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| <b>Purpose:</b>          | To describe the privileging process for Surgical Assist providers   |
| <b>Rules and Bylaws:</b> | This process is consistent with the Medical Staff Bylaws and Rules, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Staff Bylaws: Article 6.3</li> <li>• Medical Staff Rules: Article 1.5</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Outcomes:</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privileging processes for Surgical Assists are clearly understood and consistently followed by all Medical Staff Departments.</li> <li>• The privileging process supports collaboration between a provider’s Primary Department and the Department of Surgery to assess credentials and confirm the need for the appointment.</li> <li>• Departments understand their distinct accountabilities within a shared approval process.</li> <li>• Departmental practices and the privileging system provide ongoing support, quality assurance, and mentorship for Surgical Assists.</li> </ul> |

## 1.0 Requirements

A Surgical Assist is a health care practitioner who assists with surgery under the direct supervision of a Surgeon.

The Surgical Assist role may be fulfilled by a member of the Department of Surgery with surgical privileges at the site where the surgery is taking place or by another member of the Medical Staff. If the latter, the individual must be explicitly approved for Surgical Assist privileges through their Primary Department in consultation with the Department of Surgery.

The Medical Staff category used for all Surgical Assist appointments is Associate.

To be eligible to apply for Surgical Assist privileges, an applicant must hold:

- A license from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC;
- A license from the BC College of Nurses and Midwives and certification as an assistant at a C-Section; or
- A license to practice as Nurse Practitioner from the BC College of Nurses and Midwives.

To be approved, prospective Surgical Assists must:

- a) maintain an appointment as a member of the Medical Staff in the Department that corresponds most closely to their education, training, and licensure; and
- b) demonstrate competency to fulfill the role in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Surgery for a given surgical discipline and site.

Mentorship is required for all Surgical Assists who do not have prior experience. Primary Departments may also require a Surgical Assist Mentor if it is deemed necessary to ensure that the provider is well supported and able to provide safe, quality patient care.

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Surgical assisting is assumed as a core competency for all surgeons. Additional privileges are not required for surgeons to assist at sites where they also conduct surgery themselves.

This guideline is intended to be consistent with requirements articulated in relevant Provider Privileging Dictionaries maintained through the British Columbia Medical Quality Initiative.

## 2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

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| Primary Department     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary Departments are responsible for assessing credentials, reviewing applications, and maintaining medical staff appointments for Surgical Assists in consultation with the Department of Surgery.</li> </ul>  |
| Department of Surgery  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the request of Primary Department, the Department of Surgery confirms:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the need for the Surgical Assist at a given site; and</li> <li>that the Surgical Assist has the experience required to fulfill the role.</li> </ol> </li> <li>The Department of Surgery may also be called upon to provide input to any medical staff reviews undertaken over the course of a Surgical Assist’s appointment.</li> </ul> |
| Credentialing Office   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acts as a primary point of contact for applicants and provides advice and guidance related to applications and other administrative requirements.</li> <li>Distributes applications and ensures all required documentation is collected and compiled for review.</li> <li>Advises and supports medical leaders through application review, approval, and post-approval processes.</li> </ul>   |
| Surgical Assist Mentor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides oversight and mentorship for a new Surgical Assist to help them consolidate their skills and gain familiarity with the operating room environment.</li> <li>Completes an evaluation of the Surgical Assist performance over three to five surgeries to verify their competency and ability to undertake future surgical assists once the mentorship period is completed.</li> <li></li> </ul>   |
| Surgeon                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess suitability, arrange, and oversee the work of Surgical Assists within a given surgery.</li> </ul>   |

## 3.0 Resources

- Provider Privileging Dictionary:**
  - Provider Privileging Dictionaries (PPDs)* are maintained through the British Columbia Medical Quality Initiative and bring consistent province-wide practice expectations for medical staff seeking privileges within British Columbia’s health authorities.

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- If the provider’s Primary Department is the Department of Surgery, the PPD that is used in an application for Surgical Assist privileges may be either:
  - The PPD that most closely corresponds to their education, training, and category of licensure; or
  - The Surgical Assist PPD.
- If the provider’s Primary Department is not the Department of Surgery, the Surgical Assist PPD.
- **Standardized Email Templates:**
  - *Surgical Assist Application Initiation Email:* Includes a standard request for information required to initiate an application for Surgical Assist privileges.
- **Forms:**
  - *Surgical Assist Evaluation Form:* Completed by the Surgical Assist Mentor for review by the Primary Department at the conclusion of the mentorship period.

## 4.0 Procedure

### 4.1 Application Initiation, Release, and Submission

- Requests for Surgical Assist privileges may be initiated by a Surgeon, Division Head, Operational Leadership, or by a provider themselves.
- Once a request has been received, the Credentialing Office sends the *Surgical Assist Application Initiation Email* template to the provider which includes:
  - the Surgeon and Division of Surgery the provider is intending to assist;
  - the date of the first planned assist, if applicable;
  - confirmation of any prior experience;
  - for those with no prior experience, a request for a named Surgical Assist Mentor within the Division of Surgery where the provider will assist.
- Once the Credentialing Office receives a response to the *Surgical Assist Application Initiation Email*, it is sent to the Primary Department, cc the Division Head of the appropriate Division of Surgery. The Credentialing Office will include a proposed PPD to be used in the application.
- If required, the Primary Department reviews the response with the appropriate Division of Surgery.
- The Division of Surgery may note special experience or qualifications that are required.
- The Credentialing Office releases the application and directs the provider to complete it.

### 4.2 Application Review and Recommendation

- Once a completed application has been received, the Credentialing Office notifies the Primary Department, cc’ing the appropriate Division Head within the Department of Surgery.
- The Primary Department reviews all elements of the application to verify that:

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- the provider has the appropriate credentials to become a member of the Primary Department;
- the provider has surgical assist experience or a documented plan for mentorship; and
- any special experience or qualification requirements noted by the Department of Surgery have been met.
- The Primary Department approves the application for further consideration by the Health Authority Medical Advisory Committee and the Board.

## 4.3 Mentorship

- If a provider does not have prior experience as a Surgical Assist, the Credentialing Office will request that they provide the name of a Surgical Assist Mentor through the *Surgical Assist Application Initiation Email* as noted in section 4.1 above.
- At the time of application review, the Primary Department will assess the mentorship arrangement, consulting with the Department of Surgery as required.
- Surgical Assist Mentors provide general support and guidance and complete a *Surgical Assist Evaluation* form once the provider has completed three to five surgical assists.
- The completed *Surgical Assist Evaluation* form must be returned to the Credentialing Office within six months of the date on which Surgical Assist privileges are granted and sent to the Primary Department, cc the appropriate Division of Surgery for their review.
- If the *Surgical Assist Evaluation* form is not received within six months, the Credentialing Office will notify the Primary Department, cc the relevant Division of Surgery.
- In the absence of any further direction, the Credentialing Office will initiate the appointment relinquishment process.

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