



South African Nursing Council
(Under the provisions of the Nursing Act, 2005)

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COMPETENCIES FOR A PERIOPERATIVE NURSE SPECIALIST

1. Nature of specialization

A Perioperative Nurse Specialist is a Professional Nurse and Midwife who has obtained a *postgraduate diploma* in the perioperative field.

2. Context

The Perioperative Nurse Specialist provides care during *pre-, intra- and post-operative* periods.

The *pre-operative period* is the phase before surgical intervention and can occur in community clinics/community health centres and hospital wards/units or outpatients' sections. It could either be a planned or an emergency surgical intervention.

The *intra-operative period* takes place in the operating theatre, and the *post-operative period* is the period following surgical intervention, which can be either in the recovery room or in a high care/intensive care unit (ICU), depending on the acuity of the patient's condition.

3. Continuum

The Perioperative Nurse Specialist provides care in the community clinics/community health centres and hospital wards/units or outpatients' sections, in operating theatres and recovery rooms or high care/intensive care units, depending on the acuity of the patient's condition.

4. Competency overlaps

The competencies of a Perioperative Nurse Specialist overlaps with that of a Critical Care Nurse Specialist and Advanced Midwife Specialist.

DOMAINS	CORE COMPETENCIES
DOMAIN 1: PROFESSIONAL, ETHICAL & LEGAL PRACTICE	
1.1. Professional Practice	1.1.1. Accepts and maintains accountability and responsibility for own actions and judgment.
	1.1.2. Recognizes own level of competence and limitations in order to take actions, and consults with or refers to appropriate others when encountering situations beyond own competence.
	1.1.3. Recognizes and respects different levels of responsibility for the range of available health care professionals.
	1.1.4. Involvement of support systems to enhance the delivery of quality patient care.
1.2. Ethical Practice	1.2.1. Practices in a manner that conforms to the <i>Code of Ethics for Nurses</i> , and employer's code of conduct.

VISION: Excellence in professionalism and advocacy for health care users

	1.2.2. Engages in effective ethical decision-making with respect to perioperative practice areas.
	1.2.3. Displays effective ethical decision-making skills in prioritizing emergency situations.
	1.2.4. Acts in an advocacy role to protect human rights, and questions violations of health care users' human rights.
	1.2.5. Acts in an assertive manner, to ensure effective advocacy to protect patient rights.
	1.2.6. Maintains confidentiality and security of written, verbal and electronic information acquired in a professional capacity.
	1.2.7. Ensures confidentiality by securing all information (professional secrecy).
1.3. Legal Practice	
	1.3.1. Practices in accordance with professional and other relevant legislation, including those specific to Advanced Practice Nursing in a specialized practice area.
	1.3.2. Practices in accordance with relevant policies, procedural guidelines and protocols.
	1.3.3. Recognizes and acts upon laws relating to the professional role and/or professional code of conduct.
	1.3.4. Implements and reinforces identified strategies and protocols to reduce legal implications (informed consent/surgical pause).
	1.3.5. Implementation of standards to ensure continuity of practices.
DOMAIN 2: CLINICAL PRACTICE – CARE PROVISION & MANAGEMENT	
2.1. Health Promotion & Prevention	2.1.1. Assesses health education needs specific to the perioperative area of speciality.
	2.1.2. Plans, develops and implements needs based programmes to promote health and wellbeing (e.g. dosimeters, Ethylene Oxide, injury on duty).
	2.1.3. Develops and uses follow-up systems to ensure that health care users receive appropriate services.
	2.1.4. Enforces standard protocols to ensure effective disinfecting of all equipment (e.g. scope washers/ instrument washers).
	2.1.5. Ensures validation of processes for cleaning equipment to prevent events from happening (decontamination process).
2.2. Assessment	2.2.1. Scientific assessment of the patient as a holistic entity.
	2.2.2. Assessment of the environment (equipment, instrumentation, special requirements).
	2.2.3. Ensures availability of specific requirements when dealing with diagnostic tests, to prevent adverse events.
	2.2.4. Incorporates scientific nursing process in assessing needs of the patient.
	2.2.5. Ensures effective and complete documentation is recorded to ensure continuous perioperative care.

2.3.Planning	2.3.1. Ensures that standard requirements are available and updated, to ensure effective, adequate delivery (e.g. equipment).
	2.3.2. Ensures adequate and competent staff allocation.
	2.3.3. Evaluates environment safety before onset of first procedure (checklist of theatres, humidity, temperature etc.).
	2.3.4. Allocates dedicated staff members to the waiting area, to observe patients on a daily basis.
	2.3.5. Allocates emergency team to accommodate unexpected events.
	2.3.6. Establishes adequate stock levels to reduce delays and adverse events.
	2.3.7. Applies critical thinking and clinical reasoning skills in co-operation with the multi-disciplinary team.
	2.3.8. Reviews and revises standard protocols (perioperative standards) as per specifications.
2.4.Implementation	2.4.1. Responds appropriately and timeously to unexpected or rapidly changing situations.
	2.4.2. Responds immediately and appropriately to emergency situations, taking a leadership role; and co-ordination of care for health care users with special care needs.
	2.4.3. Incorporation of current technology into clinical practice.
	2.4.4. Implementing disaster management protocols, to reduce risks.
	2.4.5. Documenting relevant reference indications of equipment used, to investigate adverse events.
	2.4.6. Reporting of malfunctioning equipment immediately, to reduce adverse events.
	2.4.7. Anticipates possible adverse outcomes e.g. malfunctioning of equipment, negligence and human errors.
2.5.Evaluation	2.5.1. Evaluates progress towards planned outcomes, in consultation with health care users, families and/or carers and health care team (e.g. transfer to ICU).
	2.5.2. Utilizes evaluation data to modify the plan of action.
	2.5.3. Provides necessary support to the team members, according to their identified gaps, in the care provided.
	2.5.4. Monitors and documents progress towards expected outcome accurately and completely.
	2.5.5. Monitors and evaluates audit processes, to empower staff to identify gaps in knowledge.
2.6.Therapeutic Communication & Relationships	2.6.1. Initiates, develops and discontinues therapeutic relationships, using a range of advanced communication and interpersonal skills.
	2.6.2. Maintains a relationship that respects the boundaries between health care user and self.
	2.6.3. Listens to others in an unbiased manner, respects points of view of others, and promotes the expression of diverse opinions and perspectives.
	2.6.4. Displays relevant and important information to all staff members, and enforces acknowledgement of these communications.

DOMAIN 3: PERSONAL & QUALITY OF CARE	
3.1. Quality Improvement	3.1.1. Promotes dissemination, use, monitoring and review of nursing practice standards and best practice guidelines.
	3.1.2. Leads/participates in developing and adapting nursing practice standards to the health care environment.
	3.1.3. Uses appropriate assessment tools to identify actual and potential risks to safety and security, takes appropriate action and reports concerns where necessary to relevant authority.
	3.1.4. Ensures safe and proper storage, administration and recording of therapeutic substances.
	3.1.5. Complies with infection prevention procedures, and challenges breaches in other practitioners' practices.
	3.1.6. Plans for dealing with disasters in the perioperative environment.
3.2. Continuing Education	3.2.1. Undertakes regular review of own practice by engaging in evaluation, and seeks reflection, critical examination and peer reviews.
	3.2.2. Assumes responsibility for lifelong learning, own professional development and maintenance of competence.
	3.2.3. Participates in unilateral and multidisciplinary teaching and learning.
DOMAIN 4: MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP	
4.1.	Advocates for and acts within span of control to create a positive working environment.
4.2.	Adapts leadership style and approaches to situations specific to the perioperative environment.
4.3.	Leads in a manner that inspires respect and confidence from others.
4.4.	Prioritizes work load, manages time effectively and allocates resources to optimize outcomes.
4.5.	Provides leadership in the development and implementation of advanced practice education and professional development of learners and colleagues in the workplace.
4.6.	Leads in the development, review and modification of institutional practice policies, procedures and protocols.
4.7.	Uses the change process to influence the introduction of innovations and adaptations to the perioperative field.
4.8.	Acts as an effective role model for students, and within the care team.

4.9.	Acts as a resource in the perioperative field for students, members of the health team, policy makers and the public.
4.10.	Promotes advanced nursing practice as an essential part of health service delivery.
4.11.	Scans practice environment and literature to identify emerging trends and issues.
4.12.	Contributes to national policy and protocol development that relates to delegation of clinical responsibilities specific to perioperative specialization.
4.13.	Maintains accountability and responsibility when delegating aspects of care to others.
4.14.	Delegates activities to others, according to ability, level of preparation, proficiency and scope of practice.
4.15.	Uses a range of supportive strategies, such as precepting and mentoring, when supervising and/or monitoring delegated care.
4.16.	Applies appropriate business skills to ensure quality and cost effectiveness within the perioperative services domain.
DOMAIN 5: RESEARCH	
5.1.	Initiates and conducts research to inform practice in the perioperative environment.
5.2.	Analyses and critically interpret research findings.
5.3.	Reviews and evaluates research reports.
5.4.	Implements research outcomes.