

Anaesthesia

– a rewarding and
challenging career





Have you considered anaesthesia as a career?

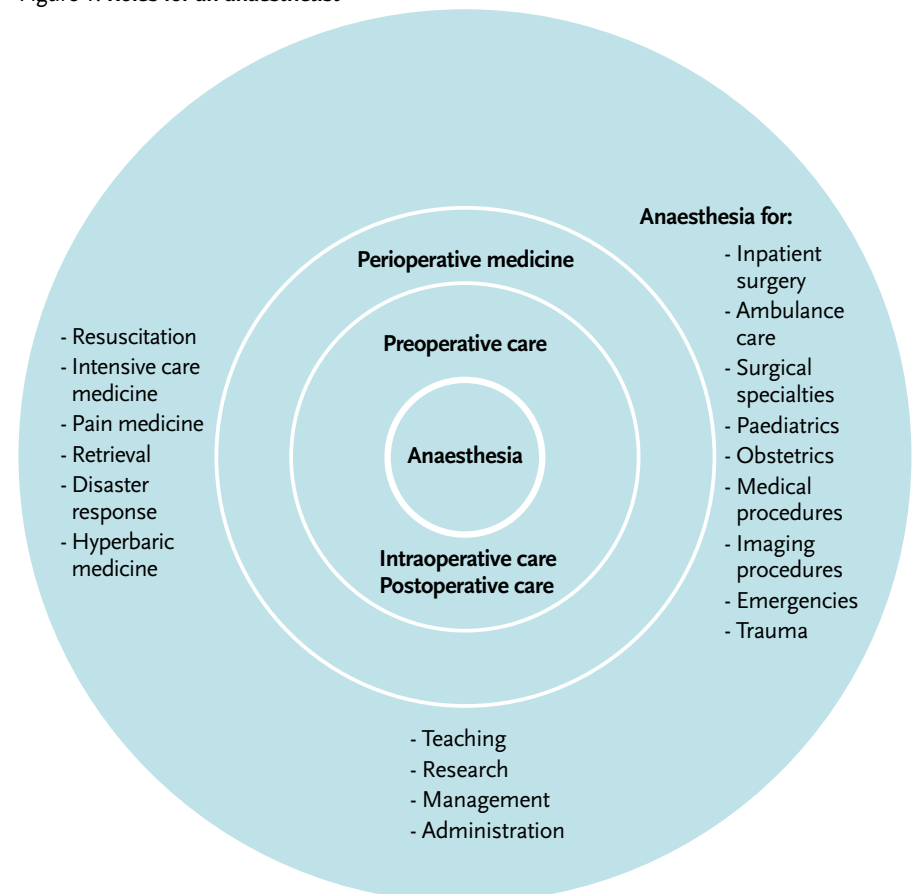
Anaesthetists have to be good all-round doctors. They have a major role in the perioperative care of surgical patients and are closely involved in several other important fields (see Figure 1). One appeal of the specialty is the way in which physiological and pharmacological manipulations can be used for the benefit of patients presenting with a variety of conditions. Associated areas include the care of the very sick in intensive care (critical care) medicine and management of acute and chronic pain (pain medicine).

Why anaesthesia?

- Relief of pain and suffering is central to the practice of anaesthesia: to facilitate surgery and uncomfortable procedures, to aid with recovery after surgery, to administer pain relief in childbirth, and to care for those with acute and chronic pain. Close and empathetic patient contact and interaction is an integral part of anaesthesia practice.

- Clinical anaesthesia is built on knowledge of physiology and pharmacology and their application to understand the ways in which patient responses are altered by their state of health as well as the various manipulations that are part of the anaesthetist's work. There are also many opportunities for teaching and research.
- In recent years, there have been many advances in anaesthesia. It has become safer and more sophisticated with the development of imaging techniques and computer technology and the advent of drugs with fewer side effects. Advances in anaesthesia have made more complex surgery possible. The specialty is progressively challenged by the ageing population, which presents with medical conditions of increasing incidence and severity. The growing obesity problem also poses challenges for the specialty.
- Anaesthetists work with a variety of other specialists as well as nursing and allied health practitioners. Anaesthetists may develop special interests in areas such as anaesthesia for paediatrics, obstetrics, orthopaedics, otorhinolaryngology, gynaecology, neurosurgery, cardiovascular and thoracic surgery, trauma management, respiratory medicine, hyperbaric medicine, intensive care medicine, pain medicine, ophthalmology, urology, and vascular and plastic surgery.

Figure 1: Roles for an anaesthetist



Have you considered anaesthesia as a career? (continued)

- There are opportunities for clinical practice and research in public and private hospitals.
- Anaesthetists are team members and have an essential role in promoting the effective co-ordination and utilisation of medical, nursing and technical resources, especially during the perioperative period. Anaesthetists collaborate with colleagues to ensure the best possible outcomes for patients.
- Anaesthesia can be demanding, both during the training period and during the subsequent years as a specialist. However, work patterns and training programs can be adapted to suit the needs of practitioners throughout their personal and professional lives.
- Anaesthesia is a developing and expanding specialty. There are currently shortages of trained anaesthetists in rural and regional areas in Australia and New Zealand.

Training in anaesthesia

Anaesthetists training in Australia and New Zealand obtain the Diploma of Fellowship of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (FANZCA) to be recognised as specialists.

Training in intensive care and pain medicine can be associated with training in anaesthesia. Within the College, the Faculty of Pain Medicine is responsible for training in pain medicine. The College of Intensive Care Medicine of Australia and New Zealand is responsible for training in intensive care medicine.

Assessment of trainees in anaesthesia is partly by examination, and includes in-training assessments by anaesthesia staff in the hospitals to which trainees have been rotated. The specific goals to be achieved during training are summarised in Figure 2. The College regularly inspects the hospitals that it approves for training to ensure that they provide high standards of teaching, supervision and clinical care.

After graduating from medical school, trainees are required to complete at least 24 months of eligible prevocational medical education and training (PMET), also known as postgraduate year 1 (PGY1) and postgraduate year 2 (PGY2), prior to commencing approved vocational training in anaesthesia.

This ensures that trainees have a good grounding in general medicine and disciplines other than anaesthesia. In considering PMET duration, a maximum of 12 months of anaesthesia, pain medicine and/or intensive care experience is recognised for this purpose during this time. Many successful applicants for training positions have had additional experience, often in anaesthesia, after completing 24 months of eligible PMET.

Vocational training in anaesthesia consists of two years of basic vocational training and three years of advanced vocational training.

Approved training comprises 33 months of clinical anaesthesia, three months of intensive care medicine and 24 months that may include clinical anaesthesia, intensive care medicine (including neonatal intensive care), clinical medicine, emergency medicine, pain medicine or other disciplines related to anaesthesia. Vocational training requires completion of 12 training modules in clinical anaesthesia, intensive care medicine, pain medicine, education and scientific inquiry, professional attributes and professional practice.

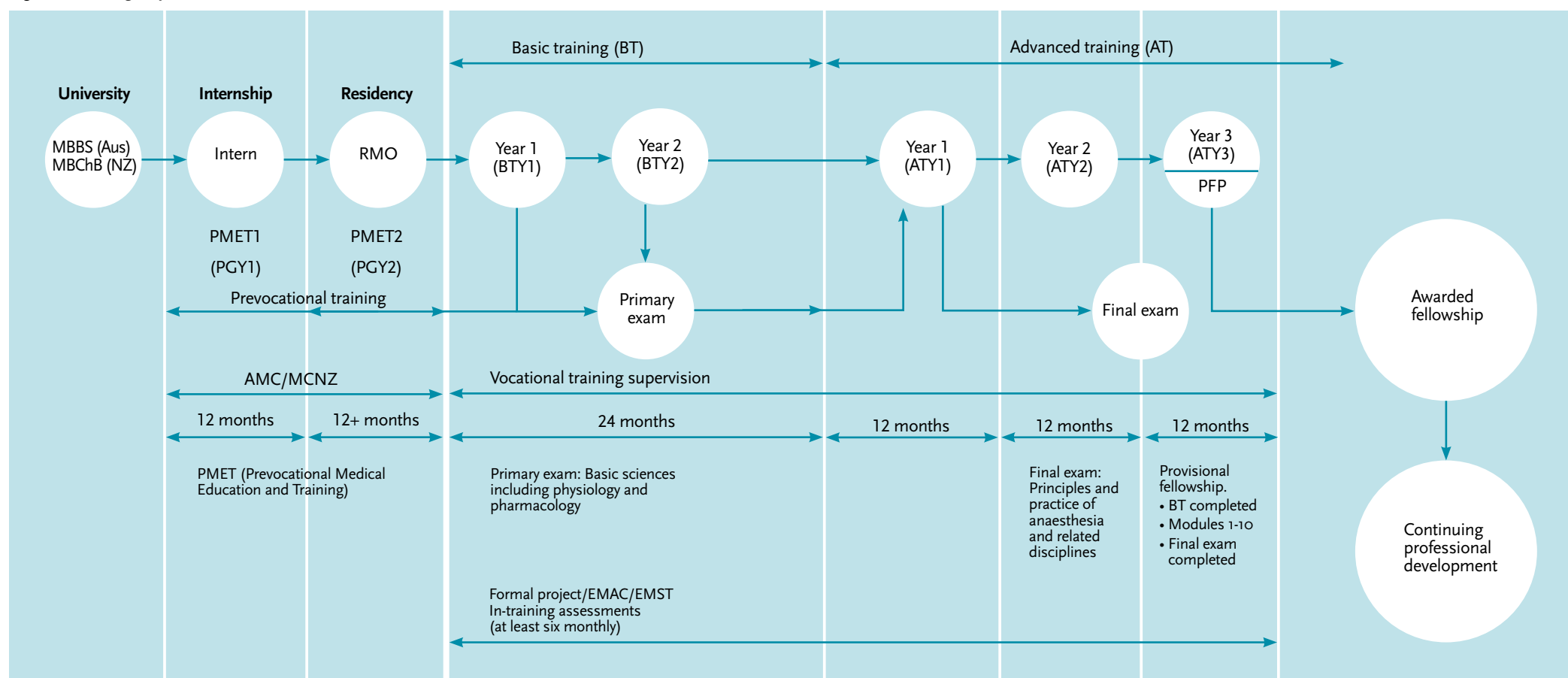
The program places emphasis on the trainee developing a continuing personal record of training objectives, experiences and achievements – a learning portfolio.

The major examinations are:

- **The primary examination: Basic sciences.** Consists of multiple-choice, short-answer written and viva components. The examination cannot be taken until completion of a minimum of 12 months eligible PMET. Trainees must pass the primary examination before they begin advanced vocational training.
- **The final examination: Anaesthesia and medicine.** Consists of multiple-choice, short-answer written and viva components.

With prior approval from the College, flexible (part-time and/or interrupted) training is possible under specified circumstances, as is some overseas training.

Figure 2: Training sequence



ANZCA Curriculum Revision 2013

A revised curriculum will be introduced in December 2012 in New Zealand and from January 2013 in Australia.

Transition arrangements will be made for trainees already in the program. More details about ANZCA Curriculum Revision 2013 can be found on the ANZCA website at www.anzca.edu.au or email curriculum@anzca.edu.au.

Transitions in education

The ANZCA training program was reviewed by the Australian Medical Council (AMC) in 2002 and the New Zealand Medical Council (NZMC) in 2004. Both councils awarded ANZCA their highest level of accreditation. These comprehensive reviews examined the structure and organisation of the College, its processes of education and training, and its accreditation procedures for training hospitals. They looked particularly at selection of trainees, supervision and assessment of trainees as well as the College's professional development programs.

From 2012, the AMC and NZMC will carry out a combined accreditation for the College in both countries.

The Australian Medical Workforce Advisory Committee has reviewed ANZCA twice and the College regularly provides input to the Australian Medical Training Review Panel. In New Zealand, ANZCA works with Health Workforce New Zealand to ensure that its training specifications are appropriate to the New Zealand situation.

ANZCA strongly supports continuity in medical education from medical school through the prevocational years, then specialty training and beyond into practice. Continuing professional development (CPD) is compulsory for specialist anaesthetists in Australia and New Zealand to maintain their medical registration. ANZCA runs a CPD program that is accredited for this purpose.

Entering a training program

If you are considering a career in anaesthesia, you should attempt to get a "feel" for the specialty as early as possible. An elective in anaesthesia is often possible during senior undergraduate years. The College and some medical school departments offer prizes in anaesthesia at undergraduate level to encourage trainees. Some experience in anaesthesia is valuable as part of the first two postgraduate years. Talk to anaesthetists. Training hospitals have directors of anaesthesia and College supervisors of training on their staff. These people can provide valuable information on job prospects and contacts in other centres. They can advise you on how to apply for training positions advertised by hospitals/health jurisdictions.

Further advice and College information for trainees may be obtained from:

ANZCA Training and Assessment Unit
ANZCA House
630 St Kilda Road
Melbourne VIC 3004
Australia

Phone: +61 3 9510 6299

Fax: +61 3 9510 6786

Email: training@anzca.edu.au

Web: www.anzca.edu.au

Information may also be obtained from the New Zealand National Committee and the College's regional committee offices in Australia's state capitals, as listed below.

New Zealand National Committee

Level 7, EMC House
5-7 Willeston Street
Wellington 6011
New Zealand

or
PO Box 25506
Panama Street,
Wellington 6146
New Zealand

Phone: +64 4 499 1213

Fax: +64 4 499 6013

Email: training@anzca.org.nz

Web: www.anzca.org.nz

Australian Capital Territory Regional Committee

6/14 Napier Close
Deakin ACT 2600
Australia

Phone: +61 2 6282 0524

Fax: +61 2 6282 0525

Email: act@anzca.edu.au

New South Wales Regional Committee

117 Alexander Street
Crows Nest NSW 2065
Australia

Phone: +61 2 9966 9085

Fax: +61 2 9966 9087

Email: nsw@anzca.edu.au

Queensland Regional Committee

West End Corporate Park, River Tower
20 Pidgeon Close
West End QLD 4101
Australia

Phone: +61 7 3846 1233

Fax: +61 7 3844 0249

Email: qld@anzca.edu.au

South Australian and Northern Territory Regional Committee

51-54 Palmer Place
North Adelaide SA 5006
or
PO Box 737
North Adelaide SA 5006
Australia

Phone: +61 8 8239 2822

Fax: +61 8 8239 2833

Email: sa@anzca.edu.au

Tasmanian Regional Committee

147 Davey Street
Hobart TAS 7000
Australia

Phone: +61 3 6223 8848

Fax: +61 3 6223 5019

Email: tas@anzca.edu.au

Victorian Regional Committee

ANZCA House
630 St Kilda Road
Melbourne VIC 3004
Australia

Phone: +61 3 8517 5313 or 9510 6299

Fax: +61 3 8517 5360 or 6786

Email: vic@anzca.edu.au

Western Australian Regional Committee

Unit 20/127 Herdsman Parade
Wembley WA 6014
Australia

Phone: +61 8 6188 4555

Fax: +61 8 6188 4550

Email: wa@anzca.edu.au



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Email: ceo@anzca.edu.au

