



**MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL  
OF NEW ZEALAND**

TE KAUNIHERA PŪTAIAO HAUORA O AOTEAROA

**POLICY AND GUIDELINES:  
PRACTITIONERS WORKING IN A LOCUM  
CAPACITY**

**NOVEMBER 2018**

<b>Policy Title</b>	
<b>Reference Number</b>	RP-MS017-V1
<b>Scope</b>	This policy applies to anaesthetic technicians and medical laboratory science practitioners practising in a locum capacity

<b>Associated Policy Documents</b>	
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## Legislative Context

The Medical Sciences Council (the Council) is responsible for the regulation of medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003. The Council's core function is to protect the health and safety of the public through ensuring practitioners are competent to fit to practise.

## Policy Statement

Anaesthetic technicians and medical laboratory science practitioners working in a locum capacity must hold full registration status and hold an annual practising certificate. Their practising certificate must not contain a condition on their practice that requires them to work under supervision.

## Definitions

### Locum

A locum practitioner is one who is employed for a short period of time (this would normally be for a period of less than 12-months). In some instances a practitioner may come from overseas to take up a locum position and then return to their country of domicile once the period of locum work has ceased.

## Mechanisms for Ensuring Practitioner Competence and Fitness to Practise

The Council uses a number of mechanisms for assessing and monitoring a practitioner's competence and fitness to practise.

### 1. Scopes of Practice

Under section 11 of the Act the Council must describe the contents of the medical laboratory science profession and the anaesthetic technology profession in terms of one or more scopes of practice.

The Council has specified six scopes of practice for the medical laboratory science profession (inclusive of provisional registration or full registration).

For the anaesthetic technology profession, the Council has specified a single scope of practice.

Each scope is denoted by a title and subsequent descriptive overview of the area of healthcare practised and activities commonly performed.

### 2. Registration

Registration is a one-off event for practitioners and denotes that a practitioner is competent and fit to practise in the medical laboratory science or anaesthetic technology profession in New Zealand. Registration is granted in a specified scope of practice and the practitioner's name is entered on a public register.

## Provisional Registration or Full Registration

Medical laboratory science practitioners can be registered either with provisional registration or with full registration.

Provisional registration is applied when a practitioner has appropriate qualifications but lacks the required relevant New Zealand experience to practise as a medical laboratory scientist, or a medical laboratory technician, or a medical laboratory pre-analytical technician. Practitioners who hold provisional registration hold qualifications that are approved as being relevant and are required to complete a period of supervised practice during which time they gain work-based knowledge and experience.

Full registration denotes that the practitioner has met all of the requirements to practise in the relevant scope of practice. Depending on the scope of practice, practising unsupervised or under the direction of another registered health practitioner will apply. For example medical laboratory scientists with full registration can practise without supervision, while medical laboratory technicians and medical laboratory pre-analytical technicians are required to practise under the direction of another registered health practitioner.

### 3. Annual Practising Certificates

Each year a practitioner who wishes to work as a medical laboratory science or anaesthetic technology practitioner (in any of the defined scopes of practice for which they hold registration) must apply for and be issued with an annual practising certificate (APC). An APC is valid for a finite period of 12-months between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> March (of the subsequent calendar year).

Issue of an APC to a registered anaesthetic technician is dependent on the practitioner having completed 1104 hours of clinical practice in the preceding 3-year period, which is the equivalent to an average minimum of 8-hours clinical practice per week.

### 4. Conditions on Practice

Sometimes the Council may place a condition on a person's APC. A common type of condition is a requirement for the practitioner to complete a specified period of supervised practice. This requires the practitioner to work under the supervision of a health practitioner who is registered and holds a current annual practising certificate in a scope of practice that is relevant to the applying practitioner.

### 5. Supervised Practice

Supervised practice serves to protect the health and safety of the public. It is a formal process of professional support and learning to enable the practitioner to build on their knowledge, skills and professional attributes, and to progressively assume responsibility for their own practice.

## Registration and Practice Status for Locum Practitioners

Locum positions are typically employed for a short period of time (this would normally be for less than 12-months) and practitioners may also work across more than one practice site.

Anaesthetic technicians<sup>1</sup> and medical laboratory science practitioners working in a locum capacity must be able to practise without supervision.

It is therefore inappropriate to offer locum employment to practitioners who hold provisional registration or who have a condition on their practice that they must complete a period of supervision.

Employers have a responsibility for checking the registration and practising status of all new and/or potential medical laboratory science practitioners or anaesthetic technicians before they are confirmed into their new position.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note the ANZCA professional document *Statement on the Assistant to the Anaesthetist* is also applicable to locum anaesthetic technicians