ANAESTHETIC TECHNICIAN TRAINING PROGRAM

Information Sheet
October 2017

The role of the Anaesthetic Technician / Assistant

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 anaesthetic procedures for their surgery. 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 a safe anaesthetic. It is a varied and challenging role and requires a team focus and excellent communication skills. It is a practical job where an interest in people, good organisational skills and professionalism are highly valued. The ability to multi-task, prioritise workload and solve problems as they arise is 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 be of interest to you if you 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 practice and professional conduct 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
- Mature students are considered for training places depending on work experience.

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

Anaesthetic Technician – New Zealand Training Update

Please note that the current training programme is delivered as an apprenticeship style training which requires employment in an approved training hospital and enrolment at AUT. The training is delivered at Diploma or Graduate Certificate level.

The Medical Sciences Council and AUT are currently considering the introduction of a possible degree programme to commence within the next 2-4 years. Trainees who enroll now may be required to upgrade to the degree in future if they wish to work in a wider scope of practice. These potential changes are still only at discussion stage but you may wish to bare this in mind when you apply for a training position. If you are keen to follow the progress of these discussions you should check the Medical Sciences Council website for updates.

The following information relates to the training as it currently stands.

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 / paramedics / ambulance officers) 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. An application for reduced training time can only be made after you have secured a training position.
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. Shifts are either 5 x 8 hour shifts or 4 x 10 hour shifts depending on placement. We are currently investigating the possibility of trainees doing some night shifts but this is still under discussion. There may also be a requirement to work at least one Christmas or New Year.

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):

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<th>Year</th>
<th>From 10.04.17</th>
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<tr>
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<td>12</td>
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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.

After Step 12, ATs can apply for step increases based on merit.

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. Unpaid leave is also only given under special circumstances and is not an entitlement.

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

AUT will not permit you to enroll in the Diploma or Graduate Certificate until you have evidence of a confirmed training place at a hospital. 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.
However, AUT will allow students to complete Human Anatomy & Physiology 1 (HAP) and Biophysics 5 theory papers 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 complete them prior to applying for a training position.

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

Trainees will be required to enroll in relevant academic papers at AUT. Visit [www.aut.ac.nz](http://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 check the Graduate Certificate in Applied Science (Anaesthetic Technology).

b) If you have a relevant health science degree you may be eligible to enroll 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 or do not have a relevant health science degree, you should check the Diploma in Applied Science (Anaesthetic Technology).

**How much does the training cost?**

During your training you will be required to pay for your academic papers up front (currently approximately $800 - $950 each). ADHB will reimburse these costs provided you pass your end of semester exam at the first attempt. Similarly, you will also be required pay for your final Registration Examination ($1,250) 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.

You are also often required to attend AUT block courses that are outside Auckland. If travel and accommodation is required for these, ADHB covers the cost up front.

**How many trainee positions are there each year at ADHB?**

We usually have 2 intakes per year (February & July) and have 4 vacancies at each one.

**How will I know when the advert is placed?**

Check the ADHB Career’s page on the ADHB website [http://careers.adhb.govt.nz/](http://careers.adhb.govt.nz/) or email Sian Mitchell with your expression of interest and you will be notified when the advert is placed.

**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 2 days per week in the operating room 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.

**How will I develop practical skills required for the role?**

You will be fully supported by experienced qualified anaesthetic technicians for the first 4-6 months of your training. They will work alongside you giving you increasing independence in your practice as your competence and confidence grow. Once you pass routine ADHB assessments, your level of supervision will be reduced. By the last year of your training, you will be working mostly independently with clinical support available as you need it.

**Am I required to buy any text books for the training programme?**

Yes, prior to commencing your employment with ADHB we require you to purchase 2 of the core textbooks (approximate value $200 new). Information about these books will be emailed to candidates who have been offered a training place. Other text books are available from the AUT Library, the Medical School Library and a small in-house library at the hospital.

**What opportunities are available once the training is completed?**

Once you successfully complete all the requirements of the training programme, you will be able to register with the Medical Sciences Council as an Anaesthetic Technician. About 3-4 months before you are able to register, you will have the opportunity to apply for permanent qualified Anaesthetic Technician roles within ADHB and other DHBs. If selected, you will be given a conditional offer and will be able to start in the role as soon as you have your registration.

*Thank you*

*I trust these FAQs have answered your questions about the training programme.*

*If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at the following email address: sianm@adhb.govt.nz*

*Sião Mitchell, Training Co-ordinator*