Module Specification

Module Summary Information

1	**Module Title**	Developing Surgical First Assistance
2	**Module Credits**	20
3	**Module Level**	6
4	**Module Code**	LBR6573
5	**Semester Taught**	2

6	**Module Overview**

This module allows you, a registered nurse or ODP, with a minimum of 12 months post-qualifying experience, to respond to the demands of perioperative practice. The role of the Surgical First Assistant is now widely accepted in perioperative practice within the NHS and Independent Healthcare Sector. As a registered practitioner, the Surgical First Assistant provides continuous competent and dedicated skilled assistance under the direct supervision of the operating surgeon throughout the procedure whilst **not** performing any form of surgical intervention (PCC 2012).

You will build upon your prior knowledge, skills and experience to develop in the role of the surgical first assistant and work safely and effectively as a member of the wider surgical team. You will mature as a critical thinking practitioner as you prepare to provide competent and skilled surgical assistance to the operating surgeon under supervision.

This module aligns with Birmingham City University philosophy and is designed to be flexible and practice-led. You will have the opportunity to develop skills of enquiry, reflection and problem solving. A blended learning approach is taken, incorporating classroom sessions and online activities via Moodle alongside professional practice in placement. You will be encouraged to think critically and share practice experiences with your fellow students to explore your prior experience and develop future learning needs in relation to acquiring the enhanced surgical skills required for safe surgical first assistant practice. As well as engaging in both directed and self-directed learning activities, you will be an active partner in your own learning and development and in return you will receive regular feedback and feedforward aimed at developing your academic skills. You will have the opportunity to identify learning opportunities and discuss your progress with the module and practice placement partners for the duration of this module and for career-long learning.

Through engagement with a practice placement, you will gain first-hand experience of working in an interprofessional team and will value the contribution of all team members to patient care. Working and learning alongside other disciplines will allow you to become competent in the Surgical First Assistant role whilst remaining aware of professional and legal responsibilities and maintaining a professional identity under a framework of transparency.

You will be supported in clinical practice by a mentor (Surgeon, Surgical Care Practitioner or SFA) who will facilitate your learning in practice to help you achieve the minimum 100 hours of clinical practice and attain the SFA competencies required by the end of the module. The mentor is responsible for overseeing the student experience in the surgical setting, liaising with the module co-ordinator as required.

7	Indicative Content

The self-directed content on the module allows you to build upon your prior knowledge and experience as a registered practitioner. The one taught day [online] and Moodle content are designed to allow you to examine your SFA role as you care for patients undergoing surgery.

You will explore:

- patient preparation and assessment
- professional, legal and ethical aspects of the role including, informed consent
- skin prep and draping
- the principles of surgery
- non-technical surgical skills
- tissue handling and manipulation including retraction
- haemostasis
- assisting with wound closure
- camera holding
- postoperative management
- academic writing

8	Module Learning Outcomes On successful completion of the module, you will be able to:	
	1	Critically examine governance in relation to the role of the Surgical First Assistant drawing upon current evidence, standards and codes of professional practice.
	2	Integrate the knowledge and skills of surgical first assistant practice to the delivery of patient care as a member of the wider surgical team
	3	Demonstrate competence when performing in the role of the Surgical First Assistant.

9	Module Assessment		
Learning Outcome Number *(from table 8)*	**Coursework**	**Exam**	**In-Person**
1 & 2	**X (100%)**		
3			**X**

10	Breakdown Learning and Teaching Activities
	An overview of the total study hours for this module and learning and teaching activities is included in this table. Please note that this module is taught at BCU's campus in Birmingham and is also delivered via formal collaborative arrangements at approved BCU institutional partners within the UK and/or overseas. To account for in-country requirements, there *may* be some variation to the breakdown of learning and teaching activities at BCU's institutional partners. Where this is the case, both BCU's standard delivery model and any variations for specific partners will be detailed below in separate tables.

Learning Activities	Hours	Details of Duration, Frequency and other comments
BCU Standard Delivery:		
Scheduled Learning includes lectures, practical classes and workshops as specified in timetable. For blended learning modules, delivery can include: • In person • Asynchronous (guided, curated content) • Synchronous (live online)	• Synchronous: 9 *hours* <u>Proportion of the module delivered online</u>: 5%	1 x 1 hour module launch 3 x 2 hour lectures 2 x 1 hour group tutorials
Directed Learning (non-curated) includes placements, work-based learning, peer group learning external visits, on-line activity, Graduate+, peer learning, as directed on VLE	148	100 work-based learning 48 hours Moodle directed learning
Private Study includes preparation for exams	43 hours	literature searching, reading, critical thinking and applying this to completion of module summative assessment
Total Study Hours	200 hours	

11	Key Texts and Online Learning Resources
No books are recommended as must-purchase titles, due to the individual nature of academic skill development, diversity of clinical backgrounds of students completing this module, and the well-resourced library. The following books/ articles/ reports are highly recommended and most are referred to throughout the module: **Highly Recommended reading** Centre of Perioperative Care (2025) Guidelines available from: Guidelines | Centre for Perioperative Care last accessed 22/07/2025 Flynt, F. (2019) Kirk's Basic Surgical Techniques 7th edition Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone	

Beauchamp, T L; Childress, J F (2009) Principles Of Biomedical Ethics New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press

Dimond B (2019) Legal Aspects of Nursing and Healthcare 8th Edition Harlow; Pearson.

HCPC (2023) Standards of Proficiency for Operating Department Practitioners. London: HCPC

NMC (2024) The Code. London: NMC

Quick, J. and Owen, M. (2025) Surgical First assistant: essentials of Practice. UK: Wiley Blackwell

The Perioperative Care Collaborative, (2018). Position Statement: The Surgical First Assistant. [Online] Available from: sfa-position-statement-final-april-2018.pdf last accessed 21-02-25

Leaper, D J; Whitaker, I. (2010) Postoperative Complications Oxford : Oxford University Press

Nair, R; Holroyd, D J (2011) Handbook Of Surgical Consent Oxford : Oxford University Press

Whalan, C (2006) Assisting At Surgical Operations: A Practical Guide Cambridge : Cambridge University Press