

Perioperative OR Internship FAQ's



Q: How long is the Internship program?

A: The fundamental portion of the Internship lasts 12 weeks and 2 days. The format includes a combination of live didactic, independent online study, lab, and clinical hours. Upon completion of the Internship program, you will remain on orientation until competency is reached.

Q: Am I required to sign a Commitment Agreement if selected to the Vanderbilt Perioperative OR Internship program?

A: Yes. The OR Internship Commitment Agreement is for a period of two years. In essence, if selected into the OR Internship program, it is an expectation that you will honor your written commitment to stay for the full 2-year period. We would hope you would stay far longer than 2 years, because we feel that the growth potential within Perioperative Services is unparalleled. The Commitment Agreement begins your first day of work at Vanderbilt.

Q: What are the hours of the training?

A: The first 12 weeks of the program requires meeting five days per week for eight hours each day. Typically, the hours are from 6:45am to 3:15pm. There are some meeting days that we arrive earlier (i.e., 6:30am) and some clinical rotations that require flexible or varied hours. After the 12 weeks are complete, your shift may change based on the departmental needs and your orientation plan.

Q: Am I considered an employee while in the program?

A: Yes. You are hired as an employee before the program begins and start earning wages and benefits on the first day of the program.

Q: Will I know where I will be working after the training?

A: You will be hired for the Adult OR. In the Adult OR you will be assigned to an initial area to start learning your fundamental skills with a preceptor. You will have a limited rotation through each service line during the program. The Adult OR includes main campus as well as ambulatory sites. Flexibility will be required regarding service line, shift, holiday, or weekend hours when needed. You will be expected to cover holiday call and late stay call upon completion of your service line orientation. Towards the end of the Internship, you will be matched to a primary service line as determined by: Intern preference, staff and leadership feedback, and ultimately **departmental needs**. This may involve evenings, nights, or weekend shifts.

Q: How long will I be working with a preceptor?

A: You will be assigned to a preceptor until competency is validated and you are signed off of orientation. Typically, you will have a primary and secondary preceptor as well as occasional alternates depending on scheduling.

Q: How will my competency be determined?

A: Each Intern will have an orientation folder that contains specific criteria for validation of competency on specific skills in both the Circulating and Scrub roles. **The Intern will be responsible for obtaining documentation from the preceptor to determine competency in the clinical area.** Progress meetings will be held with the Manager, Educator, and preceptor to provide feedback and set goals.

Q: How long does it take to be prepared to work independently in my role?

A: After the 12-week fundamental component of the program, you will remain on orientation until competency is achieved. Each service line varies as far as complexity and therefore the progression is individualized depending on

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assignment. The average total length of orientation, including the Internship, is typically 6 months.

Q: What responsibilities does a Circulating nurse have?

A: Responsibilities of the Circulator include but are not limited to:

- Management of personnel, equipment, supplies, and environment during surgical procedure
- Patient care including assessment, assisting the anesthesia team, positioning, prepping, and documentation
- Manages flow of information as well as supplies to and from the surgical team members scrubbed at the field

Q: What are the responsibilities of the nurse functioning in the scrub role, and will that be part of my training?

A: The surgical technologist, (scrub tech) is responsible for assisting the surgeon and assistants with instrumentation, set-ups, suture presentation, sponges, etc., while maintaining the sterility of the surgical field through aseptic practices. Their role is based on knowledge of anatomy and the sequence of the surgical procedure to facilitate and anticipate the needs of the surgeon and the assistant. During the Internship program you will learn to scrub, gown, and glove, drape the patient/equipment, recognize and handle 100+ instruments, recognize and correct breaks in sterile technique. You will be validated in the clinical area. You will be responsible to reach competency with these tasks as well as the Circulating role.

Q: What are the characteristics of an OR Nurse?

A: An OR nurse should be adaptable and able to:

- Work in a stressful environment through a variety of stressful situations
- Work in a physically challenging environment which includes standing for long periods of time as well as moving and lifting bulky or heavy equipment or instrument trays
- Communicate efficiently and effectively
- Multitask, prioritize, and problem solve
- Function in both the Circulating and Scrub roles after orientation.
 - Additional Scrub training for the OR nurse would be required beyond the limited scrub rotation during the Internship, before functioning in the Scrub role post service line orientation

Q: How many Interns do you accept for each class?

A: The number of Interns we hire depends on departmental needs - typical class sizes ranging from 10 to 14 for a traditional Internship.

Q: What are NCLEX requirements?

A: Nurse Interns are required to be licensed prior to their start date. Interns that can provide official documentation of successful NCLEX results and pending application for TN RN licensure (or a state that is part of the enhanced nurse licensure compact) will be considered eligible to start. Residents who have not yet passed the NCLEX or applied for licensure (in TN or a state that is a part of the enhanced nurse licensure compact) may be considered for a later start date pending position availability.

Q: May I take vacation time during the program?

A: Vacations are not granted during the first 12 weeks of the program as your attendance is crucial to your success.

Q: How often do you offer the program and how do I apply?

A: We typically offer the program two times each year, (in February and July). If needed, we may offer a third Internship in October. For more information visit our website at:

<https://www.vumc.org/periop-services/or-internship>

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Q: Will this role prepare me for a goal of becoming a CRNA?

A: No. A CRNA program requires a couple of years of ICU experience rather than OR experience. It would be better to pursue an ICU unit if becoming a CRNA is your personal goal.

Q: Do you utilize Nurse Practitioners in the OR?

A: We do not utilize Nurse Practitioners in a traditional NP role in the OR. An NP that wants to circulate and scrub would fill the same role as other Interns without an NP degree. NPs could follow the same paths for advancement that is available to all Interns (clinical ladder, FA programs, and leadership tracks).

Q: Will this role prepare me for a goal of becoming an RNFA?

A: Yes. This experience will prepare you for the goal of becoming an RNFA if desired. First, however, you must obtain two years of full-time hours and become certified (CNOR). After that you will be eligible to pursue RNFA programs.