



Short title: Anaesthetist duties

1. Purpose

To clarify the breadth of duties undertaken by specialist anaesthetists.

2. Scope

This professional document applies to all specialist anaesthetists, recognising that the scope of practice and breadth of duties is wide.

These duties most commonly include providing high quality and safe patient care both within and outside the operating theatre. Perioperative care, management roles, research, audit and education are all clearly recognised as important responsibilities of specialist anaesthetists.

It is expected that all clinical and non-clinical duties be carried out in compliance with the Medical Board of Australia and/or Medical Council of New Zealand Codes of Professional Conduct. These codes are supported by the *ANZCA Supporting Professionalism and Performance guide*¹.

3. Clinical duties:

Duties undertaken by an individual should accord with their education, training and competence whilst aligning with local service capability and relevant jurisdictional requirement (*PS02 Anaesthesia credentialling and scope of practice*). They include some or all of the following:

- 3.1 Provision of anaesthesia and perioperative medical services for patients as required.
- 3.2 Clinical management and organisation of pre-anaesthesia assessment and preparation of patients for surgery.
- 3.3 Supervision of anaesthesia trainees and other medical and non-medical staff as required.
- 3.4 Clinical support of colleagues as required.
- 3.5 Supervision of patients in post-anaesthesia care units (PACUs).
- 3.6 Provision of appropriate post-operative care with special attention to acute pain medicine.
- 3.7 Supervision of clinical anaesthesia services in the role of the daily duty co-ordinator.
- 3.8 Management of the anaesthesia component of patient care in collaboration with the multidisciplinary team.
- 3.9 Management of relevant components of the patient care pathway as part of integrated perioperative medicine management.
- 3.10 Organisation and clinical management of acute pain services and participation in pain medicine units and collaboration with Specialist Pain Medicine Physicians, where applicable.
- 3.11 Provision of acute resuscitation services for emergencies, including retrieval services where trained and credentialed, and liaison with Emergency Medicine and Trauma Service departments.

- 3.12 Management of, or clinical support for, patients in the intensive care unit, particularly when there is no intensive care medicine specialist available. This includes communication with, and liaison with, specialist intensive care physicians and intensive care unit clinical teams.
- 3.13 Supervision and/or management of extracorporeal perfusion.
- 3.14 Clinical duties in the hyperbaric medicine unit as required.
- 3.15 Management of anaesthesia in remote locations such as emergency departments, medical imaging departments, cardiac and vascular investigatory laboratories and coronary care units where the facilities meet the ANZCA standards for minimum facilities for safe administration of anaesthesia.
- 3.16 Other clinical services as may be necessary and appropriate to the specialty.

4. Clinical support duties include all or some of:

- 4.1 Managerial duties within the hospital including perioperative units, pre-anaesthesia clinics, operating suites and PACUs, department and executive leadership roles.
- 4.2 Leadership in supporting the roles and practice environment of staff and colleagues, and advocacy in support of professional responsibilities (*PS59 Anaesthetist roles*).
- 4.3 Organisation of, and participation in, appropriate educational activities for:
 - 4.2.1 Specialist anaesthetists.
 - 4.2.2 Anaesthesia trainees.
 - 4.2.3 Intern and resident medical staff.
 - 4.2.4 Medical students.
 - 4.2.5 Trainee and postgraduate nurses.
 - 4.2.6 Anaesthesia nurses and/or technicians.
 - 4.2.7 PACU nurses.
 - 4.2.8 Operating room nurses.
 - 4.2.9 Other healthcare professionals.
 - 4.2.10 Community groups in subjects such as basic life support.
- 4.4 Participation in peer review, clinical governance, audit and quality-improvement activities to promote safe, high-quality and equitable patient care.
- 4.5 Participation in continuing medical education in compliance with the MBA or MCNZ continuing professional development standard for specialist anaesthetists.
- 4.6 Contribution to activities of professional associations, hospital committees, and other relevant state, national and international organisations.
- 4.7 Health advocacy, in particular in those areas relating to perioperative safety and quality patient healthcare including diversity, equality and inclusion, cultural safety and trauma informed care (*PS62 Cultural competence and cultural safety*).
- 4.8 Participation in research, service evaluation and reviews relevant to anaesthesia, perioperative medicine, acute pain medicine, pain medicine and resuscitation. These activities may include assistance to trainees with their scholar role activities and academic development.

- 4.9 Participation in programs to safeguard personal wellbeing as well as the wellbeing of colleagues, trainees and related professionals.
- 4.10 Participation in activities promoting the image of the specialty to professional colleagues and to the public.

Reference

1. Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA). Supporting professionalism and performance – A guide for anaesthetists and pain medicine physicians. 2024. Available from: https://www.anzca.edu.au/getContentAsset/9017d13b-7288-4cd0-8e34-f5e0476ba574/80feb437-d24d-46b8-a858-4a2a28b9b970/ANZCA-Professionalism-Performance-Guide_2024.pdf?language=en Accessed 23 Jun 2026.

Related ANZCA documents

PS02 Anaesthesia credentialling and scope of practice
 PS04(A) Position statement on the post-anaesthesia care unit
 PG07 Guideline on pre-anaesthesia consultation and patient preparation
 PG09(G) Guideline on procedural sedation
 PG15(POM) Guideline for the perioperative care of patients selected for day stay procedures
 PS26(A) Position statement on informed consent for anaesthesia or sedation
 PS53(A) Position statement on the handover responsibilities of the anaesthetist
 PS55 Position statement on minimum facilities for safe administration of anaesthesia in operating suites and other anaesthetising locations
 PG58(A) Guideline on quality assurance and quality improvement in anaesthesia
 CP01 List of standard abbreviations for professional documents
 ANZCA Anaesthesia training program handbook
 ANZCA Handbook for accreditation

This document is accompanied by a background paper (PS57BP) which provides more detailed information regarding the rationale and interpretation of the Statement.

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