

## ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCE FOR: Management of Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) used for adults and/or children, excluding obstetrics

Practitioner's name:		
Clinical Area/Ward:		
Assessors Name:		
Training period:	From:	To:

Competency developed by:	<b>Acute Pain Service</b>
For use by:	<b>Registered Nurses caring for adults and/or children with Patient Controlled analgesia excluding obstetrics</b>
Review date:	<b>August 2026</b>

**ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCE FOR:**  
Management of Patient Controlled Analgesia  
for adults and/or children, excluding obstetrics

OBJECTIVES	<p>To safely manage PCA in accordance with Trust guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patient Controlled Analgesia (Adult) - CA2048</li> <li>• Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) or Nurse Controlled Analgesia (NCA) in Children - CA5106</li> </ul>
COMPETENCE WILL BE GAINED THROUGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at enhanced practice study day for PCA analgesia</li> <li>• Supervised practice</li> <li>• Practical demonstration of skills</li> <li>• Written reflection and discussion of theory, pharmacology and evidence base for PCA</li> </ul>
RE-ASSESSMENT	<p>Yearly refresher training should be undertaken by completing the eLearning module available on the Intranet.</p> <p>If there is a break in practice of one year, formal reassessment <u>must</u> be undertaken</p> <p>For breaks in practice of less than a year, reassessment should be undertaken according to the individual registered nurse's sense of accountability in reference to their competence for this skill</p>
ASSESSOR QUALIFICATIONS	<p>Assessment may only be undertaken by a registered nurse with current competence in the management of PCA for adults and /or children</p>

Policy/Document/Recommended reading	Completed	
	Signature	Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patient Controlled Analgesia (Adult) - CA2048</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) or Nurse Controlled Analgesia (NCA) in Children - CA5106</li> </ul>		

**FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT**

**The Assessor and Practitioner should meet to discuss prior knowledge and skills. Following this review a joint action plan can be developed and agreed by both parties.**

**A date for review of progress and completion of competency should also be set at this initial meeting.**

Prior knowledge and skills of Practitioner relevant to competency

**Action Plan (How do you plan to achieve the skill?)**

**Date for completion**.....  
.....

**Date for review of progress**.....

Signature of Practitioner .....Date.....

Signature of Assessor ..... Date.....

### Practical Assessment grid

The following assessment grid will be used to judge whether the practitioner is competent in this skill.

**The individual must achieve a minimum of level 3 to be deemed competent**

Grades 4 – 6 define a level above competence (desirable to achieve according to Knowledge and Skills Framework)

Grade	Level of Achievement
0	Not able to perform this task satisfactorily
1	Can perform this task but not without constant supervision and some assistance
2	Can perform this task satisfactorily but requires periodic supervision and/or assistance
3	Can perform this task satisfactorily without supervision or assistance
4	Can perform this task satisfactorily without supervision or assistance and within an acceptable time frame that demonstrates a good level of expertise
5	Can perform this task within an acceptable time frame that demonstrates a high level of expertise with initiative and adaptability to special problem solving situations
6	Can perform this task within an acceptable time frame that demonstrates a high level of expertise with initiative and adaptability leading others in the task

(Adapted from the Dacum rating scale, Adams 1968)

**The candidate's skill must be considered against the above criteria during each observed/supervised demonstration. Each person will achieve competence with a skill at their own speed but a minimum number of attempts must be agreed and documented. Use the table below to document progress then record a final assessment on the following pages**

#### Record of observed and supervised practice

Date	Level of observed	Candidate's signature	Assessor's signature
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	/supervised skill		

## Underpinning knowledge

By the end of this assessment the Practitioner should demonstrate knowledge and understanding in relation to the learning objectives and be able to apply:

Legislation, policy and good practice	Competent	
	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A working knowledge of the ethics and responsibilities of practitioners, and relevant professional bodies, codes of conduct, and guidelines</li> <li>A factual knowledge of legislation and legal processes relating to consent</li> <li>A factual knowledge of the importance of working within your own sphere of competence and seeking clinical advice when faced with situations outside your sphere of competence</li> <li>A factual knowledge of when PCA is an appropriate intervention</li> <li>A working knowledge of the evidence base for PCA</li> </ul>		
<b>Pharmacology</b>		
A working knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The analgesic ladder</li> <li>The theory of PCA</li> <li>The common drugs used for PCA i.e. morphine, fentanyl, ketamine</li> <li>Use of adjunctive analgesia alongside PCA</li> </ul>		
<b>Care and support of the patient receiving PCA</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the appropriate care of a patient receiving PCA</li> <li>Understand the management of complex patients with PCA i.e. renal failure, opioid dependent patients, long term pain patients</li> <li>Recognise and manage the potential/actual complications arising from PCA</li> <li>Manage the discontinuation of the PCA effectively</li> </ul>		
<b>Material and equipment</b>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate competence in the use of the CADD Solis PCA machine according to scope of practice in the registered nurse's clinical area (see assessment documentation for skills)</li> <li>• Demonstrate competence in the identification and management of the PCA equipment including cassettes and giving sets with anti-siphon and non- return valve</li> </ul>		
<b>Reporting, recording and documentation</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A working knowledge of the importance of keeping accurate and up to date records</li> <li>• A working knowledge of the importance of immediately reporting any issues which are outside your own sphere of competence without delay to the relevant member of staff</li> <li>• Demonstrate competence in and understanding of the accurate recording of required observations for the PCA</li> <li>• Understand when it is appropriate to seek advice from the Acute Pain Service and /or on-call anaesthetist/ team caring for patient</li> </ul>		

Assessor comments:Performance Criteria

By the end of this assessment the Practitioner should demonstrate performance in relation to the learning objectives and be able to:

	Competent	
	Yes	No
Adhere to local policies and guidelines in the performance of this competency.		
Prepare and maintain a safe environment.		
Demonstrate how to correctly prepare for a procedure.		
Demonstrate how to explain the procedure to others, ensuring their understanding.		
Demonstrate how to gain consent		
Demonstrate the correct use of equipment.		
Demonstrate the relevant skills as per the practical skill(s) assessment document, relevant to their clinical area		
Support the patient and maintain privacy and dignity		
Perform the skill(s) to the standard required.		
Demonstrate how to give the correct information following a procedure.		
Demonstrate how to maintain accurate written records.		

**Assessor comments:**

## Skills Assessment for PCA

It is difficult to maintain competencies that are only practised infrequently e.g. programming a PCA pump. Therefore, the skills should be assessed only if relevant to the registered nurse's current scope of practice within his/her clinical area.

### 1. Setting up PCA (relevant to Acute Pain Service, Critical Care, Theatre and Recovery staff only)

- Check prescription and draw up the appropriate drug for PCA infusion as per Trust policies
- Program the CADD Solis PCA according to the prescription with a second checker (who must be competent to act as a second checker of IV and CD prescriptions according to Trust Medicines Management policy)
- Correctly select and prime the PCA infusion/ cassette
- Attach using ANTT to the patient according to Trust policies
- Educate the patient in the use of PCA
- Start the PCA, including delivery of loading dose (bolus) / dose, if appropriate
- Initiate appropriate monitoring in the immediate period after the PCA is commenced according to Trust guidelines

	Level of Skill	Candidate's signature	Assessor's signature
Patient 1			
Patient 2			
Patient 3			
Patient 4			
Patient 5			
Patient 6			
Patient 7			
Patient 8			

Each Registered Nurse will achieve competence with this skill at their own speed. Thus some nurses will be considered competent after setting up a PCA for two patients, while others may need sixteen. There are no minimum or maximum numbers in this case. Please photocopy above table for further documentation purposes as needed.



## 2. Management of PCA (relevant to all registered nurses undertaking this competency)

- check the program against the prescription
- Safely prepare and change the cassette adhering to Trust Medicines Management and ANTT policies
- Monitor observations according to Trust guideline for adults and /or children receiving PCA (excluding obstetrics)
- Manage discontinuation of PCA effectively
- Maintain accurate written records of all nursing care.

The level of skill that the Candidate demonstrates should be documented beside each patient.

	Level of Skill	Candidate's signature	Assessor's signature
Patient 1			
Patient 2			
Patient 3			
Patient 4			
Patient 5			
Patient 6			
Patient 7			
Patient 8			

Each Registered Nurse will achieve competence with this skill at their own speed. Thus some nurses will be considered competent after managing a PCA for two patients, while others may need sixteen. There are no minimum or maximum numbers in this case. Please photocopy above table for further documentation purposes as needed.

## Final Assessment

Once competency has been reached in all the relevant areas in the preceding pages please complete the following.

**I have assessed (PRINT) ..... and have found him/her to be competent in the skill of Management of Patient Controlled Analgesia for adults and/or children, excluding obstetrics**

**Assessor's signature**.....

**Name**.....

**Date**.....

**Designation**.....

**Assessor's comments on successfully completing a final assessment:**

Signature ..... Name..... Date.....

I am confident in my ability to perform the skill of Management of Patient Controlled Analgesia for adults and /or children (excluding obstetrics) in accordance with the organisation's policies.

I acknowledge my accountability to maintain my competence in line with the requirements of my professional body and/or job description

Candidate's signature..... Name.....

**Date**.....

**Ward**.....

Candidate's comments on successfully completing a final assessment:

Re-assessment date:.....

Competence record held by:.....

.....

Please ensure the relevant members of staff are aware that competence has been achieved and recorded as agreed by the Clinical Competency group.

Please ensure that a signed copy of the final assessment is placed in the individual's personnel file.