

**Paths to Registration under HPCA
Policy statement adopted May 2007**

General

The Board adopted two scopes of practice in 2004 and gazetted a range of qualification options sufficient to register any person with tertiary science qualifications (if acceptable to the Board) from the three occupational groups recognised in New Zealand at that time. These were: scientific officers and medical laboratory technologists (now **medical laboratory scientists**) and laboratory assistants (now **medical laboratory technicians**).

The Board recognises that, even within New Zealand, a diverse range of qualifications and training may provide the student or school-leaver with skills relevant to the practise of medical laboratory science, particularly when combined with practical training within the medical laboratory. New Zealand laboratories also draw upon the world-wide profession to recruit experienced staff, and their assessment by the Board for suitability for registration demands that the Board establish a framework within which the diversity of qualifications and relevant experience possessed by applicants can be assessed consistently and fairly.

1. Medical Laboratory Technician - paths to registration

The main paths to registration are the Qualified Medical Laboratory Technician (QMLT) and Qualified Phlebotomist Technician (QPT) examinations, which are offered by the NZ Institute of Medical Laboratory Science (NZIMLS) to those who have been employed two years in the (New Zealand) laboratory / blood donor centre.

New Zealand BSc graduates, and graduates from all approved NZ tertiary training courses (NZCS, science diploma, etc.) require one year of such experience to qualify for registration.

A person working in the New Zealand medical laboratory prior to meeting the minimum registration requirement for relevant experience should be regarded as being in training. Those in training must work under supervision and, not being registered, do not require a practising certificate. **The terms “trainee medical laboratory technician” and “trainee phlebotomist” should be used when referring to unregistered persons working towards registration as medical laboratory technicians.**

On qualifying for registration, the individual should apply to the Board for registration and for an Annual Practising Certificate. Laboratories may need to guard against a situation where individuals repeatedly fail, or fail to sit, the QMLT or QPT examination.

Forms to apply for registration are available from the Board or from its website, www.mlsboard.org.nz.

The table below provides a guide to the minimum work experience that will normally be required for registration as a medical laboratory technician. While it is intended to be comprehensive, the table is not prescriptive for every situation and the final decision on an application rests with the Board. Further advice may be obtained from the Registrar.

As part of the transition to the HPCA Act, the Board approved a path to registration for those former laboratory assistants who had gained very considerable experience in the New Zealand medical laboratory and acquired skills sufficient for competent practice as medical laboratory technicians. This path to registration was terminated in September 2006.

Table 1: Technicians' paths to registration under HPCA (revised May 2007)

| | Qualification | Nature of training (required) | Additional experience required in lab/ donor centre | APC / Interim practising certificate |
|-----|---|--|---|---|
| 1. | QMLT, QTA, QPT* | Lab based; exam at end of 2 years | Nil | APC on completion of registration. |
| 2. | BSc, B.App.Sci etc from NZ tertiary education inst. | NZ BSc degree or equivalent – 3 years with lab component | 1 year FTE** (working as laboratory assistant) | APC as above |
| 3. | NZ Certificate in Science (NZCS) | Full-time (polytechnic etc) | 1 year FTE for all new graduates, as above | APC as above |
| 4. | NZCS | Part time study while working as lab assistant | Nil, if completed 1 year FTE. | APC as above |
| 5. | Other NZ science courses | Varies. Must be a training course of 2 years minimum. | 1 year FTE for all new graduates | APC as above |
| 6. | NZ registered nurses | varies | 1 year FTE in a NZ lab or phlebotomy clinic | APC or IPC at discretion of Board ***. |
| 8. | O/seas MLT qualification | Varies. Eg, BSc + Diploma in MLT. Must be a total of 2 years minimum. | Minimum 1 year overseas, + 6m FTE in NZ | APC or IPC at discretion of Board ***. (sign-off by NZ supervisor) |
| 9. | O/seas nursing qualification | Varies. Must be a training course of 2 years minimum. | 1 year FTE in NZ (trainee) | APC or IPC as above |
| 10. | O/seas medical qualification | Varies. Must be a training course of 2 years minimum. | 1 year FTE in NZ (trainee) | APC or IPC as above |

* Nurse assistants can gain registration through the QPT examination.

** FTE = Full time equivalent

*** The Board has delegated this decision to its Registration Committee.

2. Medical Laboratory Scientist - paths to registration

The Board has approved four qualification options, three of which correspond generally to one of the former pathways to registration. The specific pathways under the HPCA Act using these three options are shown in the following Table 2.

A fourth option provided for registration based on certification or registration with an overseas certification body. Certification by the Board of Registry of the American Society of Clinical Pathology is recognised by the Board for qualifications gained by study in the USA only.

Table 2: Scientists' paths to registration under HPCA

| | Qualification (under HPCA) | Nature of training (required path) | Additional work exp. required for registration | Eligible for APC / Interim practising certificate: IPC |
|----|--|--|---|---|
| 1. | NZ BMLSc | 4 year degree, incl clinical placements in final year | Nil. IPC for minimum 6 months and sign-off by NZ supervisor | APC on completion of registration process (at sign-off). |
| 2. | BSc + graduate diploma approved by Board | 3 year degree, + 1 year in med lab before enrolment | 3 years while studying diploma (should be a registered M/L technician) | IPC on course completion / 3 years. APC after sign-off. |
| 3. | DMLT | Ceased 1997. Registration carried forward by HPCA. | N/A | APC if maintaining competence thru CPD programme |
| 4. | O/seas MLS degree | If equivalent to NZ BMLSc eg, Australia, UK, USA, Canada, Sth Africa MLS degrees | 1 year minimum (overseas) if 3 year course. 6 months in New Zealand added at discretion of Board*. | APC at discretion of Board**, or IPC for minimum 6 months and sign-off by NZ supervisor. |
| 5. | O/seas MLS training + 10 years | As approved. eg. NDMLT (South Africa) and HNC in MLT (UK). | Qualification and lab experience "acceptable or satisfactory". 6 months in New Zealand added at discretion of Board*. | APC at discretion of Board**, or IPC for minimum 6 months and sign-off by NZ supervisor. |
| 6. | NZ or o/seas science qualification at post-grad level – eg. MSc, PhD, Honours year | As approved. eg, MSc or PhD, relevant to but not necessarily in MLS. Must be a training course of 4 years minimum. | 2 years in medical lab. as trainee scientist. If completed overseas, 6 months in New Zealand may be added at discretion of Board*. | APC on completion of required lab experience and supervisor sign-off, or IPC for minimum 6 months and sign-off by NZ supervisor, or APC at Board* discretion. |

* The Board has delegated this decision to its Registration Committee.

Phil Saxby
 Registrar