

Examination committee

Terms of reference (MLS)

Revision schedule			
Version number	Version date	Approved by	Next review
One	Mar 2018	MSC	2020
Two	Jan 2026	MSC	2028

Background

1. Te Kaunihera Pūtaiao Hauora O Aotearoa | The Medical Sciences Council (the Council) has established the Medical Laboratory Science Examination Committee (the Committee) under Schedule 3, clause 16 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act).
2. The Council has a legislative obligation under the Act to ensure registration of health practitioners is restricted to those who are suitably qualified and educated to practise in accordance with the clinical, ethical and cultural standards set by the Council.

Committee purpose

3. The Council has appointed an Examination Committee which is responsible for ensuring a framework is in place to provide oversight and quality assurance of the examinations to assess the threshold level of applied knowledge for competent and safe professional practice in each scope of practice defined for medical laboratory science.
4. The examination is to provide an efficient and effective benchmark for the assessment of professional foundational knowledge necessary for registration in the required scope.

Functions

5. The functions of the committee are to:
 - a. Ensure each examination assesses the minimum level of applied knowledge for competent and safe professional practice in the relevant scope of practice.
 - b. Ensure the exam meets the parameters of being an assessment of contemporary professional medical laboratory science and is in alignment with the Council's competencies standards.
 - c. Confirm each examination's taxonomy and blueprint to ensure it captures the key foundational knowledge requirements of the prescribed entry to practice competence standards.
 - d. Provide oversight and monitor the processes and procedures for the exam process including the question development and validation processes.
 - e. Monitor the progress of the exam, and moderate and confirm the exam results in a timely manner after each sitting.
 - f. Consider exam statistics, item analysis, and other relevant information and make recommendations for actions accordingly.
 - g. Ensure the exam model is efficient, effective and facilitates current safe practice.
 - h. Provide advice to the Council.
 - i. Consider matters about the examination referred by the Council and provide advice.

Membership

6. The Committee will comprise a maximum of five members.
7. Committee members will include practitioner representatives from the examination scope/s. Practitioner members must hold a current practising certificate, have been registered with the Council for more than five years, and be in good standing.
8. It is desirable that committee members have experience in education, teaching, and/or assessment of professional competencies. Tangata whenua representation will also be included.
9. MSS education advisors may be appointed to the committee.

Committee appointments

10. Appointments will be made through an expression of interest process, and approval will be through the Council.
11. Committee membership will be for a term of two years with a maximum of two consecutive terms.
12. The Council may remove a committee member for any reason it considers appropriate.

Chair

13. A Chair will be appointed. The role of the Committee Chair is to:
 - a. Chair meetings
 - b. Consult with MSS on agendas for committee meetings
 - c. Ensure meeting minutes are recorded
 - d. Prepare reports to the MSS and the Council
 - e. Be the primary point of contact with MSS staff in respect of committee work.

Duty to act in the public interest

14. In exercising their functions, each member of the committee is to act impartially and in the public interest.
15. To assist objectivity, candidate results will only have reference to their application number. Names and locations will be withheld.

Interest

16. All members will be required to declare any interests and any actual or perceived conflicts of interest as determined by the Council.
17. Members of the committee are to comply with conflict-of-interest requirements as set out in clauses 11-14 of schedule 3 of the Act and the Council's Interests policy.

Confidentiality

18. All external members will be required to sign confidentiality agreements as part of their contract for services.
19. No member of the committee may speak publicly, publish or otherwise comment publicly, through any communication medium, without the written consent of the Council.

Meetings and protocols

20. The committee will meet quarterly with the majority of meetings to be held online. There may be a requirement for one annual face-to-face meeting.
21. Meetings will be chaired by the nominated Chair.
22. Members of the MSS staff will also be in attendance.
23. Pre-reading may be provided to committee members to ensure they are prepared for the agenda.

Quorum and decision making

- 24. A quorum is the minimum number of committee members required to be present at a meeting to make decisions. For the Exam Committee's purpose, the minimum number required to make a quorum is three members.
- 25. While it is preferred that the committee reaches decisions by consensus, if this is not possible, a decision supported by a majority of the votes cast at a meeting at which a quorum is present is the decision.
- 26. If required, the Chair has the deciding vote.

Reporting and communication

- 27. The Chair is responsible for ensuring the committee provides a written report to the Council following each meeting using the prepared Reporting Template.
- 28. Secretarial support for the exam committee is provided by MSS staff (the Regulations Advisor - Examinations).

Remuneration

- 29. The committee will be funded by the Council. All external committee members will be paid a fee in accordance with the Council's fee schedule. Staff members participate in the committee as part of their employed role and as such do not receive additional remuneration.
- 30. Travel and accommodation (if required) will be booked through MSS.
- 31. Reasonable costs associated with travel will be reimbursed to members following pre-approval from MSS.

Dispute resolution

- 32. The role of the Exam Committee is to provide advice and recommendations to the Council. The decision of the Council will be final in all matters.

Exclusion of liability

- 33. Section 119 of the Act which provides for exclusion of criminal or civil liability, will apply to a committee member exercising functions of the Act and acting in good faith.