaesthetic assistant.
- Provide the necessary equipment.
- Provide proactive assistance to the anaesthetist as required and requested.

(7.10) Post-operative Plan:

- Outline post-operative pain alternatives and list the equipment that may be required.

(7.11) Work Environment:

- Discuss and demonstrate non-technical skills including:
 - Communication
 - Cultural competence
 - Working in a team environment
 - Situational awareness
- Maintain continuous professional development (CPD) activities, relevant to their practice and continue to upgrade valuable knowledge and skills in accordance with ANZCA PS08(A)(8) and the AAAHP requirements. Record Continuous Professional Development. (Appendix 1. available on the AAAHP website). Expected minimum CPD required is 20 hours in accordance with AAAHP policy (follows registration period, not calendar year)



- Learn, retain and apply according to their employing hospital facility, and the AAAHP's, code of ethics and conduct policy
- Recognition of advanced skill upskilling of AHP's/AT's is promoted, should be considered, and should be utilised. Skills that fall under this category are demonstrated by NZ Perioperative Practitioners, Operating Department Practitioners and AHP's/AT's who have undergone specialised training. These skills can include but are not limited to:
 - Cardiac specialisation
 - Orthopaedic specialisation
 - Peripheral Intravenous Cannulation
 - Cell Salvage
 - Rotem, Blood gases and activated clotting time (ACT) analysis
 - Processing, Preparation and Assistance with Transoesophageal Echocardiograms
 - Plegia Services for Perioperative Organ Donation and Transplantation
 - Perioperative Organ Donation Care
 - Trauma Specialisation
 - Neurosurgery & Neurointerventional (NIIS) Specialisation
 - Cardiology Interventional Specialisation (TAVI)
 - Radiology & Radiological Interventional Specialisation
 - Co-ordination, Educational, and Managerial Roles
 - Advance Life Support (ALS) and Paediatric Advance Life Support (PALS)
 - Peripherally Inserted Central Catheterisation (PICC) specialisation
 - Advanced Ultrasound Specialisation for Cannulation
 - Simulation Specialisation
 - Pre-Anaesthetic Assessment Clinic Health Assessment and Screening
 - Patient Blood Management Services
 - 12-Lead ECG Health Assessments
 - Pre-Operative / Holding Bay Specialisation
 - Respiratory and Ventilation / ICU Technical Support Specialisation
 - IDC Insertion
 - Regional and Pain Management Specialisation
- AHPs/ATs can provide educational support and mentoring to student, trainee and junior AHPs/AT's that is a critical component of their tertiary studies and learning experience. Mentor support should be aimed to focus on linking theoretical knowledge to practical application in line with the requirements of their training program. Student, trainee and junior AHPs/AT's must adhere to the direction of the scope of practice, their workplace policies & procedures and their training facility's guidelines & requirements.



- Nationally Accredited Qualifications: the Australian Government - Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) are the current national body in place to oversee nationally recognising qualifications. The national register of VET contains a list of current nationally accredited qualifications that reach the required standards for VET accredited courses, in line with the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*. The registry currently has listed the following qualifications as national accredited qualifications for AHPs/AT's:

- Diploma of Anaesthetic Technology and Practice – HLT57921
- Certificate IV in Anaesthetic Technology – HLT42607
- Diploma of Anaesthetic Technology – HLT57915, HLT50602
- Diploma of Paramedical Science (Anaesthesia) – HLT50607, HLT50612

For international qualifications: engagement with the Australian Government's Department of Home Affairs - Overseas Qualifications Units (OQU) may be required for a referral of a qualification assessment through the Australian Government's Department of Education – International Education department. Each state and territory have their own individual Overseas Qualifications Units so refer to the attached link for further guidance on Qualification recognition:

<https://internationaleducation.gov.au/services-and-resources/pages/qualifications-recognition.aspx>

- AHP's/AT's must demonstrate and maintain essential knowledge and understanding of required legal and ethical practice. This includes:
 - Legal and ethical considerations (national, state/territory) for AHP's/AT's working in health
 - How they are applied in organisations
 - How these impact individual workers
 - The consequences of breaches
 - Children in the workplace
 - Codes of conduct
 - Codes of practice
 - Complaints management
 - Continuing professional education
 - Discrimination
 - Dignity of risk
 - Duty of care
 - Human rights (universal declaration of human rights, relationship between human needs and human rights, frameworks, approaches and instruments used in the workplace)
 - Informed consent
 - Mandatory reporting
 - Practice standards
 - Practitioner/client boundaries
 - Privacy, confidentiality and disclosure
 - Policy frameworks
 - Records management
 - Rights and responsibilities of workers, employers and clients
 - Industrial relations legislation relevant to employment conditions of role
 - Specific legislation in the area of work – objectives and key components



- Work role boundaries – responsibilities and limitations
- Work health and safety
- Interrelationships, similarities and differences that may exist between legal and ethical frameworks
- Legal issues in the context of the work role (type of legal issues that arise, ways to respond etc.)
- Ethical practice in the context of the work role (type of ethical issues that arise, ways to respond etc.)
- Workplace policies, procedures and protocols (how they are/should be developed, processes for review, including consultation and mechanisms for input)
- Keeping up to date on state, territory, and federal legislation, regulatory and codes of practice amendments, as well as, organisation policies, procedures and protocol changes, is also essential to the role of AHPs to ensure best and safe practice is being adhered to.

Relevant documents:

ANZCA PS08(A) – position statement on the assistant of the anaesthetist 2016

ANZCA PS08(A)BP – Position statement on the assistant for the anaesthetist background paper 2016

ANZCA PG31(A) – Guideline on checking anaesthesia delivery systems

ANZCA PS55(A) – position statement on minimum facilities for safe administration of anaesthesia in operating suites and other anaesthetising locations

ANZCA PG28(A) – Guideline in infection control in anaesthesia

Statewide Anaesthesia and Perioperative Care Clinical Network (SWAPNET) – Position on Anaesthetic Technician Scope of Practice and Delegation

Federal Register of Legislation - *Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011*

Federal Register of Legislation - *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* - National

Federal Register of Legislation - *Electrical Safety Act 2002*

Federal Register of Legislation - *Electrical Safety Regulation 2013*

Federal Register of Legislation - *Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Bill 1998*

Federal Register of Legislation - *Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Regulations 2018*

Federal Register of Legislation - Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4173:2004 – Guide to the safe use of lasers in healthcare

Federal Register of Legislation - *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*

Federal Register of Legislation - *Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2021*

Australian Government - Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) – National Register of VET

