

Brief: This position statement sets out to highlight concerns regarding patient safety with respect to gaps between the required and the accepted perioperative standards in UK healthcare.

Position Statement: International Recruitment in Perioperative Care

International healthcare recruitment plays a pivotal role in addressing the increasing demand for skilled healthcare professionals within the UK, particularly in specialised areas such as perioperative practice. Both the National Health Service (NHS) and private healthcare providers have embraced international recruitment as a solution to staffing shortages.

The Association for Perioperative Practice (AfPP) is committed to fostering excellence in perioperative care and champions the importance of a diverse and inclusive workforce, which significantly enhances the quality of care provided to patients. However, challenges remain in ensuring that International Healthcare Professionals (IHPs) are effectively integrated into the UK workforce and are equipped to meet the specific demands of perioperative practice.

Recognition of Qualifications and Skills

AfPP acknowledges the value of the qualifications and experience that IHPs bring to the UK healthcare system. Many possess equivalent qualifications under different titles, which can lead to confusion around their skills. A particular challenge arises in the recruitment and selection of IHPs for Operating Department Practitioner (ODP) roles, as many do not meet the UK's standards for proficiency across all three areas of perioperative care:

1. **Anaesthetic Practitioner**
2. **Scrub Practitioner**
3. **Post-anaesthetic Recovery Care Practitioner**

This gap highlights the need for clear, supportive pathways to ensure that IHPs achieve the required competencies while fully utilising their existing skills.

Meeting HCPC Standards of Proficiency

AfPP recognises that IHPs must meet the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) standards of proficiency. Many international recruits require additional training to align with UK-specific clinical practices and protocols, as outlined by The Centre for Perioperative Care (CPOC) guidelines.

AfPP supports the following measures:

- The HCPC registration process for ODP to mirror the pathways available to overseas nurses registering with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), including mandatory English language testing.
- Providing accessible and comprehensive resources that clarify HCPC standards and the expectations for ODP practice in the UK.

Support and Mentorship

To facilitate the successful integration of IHPs, AfPP advocates for robust support systems, including:

- **Structured Mentorship Programs:** Pairing international recruits with experienced perioperative practitioners to provide guidance, feedback, and professional development.
- **Educational Resources:** Offering workshops, courses, and materials that bridge knowledge gaps and align international practices with UK standards.
- **Cultural Competency Training:** Supporting both IHPs and their UK-based colleagues in fostering mutual understanding and collaboration within diverse teams.

Investment in UK training

As previously stated, AfPP recognises the invaluable contribution of IHR's. However, it is vital that additional funding is allocated to support "grass roots" UK based training and development.

AfPP would ask that not only is additional funding allocated appropriately to grow "grass root" practitioners but also immediate consideration is given to relaunching the student training bursary.

Conclusion

International healthcare recruitment is an invaluable strategy for addressing workforce shortages in the UK's healthcare system. The AfPP is dedicated to ensuring that IHPs are not only welcomed but also provided with the necessary tools to thrive in the UK perioperative care environment. However, it is also paramount that IHP's skillsets meet the required level of competencies to be registered as an ODP.

By recognising their qualifications, supporting their professional development, and advocating for an inclusive approach to recruitment and integration, we can ensure the delivery of safe, high-quality care for all patients

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1	Dec 24		Board	Board	1 December 25