



**MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL
OF NEW ZEALAND**

TE KAUNIHERA PŪTAIAO HAUORA O AOTEAROA

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT: REDUCTION IN LABORATORY HOURS FOR AWARD OF THE QMLT CERTIFICATE

THE MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL IS SEEKING
FEEDBACK ON A PROPOSAL BY THE NZIMLS
TO REDUCE THE LABORATORY HOURS
COMPONENT OF A QMLT CERTIFICATE

JULY 9, 2019

The Medical Sciences Council (the Council) is consulting on a New Zealand Institute of Medical Laboratory Science (NZIMLS) proposal to reduce the number of laboratory hours a practitioner must complete before being awarded the Qualified Medical Laboratory Technician Certificate (QMLT).

The Proposal

NZIMLS has proposed to the Council a reduction in the number of laboratory hours a practitioner must complete before the QMLT certificate is awarded. Their proposal reduces the requirement from 4,000 to 2,000 hours. Based on a 40 hour week and taking into account annual leave, statutory holidays and sick leave, 4,000 hours equates to 2 years full time equivalent laboratory experience. Reducing the hours to 2,000 hours would mean a practitioner would be awarded the QMLT certificate after one year of full-time equivalent laboratory experience **and** a pass in the QMLT examination.

A little bit of background

In 2015 the Medical Sciences Council (the Council) introduced six separate scopes of practice:

1. Medical Laboratory Scientist (Provisional)
2. Medical Laboratory Scientist (Full)
3. Medical Laboratory Technician (Provisional)
4. Medical Laboratory Technician (Full)
5. Medical Laboratory Pre-Analytical Technician (Provisional Registration)
6. Medical Laboratory Pre-Analytical Technician (Full Registration)

Provisional registration is applied when a practitioner has appropriate qualifications but lacks the required relevant New Zealand experience to practise independently or under direction. Practitioners who hold provisional registration are required to complete a period of supervised practice during which time they gain work-based knowledge and experience.

Prescribed qualifications

The Council has prescribed the following qualification for a person to be eligible for provisional registration as a Medical Laboratory Pre-Analytical Technician (MLPAT) or Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) as below:

- MLPAT - Have completed a minimum of six-calendar month's employment in an appropriately accredited New Zealand laboratory and passed the Qualified Medical Laboratory Technician (QMLT) Phlebotomy certificate, or the QMLT Donor Technician certificate or the QMLT Specimen Services certificate examination as set by the NZIMLS.
- MLT - Have completed a minimum of six-calendar month's employment in an appropriately accredited NZ laboratory and passed the Qualified Medical Laboratory Technician (QMLT) examination as set by the New Zealand Institute of Medical Laboratory Science (NZIMLS);

QMLT and Registration

- To enrol in the QMLT examination a practitioner must have completed a minimum of six months laboratory experience.
- Provisional registration can be granted once a practitioner has completed at least six months of laboratory experience and passed the QMLT examination.
- To be awarded the QMLT certificate currently a practitioner must pass the QMLT examination and complete 4,000 hours of laboratory practice.

Discussion

The Council has adopted a standardised approach to awarding full registration based on a provisionally registered practitioner completing 12 months full-time equivalent (FTE) laboratory experience and the attainment of the appropriate academic qualification. Currently the Council grants provisional registration to MLT's or MLPAT's who have completed a minimum of six months FTE laboratory experience and attained the QMLT examination. They are eligible to apply for full registration once they have been awarded the QMLT certificate (currently after 2-years FTE laboratory experience) and competency sign off from their supervisor.

The Council supports the proposed reduction in laboratory hours for a practitioner to be awarded the QMLT certificate. This is on the understanding that granting of full registration remains a Council decision with the applicant having to meet all requirements for registration inclusive of an approved qualification, sufficient clinical experience, competency signoff, and fitness to practice.

Submitting Your Consultation Feedback

You have an opportunity to provide your feedback on the proposed change to the number of hours of laboratory experience required to be awarded the QMLT certificate by completing an online questionnaire that is available on the Council's website at www.msncouncil.org.nz (News and Media).

Consultation questionnaire will close at 5.00pm on **Friday 9 August 2019**.

Please make sure you have completed the questionnaire by this date

Glossary

Scope of Practice

Under section 5 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 **scope of practice** is defined as

- (a) Means any health service that forms part of a health profession and this is for the time being described under section 11; and
- (b) In relation to a health practitioner of that profession, means 1 or more such health services that the practitioner is, under an authorisation granted under section 21, permitted to perform, subject to any condition for the time being imposed by the responsible authority

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. Practitioners providing supervision take full accountability for the practice of the practitioner they supervise.

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 responsibility 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.