ANAESTHETIC TECHNICIAN TRAINING PROGRAM
Information Sheet (2016)

The role of the anaesthetic technician

Anaesthetic technicians (ATs) work inside operating suites where patients have surgical procedures. They work very closely with anaesthetists (specialist doctors) to provide care for patients having anaesthetics. ATs are responsible for preparing the anaesthetic equipment required for each patient, assisting with anaesthetising the patient and helping to reverse the anaesthetic safely at the end of surgery so that patients recover quickly. ATs perform some medical testing procedures during surgery and provide expert help in the event of an emergency arising. ATs also ensure the operating room is organised and well stocked with consumable items required for safe anaesthesia. The role requires a team focus and excellent communication skills. It is a practical job where good organisational skills and dexterity are valued. The ability to multi-task, prioritise workload and solve problems as they arise are also essential.

The training programme

For detailed information about the NZ anaesthetic technician training program, please visit the New Zealand Anaesthetic Technician’s Society (NZATS) website www.nzats.co.nz/training/ where you will find answers to frequently asked questions and information about the content of the training program.

Most training hospitals advertise for trainees in October/November for a February start. ADHB also advertises in April/May for a July start and in October for a February start.

It will help you to read the document “Competencies for Anaesthetic Technicians” published by the Medical Sciences Council of NZ (MSCNZ) (www.mscouncil.org.nz). This outlines the responsibilities of ATs when qualified and will give you an idea of the training goals. Their website contains further information about the work and responsibilities of Anaesthetic Technicians and I highly recommend you look at it. The MSC is the government appointed organisation tasked with ensuring that ATs provide safe and professional care for patients whilst they are receiving health care services in New Zealand. It is important you understand that anaesthetic technicians, like most other health professionals, are a regulated profession. You will be required to comply fully with their standards of clinical and professional practice throughout your career.

Another good resource is the YouTube video “A Career as an Anaesthetic Technician” from the series Just the Job. You will find it at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JnMRrVdsJw It was filmed at North Shore Hospital and features one of their trainee anaesthetic technicians who talks about the role and training programme.

Entry requirements

These are determined by AUT and the MSCNZ:
Minimum entry requirements at ADHB are:

- Evidence of NZ citizenship or permanent residency
- NCEA Level 2 physics or maths (or equivalent) and
- NCEA Level 3 biology (or equivalent)
- Previous work experience in a customer service based industry/healthcare setting for at least ONE year since leaving school

Please note that we cannot accept applications from candidates who do not meet these entry criteria.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long is the training programme?

- The training is full time for 3.2 years if you commence in February and 3.8 years if you commence mid-year. In some instances, trainees with relevant clinical backgrounds (eg nurses with ICU, OR, surgical ward or ED experience / physiotherapists / vet nurses) may be able to apply for reduced training times (max 12 months reduction). This is the responsibility of the Medical Sciences Council, not individual training hospitals or AUT.

What hours and shifts will I be required to work?

- At ADHB all trainees work a 40 hour week which may include day, evening and weekend shifts at various times during the training. There may also be a requirement to work at least one Christmas or New Year.

What leave entitlements will I have during my training?

- You will be entitled to 4 weeks annual leave per annum; 10 public holidays and up to 10 days paid sick leave per annum. AL is accrued at approximately 2 days per month. You may only take leave that has been accrued previously except in special circumstances.

Can I apply to AUT and enrol in the academic programme straight away?

- AUT will not permit you to enrol until you have evidence of a confirmed training place. Usually AUT require a formal Contract of Employment to be presented to them as evidence if this. The training is an apprenticeship style training which means that theory papers must be sat whilst the student completes organised clinical learning.

AUT will allow students to complete Human Anatomy & Physiology 1 (HAP) and Biophysics 5 as these are papers generic to many health science qualifications. AUT will be able to give you information about these papers if you are keen do these papers prior to applying for a training position.

Once I have a training position, which programme should I enrol in at AUT – the Diploma or Graduate Certificate?

- Trainees will be required to enrol in relevant academic papers at AUT. Visit www.aut.ac.nz to find out more information on the academic course.
a) If you are a Registered Nurse with relevant experience you should look up the Graduate Certificate in Applied Science (Anaesthetic Technology).

b) If you have a relevant health science degree you may be eligible to enrol in the Graduate Certificate. You will need to discuss this with AUT as this is entirely their decision.

c) If you are not a Registered Nurse and do not have a relevant health science degree, you should look up the Diploma in Applied Science (Anaesthetic Technology).

What are the costs associated with training to be an AT?

- During your training you will be required to pay for your academic papers up front (currently approximately $700-850 each). ADHB will reimburse these costs provided you pass them at the first attempt. Similarly, you will also be required pay for your final Registration Examination (currently $830) but will be reimbursed by ADHB if you pass it at the first attempt. If you resign from the training programme you may not be reimbursed costs for current paper enrolments.

How much does a trainee anaesthetic technician earn?

- Trainees are paid a nominal training salary as follows (excluding NZ Registered RNs who are paid according to their year of service on the NZNO nursing scales):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AT Salary Scales</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year</strong></td>
<td><strong>From 11 April 2016</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>32,824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>35,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>38,791</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>41,774</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>44,761</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>48,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>64,413</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 1 is the starting salary for the first 6 months of training and may increase to Step 2 after 6 months. Salary will increase by one step each year thereafter. The first step increase after 6 months is performance based – all others are automatic.

Step 6 is the starting salary for newly qualified ATs with annual increments up to step 12 as shown.

Step 13 is currently the top salary step for senior ATs. After this step, pay rises are in line with government increases OR the AT has to apply for a senior role as a Charge Technician or Educator.

How many trainee positions are available each year at ADHB?

- We usually have 3-4 vacancies at each intake.

Is there an orientation programme to help me settle in to the training programme?

- We provide an Induction Programme of 4 weeks’ duration. This includes theory and practical sessions designed to introduce you to the role of the AT. You will spend approximately 2 days
per week in the operating room during this time so that you can relate the theory to practice as you learn. All our trainees enjoy these days as it gives them an insight into the job right from the beginning of the training programme. Further, your first 3 months of full time clinical work will be spent in our day surgery operating suite at Greenlane Clinical Centre. This is an excellent environment for you to practice and perfect essential basic skills that are relevant to all patients having an anaesthetic. We provide additional teaching support throughout this time.

**How will I be supervised during my training?**

- You will be fully supervised and supported by experienced qualified anaesthetic technicians for the first 8-10 months of your training. They will work alongside you giving you increasing independence in your practice as your competence and confidence improve. Supervision levels are dictated by the Medical Sciences Council and are tailored to your personal needs as well. By the last year of your training, you will be working mostly independently with support available as you need it.

**Do I need to buy any text books before I start?**

- ADHB require you to purchase 2 core text books before you commence your training to an approximate value of $200. We will give you more information about this if you gain a training position here.

Thank you for your interest in our training programme. We wish you good luck with your application process!

If you require any further information, please don’t hesitate to contact Zoe Catt, Training & Development Co-ordinator at ZoeC@adhb.govt.nz