

Policy

Medical Laboratory Science Registration Policy

Effective 08 April 2025

Policy Title	MLS Registration Policy
Reference Number	2025-MSC-MLS-Registration
Scope	This policy applies to all practitioners applying for registration with the Medical Sciences Council in the medical laboratory scopes of practice.

Associated Policy Documents	
Medical Laboratory Science Scope of Practice	Scope of Practice and Prescribed Qualifications for the Practice of Medical Laboratory Science
Medical Laboratory Science Qualification Assessments Policy	20250408-MLS-Qualification-Assessments-Policy.pdf
English Language Proficiency	English Language Proficiency Policy
Medical Laboratory Science Supervision	Supervision and Direction for Medical Laboratory Science Practitioners

Revision Schedule			
Version Number	Version Date	Approved By	Next Review
One	2012	Medical Sciences Council	2014
Two	March 2019	Medical Sciences Council	2021
Three	May 2021	Chief Executive	2023
Four	April 2025	Medical Sciences Council	2027

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Policy overview

1. The Medical Sciences Council (the Council) is responsible under the [Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003](#) (the Act) for the registration and recertification of medical laboratory science practitioners.
2. This policy document sets out the requirements for registration in any one of the scopes of practice the Council has defined for the profession of medical laboratory science in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Legislative context

3. Sections 15-25 of the Act set out the legislative requirements for registration of health practitioners.
4. In accordance with section 7 of the Act, an unregistered person may not use any of the names, titles, and/or abbreviations used for the medical laboratory science scopes of practice or do anything to suggest that they are qualified to be registered or able to practise in any of those scopes of practice.

Policy statement

5. The Council will only register persons who meet the qualifications, competence, and fitness for registration requirements as stated in the Act and this policy.
6. A person can be registered in more than one of the scopes of practice defined for the practice of medical laboratory science – eg medical laboratory technician and medical laboratory scientist. However, they can hold a current practising certificate in only one of the scopes in which they are registered.

Scopes of practice

7. The Council has specified six scopes of practice for medical laboratory science under section 11 of the Act:
 - Medical Laboratory Scientist (full registration)
 - Medical Laboratory Scientist (provisional registration)
 - Medical Laboratory Technician (full registration)
 - Medical Laboratory Technician (provisional registration)
 - Medical Laboratory Pre-Analytical Technician (full registration)

- Medical Laboratory Pre-Analytical Technician (provisional registration)
8. The current Scope of Practice and Prescribed Qualifications for the Practice of Medical Laboratory Science are published in the NZ gazette ([here](#)).

Qualifications for registration

Prescribed qualifications

9. Under section 12 of the Act the Council has prescribed a number of qualifications for the purpose of registration in one of the medical laboratory science scopes of practice. A list of these may be found in the Qualifications Policy.
10. If a practitioner does not hold one of the prescribed qualifications, under section 15 of the Act, the Council may treat an overseas qualification as a prescribed qualification if the qualification has been assessed as being equivalent to a prescribed qualification.

Medical laboratory scientist: graduate diploma pathway to registration

11. Registered medical laboratory technicians who hold a bachelor's degree (as a minimum) can apply to the Auckland University of Technology to complete a Graduate Diploma in Science (medical laboratory science).
12. Practitioners applying to register as a scientist through this pathway must provide the following evidence:
- They have held registration as a medical laboratory technician or a medical laboratory pre-analytical technician for a minimum of two years immediately preceding their application; and
 - Completion of the Graduate Diploma in Science (medical laboratory science).
13. Initial registration will be as a medical laboratory scientist (provisional) for a period of up to 12 months.

Overseas qualifications

14. All qualifications from internationally qualified practitioners are subject to an assessment to determine if they meet the equivalency required by the Act.
15. Initial assessments are conducted by the Medical Sciences Secretariat (MSS) Regulation Advisors under the direction of the Deputy Registrar. When further advice is required, this is sought from professional advisors.
16. Assessments are based on a set of six criteria that are applied to all overseas qualifications. Details of the assessment criteria and subsequent registration pathways are set out in the Council's [Qualification Assessment policy](#).

Registration examination

17. In the event of a qualification being assessed as not equivalent, the applicant may be offered an opportunity to sit a Council-approved examination. A successful pass in the examination is recognised as ensuring that the candidate has the required base knowledge for entry to the Register.

Competence/clinical experience

18. All applicants will also need to provide evidence that they are competent to practice in the relevant scope of practice.
19. Graduates of the prescribed qualifications are deemed competent at graduation by way of completion of the required qualification.
20. Clinical experience is articulated as a component of the qualification requirements for registration in accordance with section 12 of the Act. Applicants must have sufficient clinical experience (in terms of time, breadth, and depth) in the relevant scope of practice.
21. As a minimum, internationally qualified applicants with a non-equivalent qualification will need to demonstrate they have two years' FTE (3,600 hours) clinical experience in the relevant scope of practice within the preceding five years.

Fitness for registration

22. Under section 16 of the Act, registration applicants must be able to satisfy the Council they are fit to be registered as a health practitioner to practise in Aotearoa New Zealand.

23. Fitness for registration includes consideration of:

- Evidence of their ability to effectively communicate in and comprehend English so as to protect the health and safety of the public. The Council's English Language Proficiency policy can be found [here](#).
- Any criminal conviction that carries a term of imprisonment for three months or longer, with the Council needing to be satisfied it does not reflect adversely on their fitness to practise as a medical laboratory science practitioner. The Council's Criminal History policy can be found [here](#).
- Any previous and/or current professional disciplinary proceedings and/or investigations, with the Council needing to be satisfied that the investigation and/or proceeding does not reflect adversely on their fitness to practise as a medical laboratory science practitioner.
- If the applicant is subject to an order of a professional disciplinary tribunal, either in New Zealand or overseas, the Council will need to be satisfied that the order does not reflect adversely on their fitness to practise in the profession of medical laboratory science.
- Provision of personal and professional references.

24. Registration applicants who provide evidence that they may not meet any of the above fitness to practice considerations, are to be referred to the Registrar.

25. Further information regarding fitness for registration requirements can be found in the [Competence Standards](#).

Post-registration

26. Practitioners new to the register may be required to complete specific requirements such as a period of supervised practice or education.

Application process

27. All registration applications are made electronically through the Council's website:

Documentation

28. Applicants will need to provide supporting documents. These will be sourced directly where possible and verified by Council staff.

29. The Council may request original and/or verified copy versions of documents.

Registration fee

30. All registration applications must include a payment of the relevant fee in order for them to proceed through to being processed for consideration.

31. Fees are set out in the Council's current [Gazette Notice](#).