

Operating Theatre Assistant

FF10 Care and nursing · ISCO-08 3259 · CBS 1012 Specialized nurses · seniority medior · Also known as: Surgical Technologist, Theatre Nurse Assistant

Prepares the operating theatre and instruments, assists the surgeon during the procedure and safeguards sterility throughout the process.

The operating theatre assistant works within a fixed protocol and must act flawlessly and sterile under the surgeon's time pressure. The role is often equated in recruitment with nursing functions, while the work centres on precision under pressure in a highly standardised process. That precision under pressure is difficult to test in a regular interview.

Key figures for this profile

24 skills · 7 competencies to measure · 6 knockout skills · centre of gravity: Professional knowledge domains 25%, Execution, craft, safety and sustainability 16%, Collaboration and interpersonal effectiveness 14%

1 Competencies to measure

These are the behavioural and ability constructs in this profile. Each one shows which hrmforce questionnaire measures it.

Competencies to measure	Target level	hrmforce instrument	Assessment method	Behavioural anchor at target level
interpersonal sensitivity Competency (50-framework): Sensitivity Knockout	 N4	Big Fifty, 360 Feedback, Colour Profile (Jung)	Personality questionnaire	Names observed tension or reticence during a conversation and adapts tone, pace and wording accordingly.

Competencies to measure	Target level	hrmforce instrument	Assessment method	Behavioural anchor at target level
Stress tolerance Competency (50-framework): Stress resilience Knockout		Big Fifty, 15PF, Mental Resilience (4C)	Personality questionnaire	Keeps working in a structured way at peak load, keeps agreements with clients clear and flags early which results are at risk.
Accuracy and attention to detail Competency (50-framework): Accuracy Knockout		Big Fifty, 360 Feedback	Personality questionnaire	Builds check moments into the own process, keeps track of errors and prevents repetition by adjusting the method.
Discipline and keeping commitments Competency (50-framework): Discipline		Big Fifty, 15PF, 360 Feedback	Personality questionnaire	Commits only to what is feasible, tracks own commitments and informs those involved as soon as a deadline comes under pressure.
Safety awareness Competency (50-framework): Discipline		Big Fifty, Competency Check	Situational Judgement Test	Recognises unsafe situations in own process, intervenes and addresses colleagues without bringing the work to a halt.
Switching between tasks and roles Competency (50-framework): Flexibility		Big Fifty, Colour Profile (Jung), Competency Check	On-the-job observation	Switches independently between execution and consultation tasks, keeps notes per role and correctly resumes interrupted work.
Physical strength and endurance Competency (50-framework): Energy		Work sample test	Work sample test	Moves heavy loads independently with aids, spreads the effort across the shift and maintains the agreed pace.

2 Full skill profile

Every skill in this profile, sorted by weight. The behavioural anchor under each skill belongs to the target level.

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
G	interpersonal sensitivity Names observed tension or reticence during a conversation and adapts tone, pace and wording accordingly.	 N4	5	yes	Personality questionnaire	Big Fifty, 360 Feedback, Colour Profile (Jung)
G	Stress tolerance Keeps working in a structured way at peak load, keeps agreements with clients clear and flags early which results are at risk.	 N4	5	yes	Personality questionnaire	Big Fifty, 15PF, Mental Resilience (4C)
V	Nursing and personal care practice Performs nursing procedures independently for clients with a fluctuating clinical picture and involves the physician in good time.	 N4	5	yes	Work sample test	Knowledge test (client-specific), Work sample test, Competency Check
V	Medication safety Independently checks medication orders for dosage and interactions, spots side effects and consults the pharmacy or physician about them.	 N3	5	yes	Knowledge test	Knowledge test (client-specific), Work sample test

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
G	Accuracy and attention to detail Builds check moments into the own process, keeps track of errors and prevents repetition by adjusting the method.		4	yes	Personality questionnaire	Big Fifty, 360 Feedback
V	Quality control Draws up a control plan for the own process, measures the quality and discusses the outcomes with those involved.		4	yes	Work sample test	Competency Check, Work sample test
V	Multidisciplinary care consultation Structures the input about a complex client, weighs advice from physician and therapist and records clear follow up agreements.		4	no	On-the-job observation	Competency Check, 360 Feedback
V	Conversation management Chooses a fitting question type for each phase, summarises along the way and steers the conversation back to its goal when it drifts.		4	no	Assessment centre	Communication Styles, Competency Check
V	multidisciplinary collaboration Maps the issue with specialists from different disciplines and formulates a joint approach with a clear division of roles.		4	no	Assessment centre	360 Feedback, Competency Check

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
G	Discipline and keeping commitments Commits only to what is feasible, tracks own commitments and informs those involved as soon as a deadline comes under pressure.	 N3	4	no	Personality questionnaire	Big Fifty, 15PF, 360 Feedback
V	Methodical care process and record keeping Independently draws up a care plan with measurable goals, evaluates it periodically and adjusts it when the care need changes.	 N3	4	no	Portfolio or evidence	Portfolio, Knowledge test (client-specific)
G	Safety awareness Recognises unsafe situations in own process, intervenes and addresses colleagues without bringing the work to a halt.	 N3	4	no	Situational Judgement Test	Big Fifty, Competency Check
V	Problem analysis Splits a recurring complaint into possible causes, tests these with own data and names the most likely cause.	 N3	3	no	Assessment centre	Competency Check, Ability Scan
K	Dutch language proficiency at professional level Writes and discusses professional documents fluently at level B2 and adapts register to formal and informal situations.	 N3	3	no	Knowledge test	Knowledge test (client-specific)

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
V	de-escalating and setting limits States which limit is being crossed when behaviour is unwanted, what the consequence is, and ends the conversation when needed.	 N3	3	no	Situational Judgement Test	Conflict Styles, Big Fifty, Mental Resilience (4C)
G	Switching between tasks and roles Switches independently between execution and consultation tasks, keeps notes per role and correctly resumes interrupted work.	 N3	3	no	On-the-job observation	Big Fifty, Colour Profile (Jung), Competency Check
V	Learning from mistakes and incidents Analyses own errors and those of the team, discusses the cause openly in the work meeting and adjusts the agreements.	 N3	3	no	Situational Judgement Test	360 Feedback, Competency Check
K	GDPR and privacy in practice Judges in own processes whether a legal basis exists, applies data minimisation and handles requests from data subjects correctly.	 N3	3	no	Knowledge test	Knowledge test (client-specific)

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
V	Safe lifting and moving in care Independently selects technique and aid for a client with limited mobility and instructs colleagues on the spot.	 N3	3	no	On-the-job observation	Work sample test
A	Physical strength and endurance Moves heavy loads independently with aids, spreads the effort across the shift and maintains the agreed pace.	 N3	3	no	Work sample test	Work sample test
V	Selecting and using tools Selects tools independently for varying materials and jobs, substantiates the choice and replaces worn parts in time.	 N3	3	no	Work sample test	Work sample test
V	Working with shift work and irregular hours Plans own work across changing shifts, allocates tasks to the part of day that suits them best and swaps carefully.	 N3	3	no	Structured interview	Big Fifty, Structured interview
V	Working with digital devices and applications Opens and uses the prescribed applications for own tasks and asks for help whenever an unfamiliar message appears.	 N2	2	no	Work sample test	Knowledge test (client-specific), Work sample test

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
V	Emergency response and first aid Knows where equipment and escape routes are, raises the alarm per procedure and follows the emergency responder's instructions.		1	no	Certificate or diploma	Knowledge test (client-specific)

3 Levels per seniority

The same profile with the job family seniority adjustment applied. Target levels are clamped to 1 to 5.

Skill	junior	medior	senior
interpersonal sensitivity	N3	N4	N5
Stress tolerance	N3	N4	N5
Nursing and personal care practice	N3	N4	N5
Medication safety	N2	N3	N4
Accuracy and attention to detail	N4	N4	N4
Quality control	N3	N4	N5
Multidisciplinary care consultation	N4	N4	N4
Conversation management	N2	N3	N4
multidisciplinary collaboration	N2	N3	N4
Discipline and keeping commitments	N2	N3	N4
Methodical care process and record keeping	N2	N3	N4
Safety awareness	N2	N3	N4
Problem analysis	N2	N3	N4
Dutch language proficiency at professional level	N2	N3	N4
de-escalating and setting limits	N2	N3	N4
Switching between tasks and roles	N2	N3	N4
Learning from mistakes and incidents	N2	N3	N4
GDPR and privacy in practice	N2	N3	N4
Safe lifting and moving in care	N2	N3	N4
Physical strength and endurance	N2	N3	N4
Selecting and using tools	N2	N3	N4
Working with shift work and irregular hours	N2	N3	N4
Working with digital devices and applications	N1	N2	N3

Skill	junior	medior	senior
Emergency response and first aid	N1	N2	N3

4 The proficiency scale

Level	Label	Autonomy	Complexity	Scope	Depth of knowledge
N1	Guided	works under supervision and follows instruction	routine, one variable at a time	own task	basic understanding of terminology
N2	Applying	works independently within set frameworks	familiar situations with limited variation	own role	working knowledge, applies standard approach
N3	Proficient	sets own approach and seeks input proactively	several variables, some ambiguity	own team or process	thorough knowledge, weighs alternatives
N4	Advanced	directs others and decides on the approach	complex, with conflicting interests	several teams or a department	in-depth knowledge, advises others
N5	Leading	sets the standard and the policy	strategic, under high uncertainty	organisation, value chain or profession	authority, advances the profession

5 Behavioural anchors per skill

Anchors sit at N1, N3 and N5. N2 and N4 are deliberately not anchored: raters interpolate between them, following the O*NET convention.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
interpersonal sensitivity Noticing verbal and non-verbal signals from others, naming what stands out and adjusting own behaviour accordingly during the contact.	Notices when a conversation partner disengages or hesitates and asks whether the explanation is clear.	Names observed tension or reticence during a conversation and adapts tone, pace and wording accordingly.	Trains others in recognising social signals and uses that insight when designing sensitive change processes across the organisation.
Stress tolerance Keeps delivering work of the same quality under time pressure, opposition or unexpected turns and maintains a businesslike tone with others.	Keeps working on the current task as pressure rises and asks the supervisor which task can wait.	Keeps working in a structured way at peak load, keeps agreements with clients clear and flags early which results are at risk.	Keeps the organisation workable in crises, takes decisions under high uncertainty and sets the standard for composed action under pressure.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Nursing and personal care practice Carries out nursing and personal care procedures for clients, from personal hygiene to reserved procedures, while observing their state of health.	Cares for a client under supervision according to the care plan and reports deviant observations immediately to the person responsible.	Performs nursing procedures independently for clients with a fluctuating clinical picture and involves the physician in good time.	Develops guidelines for nursing practice in the institution, tests them against research and guides teams through their introduction.
Medication safety Prepares, checks, administers and records medication according to protocol and recognises risks of errors, interactions and side effects.	Distributes medication according to the signing list with double checking and refers unclear orders to an authorised colleague.	Independently checks medication orders for dosage and interactions, spots side effects and consults the pharmacy or physician about them.	Draws up the institution's medication policy, analyses reports of medication errors and implements improvements across the whole chain.
Accuracy and attention to detail Works carefully, checks own work for errors and keeps to agreements about completeness and correctness of data.	Goes through the own work with a checklist and repairs errors found before the work is passed on.	Builds check moments into the own process, keeps track of errors and prevents repetition by adjusting the method.	Sets the standards for completeness and correctness, has samples checked and addresses teams on structural sloppiness.
Quality control Tests products, data or services against defined requirements, records deviations and sets corrections or improvements in motion.	Checks a product or file on the prescribed points according to instruction and records deviations.	Draws up a control plan for the own process, measures the quality and discusses the outcomes with those involved.	Sets up the quality system for several departments, chooses the measurement standards and accounts for results to client and regulator.
Multidisciplinary care consultation Contributes own observations about a client in consultation with other disciplines, weighs their advice and reaches joint agreements.	Contributes own observations about a client in the meeting and notes the agreements reached in the file.	Structures the input about a complex client, weighs advice from physician and therapist and records clear follow up agreements.	Designs the institution's consultation structure, safeguards decision quality and mediates when disciplines disagree.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Conversation management Opening, steering and closing a conversation purposefully by asking questions, summarising and making concrete agreements about what happens next.	Follows a prepared list of questions, asks them in the given order and records the agreements that were made.	Chooses a fitting question type for each phase, summarises along the way and steers the conversation back to its goal when it drifts.	Leads conversations with opposing interests at board level, develops conversation models for the organisation and tests them against practice.
multidisciplinary collaboration Working with people from other disciplines by learning their language and methods and establishing shared starting points for the joint work.	Asks a colleague from another discipline what technical terms mean and summarises the answer back to them.	Maps the issue with specialists from different disciplines and formulates a joint approach with a clear division of roles.	Sets up lasting forms of collaboration between disciplines and settles conflicts between professional standards on the basis of the organisational interest.
Discipline and keeping commitments Sticks to agreements, procedures and commitments even without supervision, and reports in good time when a commitment turns out to be unachievable.	Arrives at the agreed time with the agreed work and reports any delay to the supervisor.	Commits only to what is feasible, tracks own commitments and informs those involved as soon as a deadline comes under pressure.	Anchors the standard for reliable follow through in working agreements and addresses anyone at any level who lets that standard slip.
Methodical care process and record keeping Works through the steps of clarifying the care question, setting goals, planning, delivering and evaluating, and records these in the client file.	Records care delivered and observations in the file on the same day, using the standard reporting format.	Independently draws up a care plan with measurable goals, evaluates it periodically and adjusts it when the care need changes.	Develops the organisation's record keeping and reporting policy and leads the introduction of a new methodical care standard.
Safety awareness Continuously watches for unsafe situations and actions at work, addresses others about them and chooses the safe working method even under time pressure.	Follows the safety rules of the workplace and checks back when in doubt about an operation.	Recognises unsafe situations in own process, intervenes and addresses colleagues without bringing the work to a halt.	Sets the safety standard for the organisation, makes safety discussable at every level and steers behaviour and culture.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Problem analysis Breaks a problem into parts, separates causes from effects and states which information is needed to move forward.	States precisely what deviates in a malfunction and which data are missing, and puts this to the supervisor.	Splits a recurring complaint into possible causes, tests these with own data and names the most likely cause.	Traces persistent organisational problems back to a few root causes and sets the analysis method that other teams will use.
Dutch language proficiency at professional level Commanding Dutch in speech and writing at a level of the Common European Framework of Reference that matches the demands of the role.	Handles simple work conversations and reads short instructions at level A2 to B1 of the European reference framework.	Writes and discusses professional documents fluently at level B2 and adapts register to formal and informal situations.	Commands Dutch at level C1 to C2, edits publications written by others and uses professional and legal phrasing precisely.
de-escalating and setting limits Reducing rising tension or unwanted behaviour by staying calm, stating the limit clearly and steering or ending the conversation.	Stays calm when facing an angry reaction, lets the other person speak and calls in a colleague or manager.	States which limit is being crossed when behaviour is unwanted, what the consequence is, and ends the conversation when needed.	Establishes organisation-wide agreements on transgressive behaviour, arranges support and follow-up, and holds managers to that line.
Switching between tasks and roles Alternates between tasks, roles and counterparts within a working day and matches content, tone and pace to the situation at hand.	Switches task when instructed and uses the given work instruction per task without mixing in the previous task.	Switches independently between execution and consultation tasks, keeps notes per role and correctly resumes interrupted work.	Fills roles in several bodies with clashing interests at the same time and keeps role clarity visible for the organisation.
Learning from mistakes and incidents Investigates after an error or incident what happened, names the cause without shifting blame and changes the working method on that point.	Reports an own error to the supervisor at once and repeats the task following the corrected instruction.	Analyses own errors and those of the team, discusses the cause openly in the work meeting and adjusts the agreements.	Ensures incidents are reported safely across the organisation, has causes analysed structurally and works the lessons into policy and standards.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
GDPR and privacy in practice Knows privacy legislation requirements for own work, which legal basis and retention period apply and recognises when notification is required.	Processes personal data only according to the applicable work instruction and refers doubtful cases to the privacy officer.	Judges in own processes whether a legal basis exists, applies data minimisation and handles requests from data subjects correctly.	Sets privacy policy, decides on high risk processing operations and represents the organisation towards the supervisory authority.
Safe lifting and moving in care Moves and supports clients using lifting technique and aids in such a way that the load on client and care worker stays limited.	Moves a client under guidance with the prescribed aid, following the instruction of the designated specialist.	Independently selects technique and aid for a client with limited mobility and instructs colleagues on the spot.	Sets the policy on physical load, analyses incident figures and brings the institution to a demonstrably lower load.
Physical strength and endurance Provides the strength and endurance the work requires to lift, carry and move loads over the course of a working day.	Lifts and carries light loads over a short distance with the prescribed technique within own task.	Moves heavy loads independently with aids, spreads the effort across the shift and maintains the agreed pace.	Determines for the entire process how heavy work is distributed and which aids are standard, and substantiates that choice.
Selecting and using tools Selects the appropriate hand tool or power tool for a job, uses it as prescribed and keeps it in usable and safe condition.	Uses the tool provided for a fixed operation and returns it to its designated place after use.	Selects tools independently for varying materials and jobs, substantiates the choice and replaces worn parts in time.	Sets tool policy, assesses new tools for suitability and safety and determines what becomes the standard equipment.
Working with shift work and irregular hours Organises own work around changing shifts and irregular hours, keeps handover complete and coordinates planning and availability with the team.	Works according to the roster, arrives on time and hands over outstanding matters at the end of the shift.	Plans own work across changing shifts, allocates tasks to the part of day that suits them best and swaps carefully.	Designs roster models for the organisation, weighs continuity against workability and makes agreements with team and representation.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Working with digital devices and applications Uses computers, mobile devices and standard applications to carry out work tasks, adjusts settings and resolves simple usage problems without help.	Opens and uses the prescribed applications for own tasks and asks for help whenever an unfamiliar message appears.	Selects the appropriate device and application for each task and fixes common disruptions without support from others.	Defines organisation wide which digital workplace facilities are used and guides their introduction across all teams.
Emergency response and first aid Acts according to the emergency procedure in an accident, fire or evacuation, gives first aid within own authorisation and hands over to emergency services.	Knows where equipment and escape routes are, raises the alarm per procedure and follows the emergency responder's instructions.	Gives first aid independently, coordinates an evacuation of own department and hands over to emergency services in a structured way.	Sets up emergency response for the organisation, plans drills and scenarios and evaluates performance with the regional safety authority.

6 Assessment methods and validity

The validities are the corrected meta-analytic estimates from Sackett, Zhang, Berry and Lievens (2022) in the Journal of Applied Psychology, which replace the older Schmidt and Hunter (1998) figures. The spread matters as much as the mean: with a high SD, validity varies strongly by context.

Assessment method	rho	SD	What it is
Personality questionnaire	0.40	0.15	Self-report of behavioural preferences. At hrnforce the Big Fifty and the 15PF.
Work sample test	0.33	0.09	The candidate performs a representative work sample under standardised conditions.
Knowledge test	0.40	0.13	Test of declarative job knowledge, usually assembled per client.
On-the-job observation	-	-	Structured workplace observation with a form based on behavioural anchors.
Assessment centre	0.29	0.09	Multiple exercises, multiple assessors, dimension-wise scoring.
Portfolio or evidence	-	-	A collection of prior work or results, assessed against fixed criteria.
Situational Judgement Test	0.12	0.11	Scenario with response options, scored on knowledge or behavioural tendency.
Structured interview	0.42	0.19	Behaviour-based interview with fixed questions and a rating scale per question.
Certificate or diploma	-	-	Formal proof of completed education or examination.

7 Assessment instruments for this job

hrnforce instrument	Skills	What it measures
Competency Check	9	Behavioral-Level Competency Assessment
Big Fifty	8	Personality questionnaire, 150 items, 25 factors
Knowledge test (client-specific)	7	Professional knowledge test, customized for each client
Work sample test	7	Representative work sample under standardized conditions
360 Feedback	6	Multiple assessments based on behavioral anchors
Colour Profile (Jung)	2	Four color types, linked to Big Fifty factors

hrmforce instrument	Skills	What it measures
15PF	2	Personality Profile, a shorter alternative to the Big Fifty
Mental Resilience (4C)	2	Mental Resilience According to the 4C Model
Communication Styles	1	Preferred communication style
Portfolio	1	Evaluation of prior work against fixed criteria
Ability Scan	1	Aptitude Test: Verbal, Numerical, and Abstract Reasoning Skills
Conflict Styles	1	Preferred style in conflict situations
Structured interview	1	Behavioral interview with a fixed structure

8 How to use this profile

1. Agree the profile with the hiring manager before the first candidate is measured. Weights shifted afterwards make the outcome indefensible.
2. Choose the assessment method per skill from the Assessment method column. Combine at most three methods per candidate.
3. Calibrate the assessors in a two-hour session using the anchors in chapter 5. Anchors without rater training deliver little.
4. Fill in the match calculator and discuss the gaps in the development conversation. Type A and type G are selection criteria, not one-quarter development goals.

Source: hrmforce Skills Framework 2.0, version 2.0.0, built 2026-09-08. Crosswalks to ESCO v1.2.1, O*NET 31.0, Lightcast Open Skills, SFIA 9, DigComp 3.0, EntreComp, LifeComp, GreenComp, AILit, WEF Future of Jobs 2025, ISCO-08 and the Dutch CBS occupational classification BRC 2014 edition 2025. This profile is a starting point, not a standard: align it with your own organisation before selecting on it.