

Code of Competencies and Standards for the Practice of Medical Laboratory Science

Purpose

All persons who wish to apply for registration and/or continue to practice in the profession of medical laboratory science must be able to demonstrate to the Medical Laboratory Science Board they are competent and fit to practice in the profession of medical laboratory science so as to protect the health and safety of the public.

The Board has adopted a set of competencies and standards required of all registered and/or practising medical laboratory scientists and technicians. This Code specifies those competencies and standards deemed by the Board to be the minimum requirement for registration and practice in the profession of medical laboratory science.

The Code

The Board's Code of Competencies and Standards:

Contains the minimum clinical, cultural and ethical competencies and standards that medical laboratory scientists and medical laboratory technicians are expected to maintain and practice.

Includes the attitudes and values that all registrants must perform to acceptable ethical, cultural, legal and regulatory standards.

Acknowledges that the knowledge and skills required by individuals will vary according to their scope of practice and the tasks they are authorised to perform in the workplace.

Informs the public of New Zealand of the standards that medical laboratory scientists and medical laboratory technicians will observe.

Is used as a basis for the assessment of applications for registration.

Is a resource for institutions offering the Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science degree or examinations for medical laboratory technicians.

Provides a cross-reference/assessment tool against which to measure overseas applicant qualifications for registration in New Zealand.

Provides the standards when carrying out any reviews of professional competence.

Provides a measurement tool against which to monitor programme delivery in educational institutions.

Competencies and Standards

Maintaining high professional standards: Medical laboratory scientists and technicians will practice in a respectful, inclusive, honest and trustworthy manner

COMPETENCY	Practice as a professional
OUTCOME	Act in accordance with ethical, legal, professional, and regulatory requirements
STANDARD	<p>1.1 Comply with the HPCA Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand requirements for registration and practice as a health practitioner in New Zealand. • Practice within scope of practice and within any conditions set, and hold a current practising certificate. <p>1.2 Comply with other relevant legislation and codes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights • Health Information Privacy Code • NZS/ISO Standards for Medical Laboratory Testing • Human Tissue Act <p>1.3 Demonstrate honest and trustworthy practice</p> <p>1.4 Maintain the privacy and confidentiality of patients/clients</p> <p>1.5 Apply the protocols of informed consent, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection of specimens • Use of specimens for other than tests requested • Return of specimens to the patient/client <p>1.6 Apply the principles of Quality Assurance and Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to established workplace policies and procedures to meet and improve performance standards. <p>1.7 Manage workload and resources, be effective and efficient in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising workload • Responding to urgent requests • Timely completion of tasks

1.8 Demonstrate problem solving skills

Medical Laboratory Scientist and Medical Laboratory Technician:

- Initiate resolution of problems

Medical Laboratory Scientist:

- Evaluate outcomes and modify processes where appropriate

1.9 Work collaboratively

- Demonstrate good working relationships with colleagues and service users
- Contribute to team objectives
- Share knowledge and support colleagues

1.10 Demonstrate accountability

- Maintain accuracy
- Take responsibility for professional decisions and actions
- Recognise limitations of competence, knowledge and skills and seek assistance when required
- Recognise limitation of scope of practice

1.11 Take responsibility for the training, direction and/or supervision of others

Medical Laboratory Scientist:

- Take responsibility for training of staff. Take responsibility for direction of medical laboratory technicians

Medical Laboratory Scientist and Medical Laboratory Technician:

- Where appropriate, take responsibility for supervision of unregistered trainees or other staff members who are required to work under supervision

1.12 **Medical Laboratory Scientist:**

- Continue to develop knowledge and skills
- Participate in a re-certification programme
- Critically review and evaluate new and existing methods and apply new procedures as appropriate
- Review effectiveness of practice and modify accordingly

COMPETENCY	Practice as a scientist/technician
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OUTCOME	Practice by integrating medical laboratory science knowledge and skills within area of competence and scope of practice
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STANDARD	<p>2.1 Demonstrate the correct safe operation of laboratory equipment to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calibration• Maintenance• Responding appropriately to malfunction and accidents <p>2.2 Demonstrate practical competence in laboratory analytical techniques</p> <p>2.3 Analyse specimens using the prescribed protocols of the workplace, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collection, storage and transportation of samples• Selection of appropriate sample and preparation for analysis• Performance of the test with accuracy and precision• Performance of calibration and quality control checks• Calculation/determination or interpretation of results• Recognition of errors and taking appropriate corrective action• Authorisation and reporting of results <p>2.4 Report and interpret laboratory results</p> <p>Medical Laboratory Scientist and Medical Laboratory Technician:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrate data/information• Recognise and take account of sources of variability in interpretation of data• Recognise the relevance and significance of, and the relationship between, laboratory results in pathological conditions• Report results <p>Medical Laboratory Scientist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interpret and discuss results*• Advise what further tests might be relevant*
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* May be performed by Medical Laboratory Technician if covered by other standards, example NCSP OPQS¹

2.5 Demonstrate competence in the application and use of relevant information technology

2.6 Demonstrate knowledge of the normal and pathological states of human anatomy and physiology of the major organ systems in health and disease

Medical Laboratory Scientist:

- Advanced knowledge

Medical Laboratory Technician:

- Sufficient to perform practical work

2.7 Demonstrate an understanding of current knowledge and practical competence in one or more of the health service categories approved by the Medical Laboratory Science Board

Medical Laboratory Scientist:

- Advanced knowledge

Medical Laboratory Technician:

- Sufficient to perform practical work

2.8 **Medical Laboratory Scientist** to be able to apply appropriate research methods

- Review and evaluate research papers
- Collect, integrate, present and interpret data

¹ NCSP National Cytology Screening Programme
OPQS Operational Policy and Quality Standards
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9/04/2010

COMPETENCY	Safe practice
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OUTCOME	Ensure personal, patient/client, colleague and public safety
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STANDARD	<p>3.1 Practice safely in accordance with health and safety legislation and workplace safety policies and procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take appropriate measures when stress or other mental or physical conditions affect the ability of self or colleagues to function as a health practitioner <p>3.2 Identify and manage laboratory hazards including fire, electrical, mechanical, biological, chemical, radiation and Occupational Overuse Syndrome</p> <p>3.3 Handle, store, transport and dispose of hazardous chemical and biological material appropriately</p>
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COMPETENCY	Communication
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OUTCOME	Communicate effectively with patients/clients, colleagues, other health professionals and the public
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STANDARD	<p>4.1 Demonstrate competence in written and oral English</p> <p>4.2 Accurately record and report results in a clear, timely and appropriate format for interpretation</p> <p>4.3 Use a range of communication skills to convey information and instructions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure all communication is clear, concise and accurate• Communicate in a style and format to meet needs of recipients recognising cultural differences that may affect communication
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COMPETENCY	Culturally competent practice
OUTCOME	Practice takes into account the socio-cultural values of others
STANDARD	<p>5.1 Recognise own beliefs, values and prejudices and the impact these may have on patients/clients and colleagues</p> <p>5.2 Recognise cultural diversity as it relates to ethnicity, culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, migrant experience or disability</p> <p>5.3 Apply the Treaty of Waitangi principle of partnership, by making informed decisions through consultation, both parties to act reasonably, honourably and in good faith</p> <p>5.4 Demonstrate culturally competence practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognise and respond to the values, beliefs and cultural practices of patients/clients when collecting, handling, storing or disposing of body fluids, tissue samples and related patient/client information• Practice in a manner that is respectful of and inclusive of others
