



PACU Nurse: **Novice** Professional Development Pathway

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Introduction

- The Professional Development Pathway for PACU Nurse Novice (the Pathway) encompasses skill and knowledge development activities to support current, acting or aspiring PACU Nurse Novice.
- The Pathway has been designed to support and provide a structured development plan, agreed upon between staff and their manager. It can be used as a resource to promote regular conversations as the staff member progresses through the Pathway and develops their knowledge, skills and capabilities. The Pathway can form part of the Performance Development Review cycle.
- The Pathway also supports Succession Planning initiatives which may contribute to Recognition Prior Learning (RPL) for some elements.
- The Pathway begins with an undertaking between the line manager and the staff member to set goals, agree on timeframes and to ensure that the staff member has the operational support to succeed.
- The Pathway then moves on to a suite of overarching professional development activities related to the PACU Nurse Novice. This then progresses to the specific activities designed to guide the staff members development in PACU Nurse Novice specific areas of their role.

Transforming Your Experience

The Pathway supports Focus Area 4. Effective Leadership and Empowered Staff in the Transforming Your Experience (TYE) Implementation plan 2017-2023 and provides a framework for staff members to develop skills and achieve their full potential.

Target audience

Current, acting, or aspiring PACU Nurses (0-4 months).

Purpose

The purpose of the Pathway is to support career progression and succession planning as well as serve as a resource to guide professional development.

Learning outcomes

It is expected that by working through the Pathway that the staff member will be able to

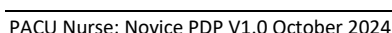
- perform the requirements of the position identified as part of the professional learning pathway.
- act as a mentor for others.
- contribute to the development of their service or specialty.
- advocate for nursing and or midwifery.
- contribute to the body of knowledge for their service or specialty.
- show evidence of professional development in career pathway.

References

- SWSLHD Workforce Plan 2022-2028 (in DRAFT)
- SWSLHD Nursing and Midwifery Succession Planning Framework 2021

Application, Enrolment and Completion processes

- The above steps are also demonstrated through the following workflow diagram.



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My Health Learning

The Pathway has been compiled in My Health Learning (MHL) for participants to easily access all requirements and track their own progress.

Managers and their delegates can track participants' progress in the pathway through MHL.

Each section includes online modules, classroom courses, external learning activities, operational assessments and assignments. A complete list of items is provided in following pages.

Each section of the pathway is listed separately to make it easy for participants to understand the requirements for each section and the number of activities that are required to be completed.

Managers, their delegates and/or the Preceptors are required to mark off the Operational Assessments.

Online modules automatically record completion once the modules are completed successfully by the participant.

Classroom courses will be marked off as completed by the Education and Training Administration team once the participant attended relevant classroom training.

Please refer to the Professional Development Pathways Guidelines document that is available on the website for detailed information on the various terms used in this document.

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Section 1: The PACU Nurse: Roles and Responsibilities

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the role of a Recovery Nurse.
- Discuss the purpose and design of the PACU area
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of a recovery nurse as part of a multidisciplinary team.
- Explore the documentation and legislative requirements of the recovery nurse role.
- Demonstrates skills in written, verbal and electronic communication
- Demonstrate understanding of anaesthesia and its adjunct drugs used within the theatres and PACU

Online Modules

#	Code	Title
1	39831941	Clinical Documentation: Getting it Right
2	53594602	Nursing, Midwifery and the Law
3	160655675	eMR-iView
4	132259299	Administering Medications
5	132194094	Power Plans

External Learning Activities

Read [ANZCA Position statement on the Post Anaesthetic Care Unit](#)

Read [ACORN Post Anaesthesia Care Nurse](#)

Read [ANZCA Guidelines for the safe management and use of medications in anaesthesia](#)

Read [SWSLHD Proc2024_025 Post Anaesthetic Care and Transfer of Patients from the Post Anaesthetic Care Unit \(PACU\)](#)

Operational Assessments

#	Code	Title
1	SWSLHD-OA-2024-12179	Perioperative: Preparation of the PACU for Patient Care

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Section 2: Work Health and Safety Considerations in the PACU

Learning Outcomes

- Identifies and WHS risks within the Perioperative environment.
- Promotes optimal safety for staff and patients
- Applies appropriate infection control procedures.
- Identify the top 3 risks within your department
- Appropriately selects the correct PPE for various precautions within the perioperative environment.
- Safely transfers a patient from bed-to-bed
- Appropriately manages sharps within the perioperative setting
- Apply evidence-based asepsis and infection control measures within the perioperative area

Online Modules

#	Code	Title
1	42498422	Operating Suite Beyond the Red Line
2	332428814	Radiation Protection Awareness
3	253093581	Infection Prevention-transmission based precautions
4	253063654	Infection Prevention-Enhanced Precautions
5	294450660	PPE for combined transmission-based precautions
6	319438161	Donning & Fit Check of P2 or N95
7	316828191	ChemAlert v5 for all staff (This is a learning pathway in itself. It cannot be included in the PDP. The participant has to search for and complete the pathway separately.)
8	107466425	Safe Patient Handling

External Learning Activities

Read [ACORN Perioperative Attire \(PA\)](#)

Read [Radiation Safety in Ward Areas](#)

Read [ACORN Sharps and preventing sharps-related injury \(SPSRI\)](#)

Operational Assessments

#	Code	Title
1	SWSLHD-OA-2020-12100	SWSLHD Patient Moving Practical Assessment
2	SWSLHD-OA-2025-12243	PPE - Local induction to standard and transmission-based precautions and personal protective

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Section 3: Receiving a Patient into the PACU

Learning Outcomes

Rotate through minor elective list patients, i.e., Endoscopy, general surgery, ECT, Urology, Gynae

- Explain the importance of an effective collaborative clinical handover to ensuring patient safety
- Identify the key principles of clinical handover.
- Describe and perform initial physical assessment of the post-operative patient.

Online Modules

#	Code	Title
1	39831743	Think, Talk and Write ISBAR
2	431806429	RNPIP - Adult Systematic A-G Assessment

External Learning Activities

Read [ANZCA Handover responsibilities of the anaesthetist](#)

Read [Sydney Morning Herald Paul Lau died after hospital medication mix up following routine surgery](#)

Read [ANZCA PS55\(A\) Position statement on minimum facilities for safe administration of anaesthesia in operating suites and other anaesthetising locations](#)

Operational Assessments

#	Code	Title
1	SWSLHD-OA-2019-1201	Neurological Assessment using the Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS)
2	SWSLHD-OA-2024-12165	Perioperative: Neurovascular Assessment

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Section 4: Airway and Breathing in the Postoperative Period

Learning Outcomes

Rotate through minor elective list patients i.e., Endoscopy, general surgery, ECT, Urology, Gynae

- Describes the role of the airway and its anatomy.
- Develops skills to assess airway needs and adjuncts including sizes
- Identifies airway adjuncts
- Demonstrates a safe and skilled support for the anaesthetist whilst managing a patient's airway.
- Understands need for supplemental oxygen requirement in the post operative period.

Online Modules

#	Code	Title
1	436493037	Procedural Conscious Sedation

External Learning Activities

Read [Functional Anatomy and Physiology of the Airway](#)

Watch [Airways](#)

Read and Watch [Bag-Valve-Mask Ventilation](#)

Watch [Micro Moments High Flow Therapy](#)

Read [Laryngospasm Management](#)

Read [Management of Bronchospasm](#)

Operational Assessments

#	Code	Title
1	SWSLHD-OA-2024-12186	Bag-Valve Resuscitator and Airway adjuncts
2	SWSLHD-OA-2024-12180	Perioperative: Removal of a Laryngeal Mask (LMA)

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Section 5: Patient Care Considerations

Learning Outcomes

Rotate with preceptor through minor elective list patients (i.e. Endoscopy, ECT, General Surgery, Urology and Gynaecology).

- Defines hypothermia and its implications on the surgical patient
- Discusses methods to prevent and manage inadvertent hypothermia in the Perioperative setting.
- Identify pressure point areas and patient positioning aids for pressure injury management in the perioperative patient
- Assess patients risk factors for VTE and implement prevention strategies
- Differentiate between type 1 and type 2 diabetes and its management.
- Discuss hypoglycaemia and hyperglycaemia and its management.
- Describe the risks of NBM in the diabetic perioperative patient including DKA.
- Blood Glucose monitoring importance within the perioperative period
- Recognise and incorporate sensitive care involving dignity and respect for patients with obesity

Online Modules

#	Code	Title
1	117156049	Learning Path - Pressure Injury Prevention: Risk Assessment and Risk Management (This is a learning pathway in itself. It cannot be included in the PDP. The participant has to search for and complete the pathway separately.)
2	237965997	Safe Use of Anticoagulants
3	212082420	Electronic Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) Risk Assessment Tool for Adult Inpatients

External Learning Activities

Read [3M Facts on Forced air warming](#)
Read [ACORN Hypothermia \(H\)](#)
Watch [Darren Lehmens experience with VTE](#)
Discover [Sequential Calf Compressors](#)

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Section 6: Wound and Drain Assessment and Management

Learning Outcomes

- Identify goals of wound management
- Discuss interventions that optimise wound healing.
- Identify factors that delay wound healing.
- Describe rationale for choice of wound dressings
- Accurately document and report continuity of wound care
- Understanding of delayed wound healing and management

Online Modules

#	Code	Title
1	42833429	Wound management
2	40063891	Wound Assessment
3	40027445	Aseptic Technique

External Learning Activities

Read [vacuum assisted closure \(VAC\)/negative pressure wound therapy](#)

Read [Surgical Drains](#)

Operational Assessments

#	Code	Title
1	SWSLHD-OA-2020-1204	Aseptic Technique Practical Assessment

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Section 7: Pain Assessment and Management

Learning Outcomes

Rotate with preceptor through minor elective lists (i.e. Endoscopy, ECT, General Surgery, Urology and Gynaecology)

- Assess patient with acute pain.
 - Document pain assessment
 - Differentiate types of pain and how to manage.
 - Identify different classes of analgesia.
 - Describe benefits of using multi-modal analgesia
- Asses clinical situation to determine if opioid medication is most appropriate intervention for pain management in the post operative patient.
- Commence opioid treatment with management plan.
 - Collaborate effectively with patient to assess effectiveness of treatment utilising reassessment information effectively

Online Modules

#	Code	Title
1	66247854	Pain Assessment
2	214583697	Safe Use of High-Risk Medicines: Introductory Module
3	267525641	Safe Use of Opioids
4	78572002	Acute Pain Management for Adults
5	40063903	Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) for adults

External Learning Activities

Read [ANZCA Position statement on acute pain management](#)

Read [Postoperative pain management in the post anaesthesia care unit](#)

Operational Assessments

		Title
1	SWSLHD-OA-2020-1209	Medication - Administration of S4D and S8 Medications
2	SWSLHD-OA-2020-1210	Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) - Practical Assessment

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Section 8: Discharging Patients from the PACU

Learning Outcomes

- Conducts an appropriate clinical handover using ISBAR to ensure safe continuity of care.
- Clinically assesses patient for a safe discharge from the PACU.
- Ensures appropriate documentation for continuity of care

Online Modules

#	Code	Title
1	47857717	Clinical Handover

External Learning Activities

Read [ANZCA guideline for the perioperative care of patients selected for day stay procedures](#)

Operational Assessments

#	Code	Title
1	SWSLHD-OA-2024-12181	Perioperative: Clinical Handover from the PACU

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Assignments

Each section has a sub-section on Assignments. These assignments include activities that the participant is required to complete in collaboration with their manager. These activities are often actions that need to be completed outside of My Health Learning.

Once all actions are completed, the participant and their manager are required to complete the checklist that is provided at the end of this document. This checklist acts as a 'final sign off' by the manager confirming that the participant has met all requirements listed within this document and pathway.

The signed checklist has to be scanned and emailed to the Education and Organisational Development Service (EODS) via email at SWLHD-EducationOD@health.nsw.gov.au.

The EODS team will mark off the final assignment in My Health Learning. An automatic certificate of completion will be generated for the Pathway once this assignment is marked off.

Assignments for each section are provided below.

Section 1: The PACU Nurse: Roles and Responsibilities

Reflective Practice Module The Roles and Responsibilities of a PACU Nurse

The manager should mark this assignment as completed after they:

- meet with the participant to confirm learning and knowledge gained from all external activities listed in this section; and
- the participant successfully completes the following activities:
 - **Activity** With your preceptor, complete the relevant checks and set up of a PACU bay in preparation for a post-operative patient.

The manager/preceptor must ensure they provide sufficient opportunities for the participant to practice the skills and support the participant in attaining an appropriate level of competence in this section before signing the participant off as having completed this assignment.

Section 2: Work Health and Safety Considerations in the PACU

Reflective Practice Module Work Health and Safety Responsibilities

The manager should mark this assignment as completed after they:

- meet with the participant to confirm learning and knowledge gained from all external activities listed in this section

The manager/preceptor must ensure they provide sufficient opportunities for the participant to practice the skills and support the participant in attaining an appropriate level of competence in this section before signing the participant off as having completed this assignment.

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Section 3: Receiving a Patient into the PACU

Neurovascular Assessment logbook
Neurological Assessment Logbook
Reflective Practice Module Receiving a Patient into the PACU

The manager should mark this assignment as completed after they:

- meet with the participant to confirm learning and knowledge gained from all external activities listed in this section; and
- the participant successfully completes the following activities:
 - **Observe** A handover between an anaesthetist and the receiving PACU nurse.
 - **Activity** Under the guidance of your preceptor, appropriately select and attach monitoring to the post-operative patient.
 - **Activity** Complete an A-G assessment of your post-operative patient with your preceptor and document your findings on eMR.

The manager/preceptor must ensure they provide sufficient opportunities for the participant to practice the skills and support the participant in attaining an appropriate level of competence in this section before signing the participant off as having completed this assignment.

Section 4: Airway and Breathing in the Postoperative Period

Removal of a Laryngeal Mask (LMA) Logbook
Maintaining an Airway Logbook
Jaw/Chin Lift Logbook
Oropharyngeal Airway Logbook
Reflective Practice Module Airway and Breathing in the Post Operative Period

The manager should mark this assignment as completed after they:

- meet with the participant to confirm learning and knowledge gained from all external activities listed in this section; and
- the participant successfully completes the following activities:
 - **Activity** Under the guidance of your preceptor, remove an LMA, NP and oropharyngeal
 - **Activity** With your preceptor, set up the Hi-flow within your PACU.
 - **Activity** Under the guidance of your preceptor, insert an oropharyngeal airway in a simulated scenario.
 - **Activity** under the guidance of your preceptor, insert a nasopharyngeal airway in a simulated scenario.
 - **Activity** Complete a single and two-person Bag-Valve-Mask simulation under the guidance of your preceptor.

The manager/preceptor must ensure they provide sufficient opportunities for the participant to practice the skills and support the participant in attaining an appropriate level of competence in this section before signing the participant off as having completed this assignment.

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Section 5: Patient Care Considerations

Reflective Practice Module Patient Care Considerations

The manager should mark this assignment as completed after they:

- meet with the participant to confirm learning and knowledge gained from all external activities listed in this section; and
- the participant successfully completes the following activities:
 - **Activity** Observe your preceptor undertaking a count with the scrub nurse.
 - **Activity** Under the guidance of your preceptor, complete a count with the scrub nurse.
 - **Activity** Under the guidance of your preceptor, scan items used for a case into the HTrak system
 - **Activity** Under the guidance of your preceptor, scan items into Instacount.
 - **Complete** Logbook-Performing a count

The manager/preceptor must ensure they provide sufficient opportunities for the participant to practice the skills and support the participant in attaining an appropriate level of competence in this section before signing the participant off as having completed this assignment.

Section 6: Wound and Drain Assessment and Management

Reflective Practice Module Wound and Drain Assessment and Management

The manager should mark this assignment as completed after they:

- meet with the participant to confirm learning and knowledge gained from all external activities listed in this section; and
- the participant successfully completes the following activities:
 - **Activity** Conduct and document a wound assessment with you preceptor.
 - **Activity** With your preceptor, complete a wound dressing change under aseptic technique.

The manager/preceptor must ensure they provide sufficient opportunities for the participant to practice the skills and support the participant in attaining an appropriate level of competence in this section before signing the participant off as having completed this assignment.

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Section 7: Pain Assessment and Management

PACU Pain Protocol Logbook

Setting up a PCA Logbook

Reflective Practice Module Pain Assessment and Management

The manager should mark this assignment as completed after they:

- meet with the participant to confirm learning and knowledge gained from all external activities listed in this section.
- the participant successfully completes the following activities:
 - **Activity** Complete and document a pain assessment on the post-operative patient with your preceptor.
 - **Activity** Under the guidance of your preceptor, determine appropriate pain relief technique for the post operative patient.
 - **Activity** Under the guidance of your preceptor, administer pain protocol in the PACU.
 - **Activity** Under the guidance of you preceptor, set up a PCA.

The manager/preceptor must ensure they provide sufficient opportunities for the participant to practice the skills and support the participant in attaining an appropriate level of competence in this section before signing the participant off as having completed this assignment.

Section 8: Discharging Patients from the PACU

The manager should mark this assignment as completed after they:

- meet with the participant to confirm learning and knowledge gained from all external activities listed in this section; and

The manager/preceptor must ensure they provide sufficient opportunities for the participant to practice the skills and support the participant in attaining an appropriate level of competence in this section before signing the participant off as having completed this assignment.

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PACU Nurse **Novice** Professional Development Pathway Completion Form

This form confirms that the participant has completed all requirements of the Professional Development Pathway and can be issued a certificate of completion in My Health Learning (MHL).

Participant Name		Employee Number	
Department		Facility/Service	
Date		Participant Signature	
Line Manager Confirmation			
☐ I confirm that the participant has completed all requirement of the Pathway including additional workplace experiential activities that are required as part of this pathway.			
Manager Name		Manager Role	
Date		Manager Signature	

Assignments

The Pathway includes assignments in the following sections that have been completed by the participants.

Course Name	Completed? ✓ or X
Section 1: The PACU Nurse: Roles and Responsibilities	
Section 2: Work Health and Safety Considerations in the PACU	
Section 3: Receiving a Patient into the PACU	
Section 4: Airway and Breathing in the Postoperative Period	
Section 5: Patient Care Considerations	
Section 6: Wound and Drain Assessment and Management	
Section 7: Pain Assessment and Management	
Section 8: Discharging Patients from the PACU	

Submit the completed and signed form to the Education and Organisational Development Service (EODS) via email at SWSLHD-EducationOD@health.nsw.gov.au for sign off in My Health Learning.