



**MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL
OF NEW ZEALAND**

TE KAUNIHERA PŪTAIAO HAUORA O AOTEAROA

POLICY AND GUIDELINES: RETURN TO PRACTICE

JUNE 2019

Policy Title	
Reference Number	2019-Jun-V2-MSc Practising Certificates
Scope	This policy document applies to all registered medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners looking to return to practice in New Zealand

Associated Policy Documents	
Document Title	Reference Number
Competence Standards for Medical Laboratory Science Practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand (Revised February 2018)	2018-Feb-V2-MSc Competence Standards (AT)
Competence Standards for Anaesthetic Technicians in Aotearoa New Zealand (Revised July 2018)	2018-Jul-V2-MSc Competence Standards (MLS)

Revision Schedule			
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Policy Overview

The issue of an annual practising certificate (APC) is conditional on the Medical Sciences Council (the Council) being satisfied the practitioner is fit and competent to practise. This policy sets out the Council's requirements for the issue of an APC to practitioners who are registered but have not practised in New Zealand for more than 3-years immediately preceding the date of their application.

Legal Context

Under section 27(d) of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act) the Council may decline to issue an APC when the practitioner has not held an annual practising certificate of a kind sought by the application within the 3-years immediately preceding the date of the application.

Section 29 of the Act enables the Council to consider what conditions it may impose or vary before it issues an APC.

Competence to Practise

To be issued with an APC, registered practitioners must provide evidence that they are practising within their registered scope of practice and are maintaining their competence to practise.

The scopes of practice (as articulated in the current and respective Gazette notices) provide the broad parameters of medical laboratory science practice, and anaesthetic technology practice. The Council's *Competence Standards for Medical Laboratory Science Practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand* and *Competence Standards for Anaesthetic Technicians in Aotearoa New Zealand*, provide the detail of how registered practitioners are expected to practise and what they must be capable of doing. The competence standards set the minimum threshold required of entry-level practitioners for the purpose of registration in the relevant profession.

To ensure public safety, as a minimum, practitioners applying for an APC must be able to work at the level expected of an entry-level practitioner and be able to demonstrate they meet all of the competence standards for their registered scope of practice.

Return to Practice

Practitioners who have not practised for more than 3-years immediately preceding the date of their APC application must meet a number of return-to-practice requirements so as to assure the Council of their competence to safely practise in New Zealand. Those requirements may be different according to the length of time elapsed since the practitioner ceased practising in New Zealand.

Practitioners who are Registered but Never Practised

In some instances New Zealand trained practitioners may have been granted registration after gaining their qualification, but never practised in the medical laboratory science profession or the anaesthetic technology profession, either in New Zealand or overseas.

Practitioners in these circumstances must meet the Council's return to practice requirements as set out in this policy document.

Standard Information Requirements

Irrespective of the return-to-practice category, each practitioner seeking to return to practice must provide the following documents at the time they apply for an APC:

- A criminal history/police report from any country where the practitioner has lived for 12-months or more (including New Zealand). The report must be no more than 6-months old.
- Curriculum vitae (CV).
- Name and contact details for two professional referees.

Return to Practice Process

The following sets out the process for all practitioners applying to return to practice:

- Identify the appropriate return-to-practice category.
- Provide the standard information requirements along with any additional information as described in the appropriate return-to-practice category.
- Upon Council agreement the practitioner is fit to practise, an interim practising certificate (IPC) will be issued for those return to practice categories where a period of supervised practice has been specified.
- Upon evidence the practitioner has met all requirements for the period of supervised practice and including certification of practice competence, the IPC will be cancelled and replaced with an APC. Issue of the latter will be at no additional cost providing it is in the current APC year.

Return to Practice Categories

The time periods and return to practice requirements described in each category are indicative of the Council's expectations for practitioners in those circumstances. Each practitioner seeking a practising certificate after an absence from practice exceeding 3-years will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The Council will consider all relevant information pertaining to a practitioner's return to practice including their qualification, clinical practice experience, and any relevant experience since ceasing practice.

Return to Practice Categories and Requirements

Practitioners who are on the Medical Sciences Council register and are returning to practise fall into one of eight categories:

Category	Medical Laboratory Science Practitioners or Anaesthetic Technicians Who Have:	Return to Practice Requirements
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practised in New Zealand following graduation and taken a break from practice for less than 3-years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practitioners in this category do not fall within the definition of formal return-to-practice requirements under the criteria of the Act. - Must complete the routine recertification requirements required of all practitioners seeking issue of an APC
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practised in New Zealand and taken a break from practice for between 3 to 5 years - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete a period of supervised practice for a minimum of 3-FTE months (480 hours).
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Been out of clinical practice for more than 5 but less than 10-full years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May be required to pass an examination as set by the Council - Subsequent to passing of an examination, the practitioner must complete a period of supervised practice for a minimum of 6-FTE months (960 hours)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remained in a relevant clinical health care role but out of direct medical laboratory science or anaesthetic technology practice for 10 years or more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide documentation that demonstrates how they meet the competence standards required for their scope of practice - May be required to pass an examination as set by the Council - Subsequent to the passing of an examination, the practitioner must complete a period of supervised practice for a minimum of 6-FTE months (960 hours)

Category	Medical Laboratory Science Practitioners or Anaesthetic Technicians Who Have:	Return to Practice Requirements
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not remained in a relevant clinical health care role and out of medical laboratory science or anaesthetic technology practice for 10 years or more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Must successfully pass an examination as set by the Council OR may be required to undertake further tertiary study - Subsequent to the passing of an examination, the practitioner would normally complete a period of supervised practice for a period of 12-months which may be reduced upon application to the Council with certification of competence
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Registered practitioner who has not previously held a New Zealand APC and wishes to practice in New Zealand after practising in medical laboratory science or anaesthetic technology overseas for more than 3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete a period of supervised practice for a minimum of 1-FTE month (160 hours). - Provide a verifiable work history for the full period of their overseas practice - Provide a record of CPD activities for the 3-years immediately prior to the last date of practice in any country - Medical laboratory science practitioners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Provide documented evidence of having met a workplace competency assessment – for the last 12-month period of practice in an accredited laboratory - Anaesthetic technicians: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Provide written attestation from the employer for the last 12-month period of practice as to their competence to practise (Medical Sciences Council form)

Category	Medical laboratory Science Practitioners or Anaesthetic Technicians Who Have:	Return to Practice Requirements
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practised medical laboratory science or anaesthetic technology overseas for between 3 to 5-full years immediately preceding the date of application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The practitioner must complete a period of supervised practice for a minimum of 3-FTE months (480 hours) - Provide a verifiable work history for the full period of their overseas practice - Provide a record of CPD activities for the 3-years immediately prior to the last date of practice in any country - Medical laboratory science practitioners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Provide documented evidence of having met a workplace competency assessment – for the last 12-month period of practice in an accredited laboratory - Anaesthetic technicians: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Provide written attestation from the employer for the last 12-month period of practice as to their competence to practise (Medical Sciences Council form)
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practised medical laboratory science or anaesthetic technology overseas for less than 3-full years immediately preceding the date of application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The practitioner must complete a period of supervised practice for a minimum of 4-FTE months (640 hours) - Provide a verifiable work history for the full period of their overseas practice - Provide a record of CPD activities for the 3-years immediately prior to the last date of practice in any country - Medical laboratory science practitioners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Provide documented evidence of having met a workplace competency assessment – for the last 12-month period of practice in an accredited laboratory - Anaesthetic Technicians: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Provide written attestation from the employer for the last 12-month period of practice as to their competence to practise (Medical Sciences Council form)

All practitioners who are required to complete a period of supervised practice

- The supervisor must be a registered health practitioner (under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003) and hold a current practising certificate
- Medical laboratory science supervisors must hold full registration
- Supervision will initially be within Level 1 for a minimum of 4-FTE weeks (160 hours)
- Level 1 supervision requires the supervisor to be in the same room as the practitioner being supervised, at all times
- Medical laboratory science practitioners working in the practice of phlebotomy must be signed off as meeting minimum clinical competencies before working off-site (from the laboratory)
- The level of supervision can be incrementally reduced after the initial minimum period of Level 1 supervision as mutually agreed by the nominated supervisor and the return-to-practice practitioner
- At the conclusion of the period of supervised practice the practitioner must be certified by the Council-approved supervisor as meeting the competence standards for their scope of practice
- The practitioner and nominated supervisor must meet all reporting requirements as specified by the Council