



**MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL
OF NEW ZEALAND**

TE KAUNIHERA PŪTAIAO HAUORA O AOTEAROA

MSC NEWS

TE HEAMANA | FROM THE CHAIR

Tēnā koutou katoa

Thank you to all those practitioners who renewed their Annual Practising Certificates (APCs) early or on time. We're working to make this a more streamlined process for everyone in future. Certainly, as our professions grow in numbers, we must improve our online tools, while also growing our capacity to meet the administrative and regulatory demands. With that in mind I welcome Peter Lourie, the new Deputy Registrar, along with everyone else who has joined recently – the roles they carry out are all important to keeping things going.

As the year gains momentum, and with the APC round now closed, the Council can concentrate on those projects outlined in our previous newsletter. Further, we have been able to get out and engage more with practitioners at various professional body events, such as the recent NZIMLS forum* held in Nelson during March, attended by our Deputy Chair Ruth Beeston and Chief Executive Sue Calvert.

Being able to hear directly from practitioners enables council members to reflect on another perspective when interpreting the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA/the Act) as it relates to our professions.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the New Zealand Anaesthetic Technicians Society (NZATS) on a well-run national examination – specifically the preparation and delivery it takes by a dedicated group of volunteers. Most importantly, congratulations to those trainee AT's and their education teams who put in significant hours to prepare, and who came away with the desired result.

*New Zealand Institute of Medical Laboratory Science (NZIMLS)

Ngā mihi

Brett Besley - Chair

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COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITY

The primary responsibility of the Council is to protect the health and safety of the New Zealand public by ensuring practitioners registered with the Council are competent and fit to practise.

Message from the Chief Executive

Kia ora koutou

Thank you to all practitioners who applied for and were granted their Annual Practising Certificate (APC) before Easter. And thank you also to staff at the Medical Sciences Secretariat (MSS/the Secretariat) who worked over Easter to ensure that all practitioners who applied and paid for APCs over that time had them issued. Now that the APC round is over, we're working on the recertification audit (Continuing Professional Development/CPD) for 2024. We'll be contacting a random selection of practitioners for that soon.

Recently, Deputy Chair Ruth Beeston and I had the opportunity to attend the New Zealand Institute of Medical Laboratory Science (NZIMLS) South Island seminar in Nelson. It was a great opportunity to network and meet medical science professionals from across the motu. Practitioners took the opportunity to discuss regulation matters with us and to ask questions. Members of the Medical Sciences Council (the Council) and the Secretariat plan to attend several conferences and meetings during 2024, and we encourage practitioners doing the same to seek us out.

Anaesthetic Technician (AT) Scope of Practice (SOP)

Work on the scope of practice has continued since our communication to the workforce in March. We'll provide more information about this in due course.

The Expert Advisory Group has continued to meet and progress the standards of competence. We hope to consult on these new standards after the June Council meeting.

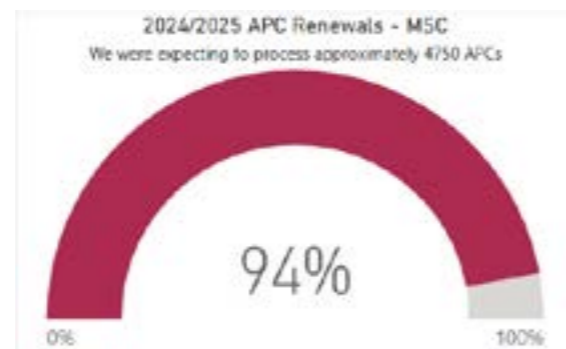
I acknowledge **Te Ama Tōtika** | Māori Practitioners Advisory Committee who, over the course of 2023-2024, have provided the Council with advice and guidance to support its work. This rōpū recently reviewed the draft standards of competence for anaesthetic technicians and helped inform their development.

Recently, our Registrar and I were invited to speak to scientists from across the Pacific who recently attended education at the Pacific Pathology Training Centre. They were keen to know about regulation and how it works in Aotearoa | New Zealand. This was an opportunity that we both thoroughly enjoyed.

Dr Susan Calvert | **Chief Executive**

APC renewals nearly 100%

The Annual Practising Certificate (APC) renewal period officially closed on 31 March with a 94% renewal rate.



There were still a few late applications being dealt with in April, but generally people got in early to make sure they applied and paid for their APCs in plenty of time.

Remarkably there are still some registered practitioners who don't seem to know that having an APC is a legal requirement – that you can't legally work in Aotearoa | New Zealand as a medical laboratory science practitioner or anaesthetic technician without one.

By holding a current practising certificate you're stating that you have maintained your competence to practise, and that by doing so the public is protected.

We tried to make it easier this year by introducing some [FAQs on our website](#) - how to apply for your APC; how long the process takes; what happens if you don't apply for your APC, etc.

If, after reading the FAQs, you still have any questions about the process then email us at msc@medsci.co.nz

2022-2023 Annual report

After getting the final sign-off from our auditors the 2022-2023 MSC Annual Report has been finalised.

It's now available to view on the website under [About us / Annual Reports](#).



Recertification audit - it could be you

Every second year a group of registered practitioners are randomly selected to be audited, to monitor compliance/ make sure everyone's meeting their Continual Professional Development (CPD) requirements. This process is done online.

For more about the CPD audit view details on the website under [Already registered/Continuing Professional Development](#).

Making sure practitioners are providing safe services to the public they're caring for is a legislative requirement under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (Section 41).

The audit is conducted over a 12-week period. This year it **will start during mid-May and finish early August**.

**CPD is a critical part of the Council's recertification programme. Registered practitioners are required to actively engage in a range of learning activities throughout their career to ensure they maintain competence/continue to practise safely/effectively/legally within their relevant scope of practice. And they may, from time to time, be called upon to provide evidence of this, ie participate in audit. Details about this are in the Act, section 41, and on the [website](#).*

If you're selected to take part in this audit you'll be asked to provide supporting information about the learning activities you've undertaken to maintain competence (practise safety, effectively and legally) within your profession's scope of practice over the last two years.

Deputy Registrar onboard

Peter Lourie, newly appointed Deputy Registrar, comes to us with a background in regulatory environments. Peter has previously worked with Engineering New Zealand Te Ao Rangahau and the Pharmacy Council of New Zealand Te Pou Whakamana Kaimatū o Aotearoa, so he comes with a lot of relevant experience. The role of Deputy Registrar was created to assist the team in delivering a strong regulatory and business improvement approach for our systems, processes and regulatory compliance, along with assurance functions. This includes making sure working practitioners are registered and hold an Annual Practising Certificate (when working). Welcome Peter!

The Council must appoint a registrar under legislation to make sure various regulatory processes are carried out. For example, overseeing the registration of practitioners. The Deputy Registrar is employed to assist the Registrar with those functions. Ultimately the Registrar is responsible for ensuring all regulatory processes are carried out.

Conference and forums

CE Sue Calvert and MSC Deputy Chair Ruth Beeston presented at the New Zealand Institute of Medical Laboratory Science - NZIMLS South Island Seminar – held in Nelson last month. Sue says there was lots of discussion about our role (the Council), funding, and where we get money from.

There was also talk about clinical practice, and an interesting kōrero about cultural safety/respecting the taonga that NZIMLS look after. There was also a session about education of pre-analytical technicians and having this as a career.

Both Sue and Ruth said it was a very worthwhile seminar and an opportunity to engage with people in the profession.



L to R: CE Dr Sue Calvert and MSC Deputy Chair Ruth Beeston at the NZIMLS South Island seminar, March 2024.

We'll be at more conferences and forums throughout the year - if you're there too then please seek us out:

- at NZHSOA (Christchurch) in June
- NZIMLS (Christchurch) in August
- NZATS (Auckland) in November.

UPDATE on the Anaesthetic Technician scope of practice

As most of you will know, we held a consultation in 2023 to revise the Scope of Practice for the anaesthetic technician profession. The outcome of that was published on 13 February. Since then a few things have happened:

- An expert advisory group (EAG) of anaesthetic technicians from across the profession, and a lay person, were appointed to advise on completing this project.
- Part of the project has been paused while we review the scope. While going through the process of publishing the gazette notice, the Ministry of Health (as part of the normal process of checking these things) highlighted a potential issue with the way the gazette notice was framed. As a result that notice was rescinded and everyone was advised to continue referring to the original notice: [Notice of Scope of Practice and Prescribed Qualifications for the Practice of Anaesthetic Technology in New Zealand](#).
- On Tuesday 16 April we held a webinar so that registered practitioners could ask questions they had about the project, and what the pausing the name change meant.

Be assured, that although this pause will cause a delay to some aspects of the review while we look into it, the project itself still goes on. Everything else that's been done, discussed, and achieved to date remains the same.

As a result of having to change our approach, our previous gazette notice has been removed. **Ignore this one:** Scope of Practice and Prescribed Qualifications for the Practice of Perioperative Practice in Aotearoa | New Zealand (Notice no. 2024-s1776).

Use this one: The previous notice has been replaced with the original (continue to use this as your guide) [Anaesthetic Technician Scope of Practice notice per the corrigendum published here](#).

Webinar drew good questions

The April webinar went very well. Thanks to those people who found time to attend. There were a lot of good questions (many of them similar to the ones we already have on the website). And some additional ones that we've included since.

Key themes were:

- What's happened and why?

- What does it mean for us today/tomorrow?
- What notice are we working under?
- How do people use those skills under the new scope of practice?
- What does this mean for new graduates and international practitioners wanting to work in New Zealand?

If you have any questions about what this means, please view the [FAQs on our website here](#) or email us at msc@medsci.co.nz

Scams and scammers

Beware of scams and scammers – people pretending to be someone or something they're not - usually after money or information they're not entitled to.

Ask questions to make sure the person you're talking to are legitimate, and if in doubt get a phone number, then call them back. If it's not our phone number 04 801 6250, then it could be a scam.

And don't give out any personal information over the phone unless you're sure it's us you're talking to.

Online exams

In 2021 the Medical Sciences Council introduced an examination for the purpose of registration and recertification under the Health Practitioners Competences Assurance Act 2003.

The exam is used for applicants who hold a qualification in anaesthetic technology or medical laboratory science, combined with relevant experience BUT their qualification has been assessed as being 'non-equivalent' (doesn't match the New Zealand qualification).

The Council's Registration Committee has reviewed their application and deemed that your qualification is not substantially equivalent to the required New Zealand standard and/or where applicants don't have at least five years of post-qualification clinical experience.

Four times a year the exam is offered to practitioners that fall into one of those groups. Information about dates and fees is available on the website under [Pre-registration/Online examination](#). The fee covers the administrative costs of running the exam.

We don't actively promote this exam, and only applicants who have started their registration application, as above, are offered the opportunity to sit the exam.

The sole purpose of this exam is to determine whether the people taking it are qualified for admission to the Medical Sciences Council Register. This is not a qualification by the way.

Some people have asked us whether it's possible to see a list of accepted qualifications that the Council has assessed as being equivalent to the Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science (BMLSc). The Council doesn't provide a list of accepted qualifications because there's just too many variables and each applicant needs to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. However, in the future we will look at recognised pathways.

If you have any queries about this, contact the Registration team by emailing msc@medsci.co.nz

Te Ama Tōtika

Te Ama Tōtika (formerly known as the Māori Practitioners Advisory Committee) was formed in 2023. Since then the committee has provided the Council with advice and guidance to support its work. This rōpū recently reviewed the draft standards of competence for anaesthetic technicians and helped inform their development.

Update from the Committee Chair - Chelsey Loader



Reflecting on our mahi in the past year we have enjoyed working as a team and strengthening the work that the Council has been doing. It's been a good journey, and we value the engagement we've had with the Council during this process.

We're currently looking into our final review of the Anaesthetic technician competency standards document before

it goes out for consultation. And we asked the Council to produce a position statement on Te Tiriti, to gain a clearer understanding about the relevancy of Te Tiriti for practitioners.

Our desire is to support and network with Māori practitioners throughout the motu.

Whāia te iti kahurangi ki te tūohu koe me he maunga teitei - Seek the treasure you value most dearly and if you bow your head, let it be to a lofty mountain.

More about the committee

You can view bios for Te Ama Tōtika on the website under [About us/Māori Practitioners Advisory Committee](#)

Who we are - what we're about - what you need to know



We are Te Kaunihera Pūtaiao Hauora o Aotearoa | Medical Sciences Council (the Council/MSC). Our role, as a responsible authority, is to protect the public of Aotearoa | New Zealand through the regulation of the medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology professions which includes the following scopes of practice:

- **Medical Laboratory Science:** Medical Laboratory Scientist, Medical Laboratory Technician, Medical Laboratory Pre-Analytical Technician
- **Anaesthetic Technology:** Anaesthetic Technician.

We're responsible for protecting the health and safety of the New Zealand public by ensuring practitioners registered with us are competent and fit to practise. We manage practitioner registrations and the processing of annual practising certificates, (APCs), ensure compliance with obligations under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003, provide advice, manage the website www.msccouncil.org.nz and CPD audits – amongst other things.

We employ the Medical Sciences Secretariat (the Secretariat), whose staff provide business services regulatory support and advice.

You can get in touch by emailing msc@medsci.co.nz or phoning 04 801 6250 and/or visit the website for more information:

www.msccouncil.org.nz