

# nursing specialty

## Perioperative Nursing

### What is Perioperative Nursing?

The term 'perioperative nursing' describes the care of patients by nurses who work within the perioperative environment. This environment was once known simply as 'the operating theatre', however, this dynamic environment now encompasses pre-admission clinics and day procedure units, as well as interventional suites and operating suites.

Perioperative nurses work as part of a multidisciplinary team to plan, implement and evaluate the patient's treatment and care through the pre-operative, intra-operative and post-operative phases of surgery. Perioperative nurses may specialise as a day procedure nurse, anaesthetic nurse, circulating nurse (scout), instrument nurse (scrub) and/or post anaesthetic care nurse (recovery).

### What makes Perioperative Nursing special?

Whether the patient is under local or general anaesthesia, having elective or emergency surgery, the perioperative patient will be at their most vulnerable and helpless stage during the surgical episode. They may experience anxiety, fear and pain. The perioperative nurse therefore, focuses on both the psychosocial and physiological needs of each patient and, unlike nurses in other practice environments, is in the privileged position of managing the care of one patient at a time. This model of individualised patient care, which occurs 'behind closed doors' is not always visible or apparent to the patient or family, but ultimately, it is extremely rewarding.

### What's good about Perioperative Nursing?

A career in perioperative nursing allows nurses to focus on individual patient care and fosters the development of teamwork as well as advanced practice knowledge and skills. It also provides opportunities for nurses to enhance their leadership qualities in management and education roles. Whether the nurse works in the perioperative environment for six months or six years, the experience gained will be invaluable in understanding the unique care needs of surgical and critical care patients.

### What's challenging about Perioperative Nursing?

Perioperative nursing appeals to those who are quick thinking, highly organised and who enjoy the challenges of working in a rewarding and dynamic practice environment. Because it provides a 24 hour service, the nurses who work in the perioperative environment take on a share of 'on-call' duties for emergency surgery. Above all else, patient care is the priority in this highly charged atmosphere so the workload can be unpredictable and physically challenging.

### Which facilities employ Perioperative Nurses?

Permanent full-time, part-time or casual employment is available for registered and enrolled nurses in all of our operating suites.

Information on the employment opportunities can be obtained from the nursing workforce managers or nurse educators in the operating suites at the following facilities:

Sydney Hospital & Sydney Eye Hospital	(02) 9382 7111
St Vincent's Hospital	(02) 8382 1111
Prince of Wales Hospital	(02) 9382 2222
Royal Hospital for Women	(02) 9382 6111
St George Hospital	(02) 9113 1111
The Sutherland Hospital	(02) 9540 7111
Wollongong Hospital	(02) 4222 5000
Shellharbour Hospital	(02) 4295 2500
Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital	(02) 4421 3111

Find out more about these hospitals and South Eastern Sydney Illawarra Health from our website:  
[www.sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au/Hospitals/index.asp](http://www.sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au/Hospitals/index.asp)

<http://nursing.sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au>

Positions vacant in SESIH are advertised through the following websites:

[www.sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au/employment/index.asp](http://www.sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au/employment/index.asp)  
[wwwsvh.stvincents.com.au/hr/employment/jobs.htm](http://wwwsvh.stvincents.com.au/hr/employment/jobs.htm)

Expressions of interest about employment with us can also be lodged at: <http://nursing.sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au>

## How do you specialise in Perioperative Nursing?

Operating suite managers welcome opportunities to meet with interested trainees and students, newly graduated nurses, as well as qualified enrolled and registered nurses and introduce them to the fascinating clinical specialty of perioperative nursing.

Employment in SESIH provides access to educational pathways in highly regarded in-house programs such as PEPEN: the Perioperative Education Program for Enrolled Nurses and the Foundations in Perioperative Nursing Program for registered nurses.

Post-basic specialty qualifications are not a pre-requisite for employment in the perioperative environment since new employees are supported in their entry to practice by a comprehensive orientation program. This includes attendance at PIP: the SESIH Perioperative Introductory Program, as well as access to a variety of study days held across the calendar year.

All operating suites in SESIH provide clinical support for registered nurses undertaking post graduate perioperative nursing courses. Several universities, including the Australian Catholic University (ACU) National and the University of Technology, Sydney as well as The College of Nursing, offer post graduate courses in the areas of anaesthetic, recovery and perioperative nursing at graduate certificate, graduate diploma or masters degree level. Courses are conducted annually and application is made directly to the institution.

**Note:** St Vincent's Hospital offers a formal one year Perioperative Nursing Clinical Program for which credit is given at ACU National towards their Master of Clinical Practice. The program commences in February each year and includes rotations through the surgical specialities and clinical study days.

## Perioperative Networks for further information

For further information about any of our education initiatives contact:

### **The Clinical Nurse Consultant for Perioperative Practice Development in SESIH**

c/o St Vincent's Hospital  
Telephone: (02) 8382 1111 and page 6141  
or (02) 8382 2606.

There is a wealth of information available from professional organisations, which will be helpful for nurses interested in finding out more about the exciting specialty of perioperative nursing:

The New South Wales Operating Theatre Association:  
[www.nsw-ota.asn.au/](http://www.nsw-ota.asn.au/)

The Australian College of Operating Room Nurses:  
[www.acorn.org.au/](http://www.acorn.org.au/)