



**Te Kaunihera Rata
o Aotearoa**

Medical Council
of New Zealand

Section 1: Scopes of practice - consultation on regulation of physician associates/ assistants (PAs)

Closes 16 February 2026

Overview

Initially, two 'scopes of practice' are proposed (with the potential for the future development of extended scopes of practice covering specific areas of practice).

The two proposed scopes of practice are:

1. Provisional PA scope of practice – all PAs will be registered in this scope and work under Council approved supervision for a minimum period of time to demonstrate competence.
2. General PA scope of practice – once a PA has met all requirements of the provisional scope, they can apply for a General PA scope of practice.

The proposed requirements that a PA registered in the Provisional PA scope of practice must satisfy to progress to the General PA scope of practice are set out in Section 2: Requirements for Registration/Change of scope of practice.

The proposed scopes of practice do not include reference to prescribing. Prescribing rights are set out in the Medicines Act 1981 and are not defined in scopes of practice. PAs will, however, be able to administer medicines at the direction of doctors.

Proposed scopes of practice

The two proposed scopes of practice are set out in the grey box below.

Provisional PA scope of practice

A PA registered in the Provisional PA scope of practice may:

1. Offer health assessments, take detailed patient histories, perform physical examinations, and order relevant diagnostic tests.
2. Under supervision, contribute to diagnosis and the development and implementation of appropriate treatment and management plans.
3. Offer health promotion and disease prevention advice.
4. Undertake relevant non-patient contact activities.

Permitted minor surgical procedures

In low-risk clinical situations, and within credentialled parameters and any relevant clinical guidelines, a PA registered in the Provisional PA scope of practice may perform the following minor surgical procedures:

- suturing
- excision of skin lesions and cutaneous cysts
- punch biopsies.

Core requirements

a) A PA registered in the Provisional PA scope of practice must:

- Work in a Council-approved position under Council-approved supervision with a Council-approved supervision plan.
- Be credentialled by their employer to define their specific clinical responsibilities within the provisional PA scope of practice and within each service environment in which they work, taking into account their qualifications, training and experience, and the resources and support available in that service.
- Practise only in a setting where onsite supervision is available *[see section 3 of this paper for the proposed supervision framework]*.

b) A PA registered in the Provisional PA scope of practice must:

- Work in collaboration with patients, their whānau, communities, and the multi-disciplinary healthcare team to deliver equitable person/whānau-centred healthcare.
- Practise in a culturally-safe way – promoting equity, inclusion, diversity, and rights of Māori as tangata whenua, Pacific Peoples and all population groups to support the provision of quality services that are culturally safe, equitable and responsive.
- Recognise when to seek the assistance and input of a vocationally registered doctor.

c) A PA registered in the Provisional PA scope of practice must ensure that their practice is:

- Consistent with their qualifications, training, and experience, individual competence, Council standards, and legislative requirements.
- Within the terms of the supervision requirements set by Council, their supervision agreement with their supervising doctor, and their employer-credentialled defined clinical responsibilities in each specific service environment.

Time limitation

Registration in the Provisional PA scope of practice is time-limited to a maximum of 36 months from the date of registration in that scope of practice. If the registrant has not completed the requirements of the provisional scope of practice and successfully obtained registration in the General PA scope of practice within this time, their registration in the Provisional PA scope of practice will expire.

General PA scope of practice

A PA registered in the General PA scope of practice may:

1. Offer health assessments, take detailed patient histories, perform physical examinations, and order relevant diagnostic tests.
2. Under supervision, contribute to diagnosis and the development and implementation of appropriate treatment and management plans.
3. Offer health promotion and disease prevention advice.
4. Undertake relevant non-patient contact activities
5. Use their expertise in areas and roles such as leadership, management, education, policy and research.

In low-risk clinical situations, and in line with credentialled parameters and any relevant clinical guidelines, the PA registered in the General PA scope of practice may perform the following minor surgical procedures:

- suturing
- excision of skin lesions and cutaneous cysts
- punch biopsies.

Core requirements

a) A PA registered in the General PA scope of practice must:

- Work under employer-approved supervision of a doctor registered in a vocational scope of practice that is relevant to the practice setting and the PA's role.
- Be credentialled by their employer to identify the specific clinical responsibilities they may perform within the General PA scope of practice and within each service environment in which they work, taking into account their qualifications, training and experience, and the resources and support available in that service.
- Practise only in a setting where onsite supervision is available [*onsite supervision is defined in supervision guidelines under section three of this consultation*].

b) A PA registered in the General PA scope of practice must:

- Work in collaboration with patients, their whānau, communities, and the multi-disciplinary healthcare team to deliver equitable person/whānau-centred healthcare.
- Practise in a culturally safe way – promoting equity, inclusion, diversity, and rights of Māori as tangata whenua, Pacific Peoples and all population groups to support the provision of quality services that are culturally safe, equitable and responsive.
- Recognise when to seek the assistance and input of a vocationally registered doctor.

c) A PA registered in the General PA scope of practice must ensure that all health care they provide is:

- Consistent with their education, individual competence, Council standards, and legislative requirements.
- Within the terms of the supervision requirements set by Council, their supervision agreement with their employer and supervising doctor, and their employer-credentialled clinical responsibilities.