The Assistant in Nursing is an emerging category of health care worker introduced into WA Health in 2008. The role of the Assistant in Nursing is to support registered nurses (RN) and enrolled nurses (EN) in the delivery of general patient care. This Operational Directive outlines the duties a trained Acute Care AIN may undertake, always under the supervision of a registered nurse.

The Chief Nurse and Midwifery Officer in 2008, consulted with the Nurses and Midwives Board of WA (now known as ‘Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency’) and the Liquor and Hospitality Miscellaneous Union (now known as ‘United Voice’), determining a set of competencies to be obtained and a uniform set of duties that may be undertaken by AIN within WA Health. The application of this determination is mandatory in all WA Health facilities.

Health services employing AIN may not require them to undertake the full range of duties as listed below and where this is the case, should articulate their choice of allowable AIN duties via a statement of local policy. The range of allowable duties must however be drawn from those detailed in this Operational Directive.

An AIN who has successfully completed the Certificate III in Health Services Assistance (Acute Care) qualification has been trained to undertake all of the duties identified in this duties list.

All tasks undertaken by AIN will be allocated to the AIN by an RN who has made an assessment of the patient and delegated the task under the Scope of Nursing Practice Decision Making Framework.
DUTIES AND COMPETENCIES LIST

Patient Meals

- Preparation of table over bed
- Safe positioning of patients to receive meals
- Assist with cutting up food and opening packages
- Physically feeding patients who are unable to do so for themselves under the direction of the RN
- Refilling of water jugs or making drinks (outside of food service times & routine drink rounds)

Patient Activities of Daily Living

- Assist patient with showering, bathing and bed washes
- Assist patient with oral hygiene, brushing teeth, and cleaning of dentures
- Assist with dressing and grooming of patients
- Observation of basic skin integrity & reporting skin condition to the RN
- Facial shaves of male patients (exclusion: all pre operative shaving)
- Hair care (exclusion: no prescribed treatments are to be used by the AIN)
- Nail care (exclusion: cutting or trimming of nails)
- Washing patients’ faces – including the corners of patients eyes, to remove usual accumulated crusted exudate or discharge
- Last offices to be undertaken with an RN or EN

Patient mobility

- Assist patients to transfer from bed to chair
- Assists patients to change position in bed
- Assists nurses with patient transfers and manual handling
- Re-application of anti-embolic stockings to patient (exclusion: initial measurement & fitting of stockings)

Patient toileting

- Assists patients to toilet
- Provides bedpan / urinal
- Emptying, measuring and recording urine from urine collecting drainage bags.
- Reports any abnormalities to the RN, for example, increased frequency in passing urine, offensive odour of urine, unusual colouring of urine, unusual consistency of urine, constipation and consistency of excreta.
- Records urine output on fluid balance chart
- Performs routine urinalysis and reports findings to the RN

Communication

- Maintain confidentiality, privacy and dignity of patients
- Demonstrate empathy towards patients and relatives
- Act tactfully and diplomatically with sensitive situations
- Report conflict to an RN immediately
- Seek advise on dealing with conflict from the RN
- Demonstrate safety awareness and report unsafe issues and potential workplace hazards to the RN
- Report the wandering patient to the RN
- Encourage independence in respect to delivery of Activities of Daily Living (ADL)
- Communicate effectively with RNs when reporting and acquiring clinical information and data, for example, stating the amount of drainage from an indwelling urinary catheter (IDC) or amount of fluids consumed by patient
- Relay messages to patients (exclusion: matters regarding clinical status or condition of the patient)
- Refer patient inquiries onto the RN
- Answer call bells in a timely manner
- Assist with telephone calls as required
- Immediately report any changes in patient’s physical & mental condition to the RN
- Reports any patient concerns / complaints to the RN

Environmental maintenance

- Implements infection control standards with all work undertaken
- Makes up post-operative beds and arranges bed linen as required
- Maintains patients’ surroundings and sink area in a clean and tidy manner
- Keeps the treatment and pan rooms tidy
- Assists in restocking of the treatment room & linen room/trolley as directed by the RN
- Arrangement and management of flowers
- Simple patient errands (exclusion: money changing hands or errands outside hospital grounds)
• Cleaning washbowls, urinals, and bedpans
• Mops up spills and notifies the RN if further cleaning is required

**General**

• Assist the nurse to settle patients for sleep and rest periods
• Assist with bed making and bed making – independently
• Makes up ‘discharge beds’ in circumstances where a RN or EN would otherwise undertake the task
• Provides patient escort if deemed appropriate by the RN
• Provides patient companionship if deemed appropriate by the RN
• Provides patient surveillance if deemed appropriate by the RN
• Applies practical intervention procedures for dementia or behavioural problems
• Attends to simple dressings as explicitly directed, on a case-by-case basis, by the RN. For example, covering a break in skin integrity for site protection, recovering a non-infected, stapled or sutured incision after the incision has been inspected by the RN.
• Takes and records patients’ observations, temperature, pulse, respirations, blood glucose, blood pressure and pulse oximetry. All information must be recorded on appropriate charts and reported to the RN.

**Documentation**

• Ensures all information and data regarding patients is recorded on appropriate charts and reported to the RN as required
• Completes patient documentation. AIN may write in the patients’ progress notes, however, the RN must countersign all entries
• Completes Advanced Incident Management System (AIMS) forms as necessary
• Ensures that organisational policies and procedures are adhered to at all times
• Reports all incidents immediately to the RN, for example, verbal/physical aggression, hazards and complaints from patients/relatives

Kim Snowball
DIRECTOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WA

This information is available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.