



**MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL
OF NEW ZEALAND**

TE KAUNIHERA PŪTAIAO HAUORA O AOTEAROA

CONSULTATION OUTCOMES:

REDUCTION IN LABORATORY HOURS FOR THE AWARD OF THE QMLT CERTIFICATE

In July 2019 the Medical Sciences Council issued a consultation document seeking comment on the proposed reduction in the Laboratory experience hours required for the award of the QMLT qualification.

This report summarises the consultation feedback received by the Council and their subsequent decision to support the reduction in clinical for the award of the QMLT but require graduates to complete a period of provisional registration.

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INTRODUCTION

The Medical Sciences Council would like to take this opportunity to thank those individuals who provided feedback on its recent consultation document (July 2019) that set out a proposal from NZIMLS to reduce the laboratory hours a trainee must complete before they are eligible to be awarded the Qualified Medical Laboratory Technical certificate.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Consultation respondents were asked to provide their feedback via an online questionnaire. Responses were received from

Scope of Practice	Response	%
Medical Laboratory Pre-Analytical Technician	24	61%
Medical Technician Laboratory	5	13%
Medical Scientist Laboratory	10	26%
TOTAL	39	

No group or email responses were received.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. Do you support the reduction in the number of full-time equivalent hours of laboratory experience a practitioner must complete to be awarded the Qualified Medical Laboratory Technician Certificate?
2. Please provide your reasons for supporting or not supporting the change.
3. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about the proposed change?

OVERVIEW OF THE CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

QUESTION 1

Do you support the reduction in the number of full-time equivalent hours of laboratory experience a practitioner must complete to be awarded the Qualified Medical Laboratory Technician Certificate?

38 people responded to this question, with 27 (71%) supporting the reduction.

QUESTION 2

Please provide your reasons for supporting or not supporting the change. All responses can be found in Appendix 1.

REASONS FOR SUPPORTING REDUCTION IN THE HOURS

- 2,000 hours is more realistic and achievable
- 4,000 hours is too long
- A trainee would gain enough experience in the 2,000 hours
- Part-timers are disadvantaged by the requirement to complete 4,000 hours

REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING CHANGES IN HOURS

- Insufficient exposure to less common specimens therefore would not be competent after 2,000 hours
- 2,000 hours is insufficient time for a practitioner working in Mortuary Science
- A school leaver would not be competent after 2,000 hours of work experience.
- One year is simply not enough for someone with no medical background
- A technician needs 2 years' experience to be competent in their specialisation. They may get through everything in 1 year, but I do not believe they would be competent.

Concerns were raised that the reduction in hours would:

- Dumb down the qualification and put public safety at risk
- mean inexperienced practitioners would not get the required level of supervision.

Concerns were also expressed about the lack of justification for the reduction and the suggestion the change was motivated by a commercial agenda.

COUNCIL DECISION

The Council noted that 71% respondents support the proposal to reduce the laboratory hours for the award of the QMLT certificate from 4,000 to 2,000 hours. However, there was a very low response rate.

The Council noted that a qualification does not equate to competence and agreed that a newly qualified medical laboratory technician or medical laboratory pre-analytical technician will need to be registered under the provisional registration pathway.

The Council resolved to advise the NZIMLS that it supports a reduction of the clinical hours component for the award of the QMLT certificate. New graduates conferred with a QMLT will be eligible for provisional registration for a period of 12-months in either the medical laboratory technician, or the medical laboratory pre-analytical technician scope of practice. The Board considers that a 12-month period of provisional registration (during which they work under supervision) would be sufficient for a practitioner to demonstrate and provide certified evidence that they meet the competencies required for their relevant scope of practice.

There would be opportunity for individuals to apply for a reduced period of provisional registration but as a minimum they will be required to complete 3-months (fulltime equivalent) of supervised practice. All applications for a reduction in the 12-month provisional registration period must be accompanied by supporting documents certified by the practitioner's nominated supervisor who a registered and senior medical laboratory science practitioner with full registration and no conditions on their practice.

PRESCRIBED QUALIFICATIONS

The Council will update the prescribed qualification for registration as Medical Laboratory Technician and medical Laboratory Pre-analytical Technicians to reflect the proposed reduction in laboratory hours for the award of the QMLT certificate.