



**MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL
OF NEW ZEALAND**

TE KAUNIHERA PŪTAIAO HAUORA O AOTEAROA

**POLICY AND GUIDELINES:
SUPERVISION AND DIRECTION FOR
MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE
PRACTITIONERS**

August 2019

Policy Title	Supervision and Direction for Medical Laboratory Science Practitioners
Reference Number	2019-Aug-V2- MSC Supervision and Direction (MLS)
Scope	This policy applies to registered medical laboratory science practitioners required to practise under supervision or direction.

Associated Documents
Competence Standards for Medical Laboratory Science Practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand (Revised November 2018)
Registration Policy (March 2019)

Revision Schedule			
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POLICY OVERVIEW

Sections 22 (3), (a) and (b) of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Amendment Act 2019 (the Act) allow the Council to place a condition on a practitioner's scope of practice that will ensure they are competent to practise.

This document sets out the Council's policy and guidelines for registered medical laboratory science practitioners working under supervision or direction to ensure the continued protection of the health and safety of patients.

DEFINITIONS

PRACTITIONER

For the purpose of this policy a *practitioner* is in accordance with section 5(1) of the Act, and means a person who is, or is deemed to be, registered with the Council as a practitioner of the medical laboratory science profession.

The policy does not apply to persons who are in training towards gaining registration in the medical laboratory science profession. It is an employer's responsibility to ensure laboratory workers who are unregistered and training towards a medical laboratory science qualification are supervised appropriately to ensure safe practice.

SUPERVISION

Supervision is a formal process of professional support and teaching to enable the practitioner to build on their knowledge, skills and professional attributes, and to progressively assume responsibility for their own practice.

DIRECTION

Medical Laboratory Technicians and Medical Laboratory Pre-Analytical Technicians with full registration practise under the direction of a fully registered medical laboratory science practitioner or other appropriately qualified and registered health practitioner who has expertise and knowledge in the relevant medical laboratory science discipline.

Within the parameters of practising under direction the practitioner takes full accountability for their practice with general oversight by the practitioner providing direction who must be available for consultation if assistance is required.

Practitioners providing direction are accountable for the direction they provide to ensure practitioners working under direction practise within the parameters of the relevant gazetted scope of practice. The practitioner providing direction must regularly meet with, and conduct periodic reviews of the Medical Laboratory Technician's or Medical Laboratory Pre-Analytical Technician's practice.

SUPERVISION AND DIRECTION: AN OVERVIEW

The practitioner providing supervision is accountable for the safe practice of those they supervise

	Definition	Specifications	Responsibilities
Supervision	<p>The practitioner providing supervision must be available to give immediate practical assistance and/or advice at any time.</p>	<p>The practitioner works under the supervision of a registered health practitioner who is suitably qualified, and has the expertise and relevant knowledge of the medical laboratory science discipline(s) within which the practitioner is practising. This means that supervision may be provided by a medical laboratory science practitioner who is registered in any of the scopes of practice (scientist; technician; pre-analytical technician), on the proviso they have full registration and no conditions on their practice. The supervising practitioner must have expertise and experience in the relevant medical laboratory science discipline/area of practice.</p> <p>No medical laboratory science practitioner with provisional registration can provide supervision or direction to another practitioner.</p> <p>Phlebotomists cannot work off-site (i.e. without the supervisor being physically present) until they have been signed off by the nominated supervisor as meeting minimum clinical competencies.</p>	<p>When a condition of supervision is placed on a practitioner's registration, they must provide the Council with the name of the practitioner who will act as a <i>nominated</i> supervisor.</p> <p>Practitioners providing supervision take full accountability¹ for the practice of the practitioner they supervise.</p> <p>The nominated supervisor may delegate their daily oversight of a practitioner to another registered health practitioner with the appropriate expertise and relevant knowledge.</p>

¹ Full accountability means undertaking regular assessments of the supervised practitioner's performance to ensure they demonstrate competence in each respective laboratory task before doing those independently. Performance assessment should be documented

	Definition	Specifications	Responsibilities
Level of Supervision	<p>The degree of supervision provided to the individual practitioner can be reduced over time and as the practitioner under supervision demonstrates competence in particular procedures/tasks. This means that the supervision level being provided may be different according to particular procedures/tasks being undertaken the supervised practitioner.</p>	<p>Phlebotomists cannot work off-site until they have been signed off by the nominated supervisor as meeting minimum clinical competencies.</p> <p>Level 1 Supervision:</p> <p>Level 1 supervision applies when the practitioner being supervised is performing procedures/tasks for which competence sign-off has not been achieved.</p> <p>Level 2 Supervision:</p> <p>The practitioner under supervision has been signed-off as competent in the procedures/tasks they are performing.</p> <p>Level 3 Supervision:</p> <p>The practitioner under supervision has been signed-off as competent in a range of procedures/tasks they would be expected to perform as part of their usual routine but still require sign-off across the whole range of competencies as required for their scope of practice.</p>	<p>Level 1 Supervision:</p> <p>The practitioner providing supervision must be in the same room as the practitioner under supervision.</p> <p>Level 2 Supervision:</p> <p>The practitioner providing supervision must be on-site and within a reasonable distance so as to be immediately available should the practitioner under supervision need assistance and/or advice.</p> <p>Level 3 Supervision:</p> <p>The practitioner providing supervision may be off-site but is immediately available to the practitioner under supervision by phone.</p>
Direction	<p>The practitioner providing direction is available, but does not need to be present at all times.</p>	<p>The practitioner working under direction will take full accountability for their practice with general oversight by a registered medical laboratory science practitioner or other appropriately qualified and registered health practitioner, who must be available for consultation if assistance is required.</p>	<p>Practitioners providing direction are accountable for the type and extent of direction provided.</p>

The following table outlines when a practitioner should be practising under supervision or direction:

Scope of Practice		Practising Under Supervision	Practising Under Direction
MLS	Provisional registration	✓	
	Full registration		Not generally applicable
MLT	Provisional registration	✓	
	Full registration		✓
MLPAT	Provisional registration	✓	
	Full registration		✓
Return to work practitioners		To be determined on a case-by-case basis	

SUPERVISION PRE-REQUISITES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Pre-Requisites for Nominated Supervisors	Responsibilities: Nominated Supervisors and Supervisors Providing Daily Oversight	Responsibilities: Nominated Supervisors	Responsibilities: Practitioner Working Under Supervision
Hold a current practising certificate that does not contain any restrictive conditions on their practice	Take responsibility for their own and the supervised practitioner's practice	Maintain supervision and assessment integrity	Maintain a professional relationship with supervisor
Be actively engaged in a Council-approved CPD programme	Avoid and/or declare any conflicts of interest	Establish regular meetings with the supervised practitioner and conduct regular performance reviews with timely remediation of any identified issues	Be prepared for meetings with supervisor
Have at least 2-year's post qualification clinical experience and hold full registration	Ensure the health and safety of patients is protected through the practice of the supervised practitioner and the range of tasks for which supervision is provided	Notify the Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - if the relationship with the supervised practitioner breaks down - of any concerns regarding the conduct, or health of the supervised practitioner - if the supervised practitioner is not complying with the conditions or undertakings as set by the Council 	Adapt their practice to address the remediation of identified areas of practice needing improvement
Have a sound understanding of the competencies required for registration in the relevant scope of practice	Maintain a professional relationship with the supervised practitioner	Complete all required supervision reports as set by the Council	Recognise professional limits and work within those limits
Declare any conflict of interest prior to undertaking supervisor responsibilities	Be contactable and readily available to the supervised practitioner		Immediately advise supervisor of any issues and all clinical incidents
	Take appropriate steps to ensure the practitioner is practising safely Observe the practitioner, conduct case reviews and provide constructive feedback		

WORKING UNDER DIRECTION PRE-REQUISITES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Pre-Requisites for Practitioners Providing Direction	Responsibilities: Practitioner Providing Direction	Responsibilities: Practitioner Working under Direction
Have full registration without any conditions for supervised practice	Ensure the health and safety of patients is protected through the practice of the practitioner under direction and the range of procedures/tasks they perform	Take responsibility for their own practice
Be actively engaged in a Council-approved CPD programme	Ensure suitable support is available to the practitioner	Recognise their professional limits and practise within those limits
	Meet regularly with the practitioner to review their work practices	Maintain a professional relationship with the practitioner providing direction
	Notify the Council if there are concerns regarding the competence, conduct, or health of the practitioner	Advise the practitioner providing direction of any issues and all clinical incidents

COMPETENCY SIGN-OFF

PRACTITIONERS PRACTISING UNDER SUPERVISION

At the end of the supervision period, the supervisor is required to provide the Council with written confirmation the practitioner meets all of the competencies of the scope of practice they are registered in. This is inclusive of ethical practice, awareness of limitations on their practice, professional and cultural competence, and a commitment to lifelong learning. That confirmation must be received by the Council as supporting evidence when the supervised practitioner apply to have their provisional registration changed to full registration.

Once this has been received and approved the supervised practitioner's registration can be converted to full registration, and their APC is re-issued at no extra cost.

PRACTITIONERS PRACTISING UNDER DIRECTION

Medical Laboratory Technicians (MLT) and Medical Laboratory Pre-Analytical Technicians (MLPAT) have no formal reporting requirements to the Council, however each year they renew their APC, the practitioner providing direction will need to declare to the Council the MLT/MLPAT is competent to practise.

The person signing off the competency of a practitioner must:

- Have knowledge of the practitioner's competence; and
- Be in the position where competency issues would be reported to them; and
- Review the results of an annual competency review conducted by another party; and
- Have sufficient background knowledge of the work to form a sound opinion on the practitioner's competency

While direction of MLT's and MLPAT's is usually the responsibility of medical laboratory scientists, in some circumstances it may be more appropriate for the direction to be provided by a MLT or MLPAT. The MLT/MLPAT providing direction would be an experienced practitioner with extensive knowledge of the relevant medical laboratory science discipline/area of practice.