



**MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL
OF NEW ZEALAND**

TE KAUNIHERA PŪTAIAO HAUORA O AOTEAROA

**MSC
NEWS**

TE HEAMANA | FROM THE CHAIR

Tēnā koutou katoa

With the first Council meeting of the year, I was selected to take on the role of Chair for the Medical Sciences Council, with a bit of trepidation. Brett Besley has handled this role very well for the past few years – with thoughtful, astute, and patient leadership. The Council members have all appreciated his calm and encouraging style. I hope I can do as well as he has.

As we're now finishing off all the details that go along with the revision of scope of practice for the Anaesthetic Technicians, our Secretariat is changing focus to the scopes of practice review for medical laboratory science professionals.

I have been working with the Secretariat for several years and look forward to continuing the successful relationship that I've shared with Sue Calvert and her staff.

Scope of practice reviews are a huge task – and very important to get as right as possible. For this reason, an expert advisory group – with representatives from the entire range of the professional spectrum – has been established. They will have had two meetings by the time this newsletter is published. This gives me a sense of confidence that we can travel along the right path.

Partnering with Te Ama Tōtika (our Māori practitioners advisory committee), let's work towards scopes of practice that are relevant in medical laboratory science as it exists in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2025.

I'm looking forward to meeting more practitioners from both professions as the year progresses. It can feel like trying times in this ever-changing landscape for the health workforce professionals in Aotearoa. I hope we can work together to be part of a stable but innovative allied health workforce which enables equitable, quality healthcare for all.

Ngā mihi nui

Ruth Beeston | **MSC Chair**



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COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITY 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

Welcome to the first newsletter for 2025. We are now one third of the way through our Annual Practising Certificate (APC) period and it's pleasing to see that many of you have already taken the opportunity to renew your status.

Please remember that if you haven't applied and paid for your APC by 31 March 2025 you won't be able to work on 1 April. There's an extensive list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the website – please have a look at them [here](#) if you have any queries.

The year has started with a flurry of activity. The Council was pleased to gazette the Anaesthetic Scope of Practice and revised competency standards – which come into effect on 1 April 2025. It also introduced a Recertification Programme for newly qualified anaesthetic technicians which came into effect immediately. We held a number of webinars with the sector and updated the FAQs on our website to ensure accurate information. We're methodically working through further policy changes that are required and will update you as this work progresses.

We're also about to recommence the scope of practice work for the Medical Laboratory Sciences (MLS) professions. An expert advisory group has been established and met in Wellington recently to discuss matters related to the scope of practice. The role of that advisory group is to provide advice to the Council, as it is the Council that makes decisions. Although in the early stages of the project, there will be many opportunities and requirements to engage with you/the profession as this work progresses.

The Council met recently - one of its key activities was the election of Ruth Beeston as Chair and Dr Nicola Swain as Deputy Chair for 2025. Ruth has been a Medical Laboratory Scientist for over 30 years and currently works for Awanui Labs as a point-of-care coordinator. She's also a technical assessor for IANZ and has a postgraduate diploma in public health. Nicola is a lay member on the Council. She's published over 70 peer-reviewed journal articles, teaches, and supervises in well-being programmes at Te Pūkenga and is currently involved with several boards.

For more about Ruth and Nicola (and the rest of our Council members) view information on our website [here](#).

I'm grateful for this opportunity to acknowledge the work of Brett Besley who has been the Chair of the Council for several years. Brett has led the Council through periods of change and supported the work they do using his expertise around the practice of anaesthetic technology. Many of you will have met Brett as he has attended several conferences and spoken on the Council's work at these events. He's been an incredible resource for me as CE providing advice and guidance. Although no longer Chair, Brett remains on the Council.

The Council also recently met with Te Ama Tōtika (our Māori practitioners advisory committee) where they hosted a hui for Māori Anaesthetic Technician and Medical Laboratory Science practitioners. The focus of this hui was cultural competence and issues of equity across the sector.

This year we have a full programme that includes, not only the scope of practice work, but also the implementation of a new database for practitioners. We'll be communicating with you about that and what those changes will mean for registered practitioners as we get closer to the implementation phase. In addition, every five years the Council is required to undergo a performance review. Although this is not scheduled until 2026, work has already begun in preparation. Our previous review (the 2021 report) can be found [here](#).

If you have any questions about aspects of the Council's work, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Ngā mihi

Dr Sue Calvert | **Chief Executive Medical Sciences Secretariat**

Te Kaunihera Pūtaiao Hauora O Aotearoa | The Medical Sciences Council (MSC/the Council) works very closely with another health responsible authority, **Te Poari Ringa Hangarau Iraruke | New Zealand Medical Radiation Technologists Board (MRTB/the Board)**. Together they set up a jointly owned company, **Te Rangatapu Pūtaiao a Rongoā | the Medical Sciences Secretariat (MSS/the Secretariat)** to achieve efficiencies and consistency in regulatory standards, manage key initiatives and business goals.

Review of the HPCA

The Ministry of Health has been working on a review of the HPCA Act over the course of the past year. Representatives of the Council and staff have attended and participated in workshops about the review and have provided feedback on aspects of the Act to the Ministry as requested. Consultation timeframes for feedback are often limited so the possibility to seek the opinion of members of the workforce is limited. We will attempt to keep you up to date about any changes as we are informed.

Med Lab Science scope of practise

Members of the Expert Advisory Group (EAG) for Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) - representing the three scopes of practice - attended a meeting here in Wellington earlier this month with members of the Secretariat.

The EAG meeting was to discuss the three Scopes of Practice for medical sciences. This included the structure of the scopes (including provisional scopes) and how they could be updated to better reflect practice now and into the future. They also discussed the role of the Council in advanced practice. Many of the issues discussed were also raised in the 2022 consultation. **It was a great session** – people were very positive and appreciative of the opportunity to participate. As a result, several recommendations will go to the Council in April for discussion. Any proposed changes will be consulted on with practitioners, the sector, and the public before any decisions are made.

Make sure you keep watch for this so you can participate in the consultation.

Digital change project - coming soon

What it means for you as a registered practitioner

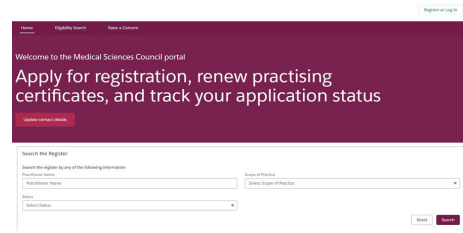
We're replacing our database system - where all your information is stored and kept updated by you (as a registered practitioner) and us, under 'my profile'.

There's nothing you need to do differently right now. We'll give you plenty of notice about what's changed.

Why and why now?

Our current system dates back many years and the infrastructure needs replacing with a more modern system. This will help support us in providing more efficient services.

Here's an example of what you might see in future when logging into 'my profile' –



We've still got work to do, including the testing to make sure it works well for all of us who'll be using it. Some of the benefits of this new system that we can all look forward to include:

- Increased ability to submit reports online.
- Automatic processing of practising certificates for eligible practitioners.
- Enhanced security of practitioner information.

Examining the exam process

The online examination is an approved part of the pathway to registration, primarily for international applicants seeking registration. It's only available to applicants following approval by the Council. Applicants will need to meet certain criteria to be offered the opportunity to sit the examination.

An applicant who's been successful in the exam has been able to demonstrate their foundational knowledge in their scope of practice. They've also demonstrated an understanding and application of professional health practitioner practice, communication, and collaboration within an Aotearoa New Zealand practice context.

An examination committee oversees the exam to ensure that it's valid, robust and reflects current good practice here.

To provide additional assurance that the exam is meeting expectations we surveyed previous applicants who have successfully sat it, and practitioners who've worked alongside these newly registered successful applicants.

Feedback from this survey has been analysed and shows that expectations of applicants and supervisors of newly registered practitioners are being met.

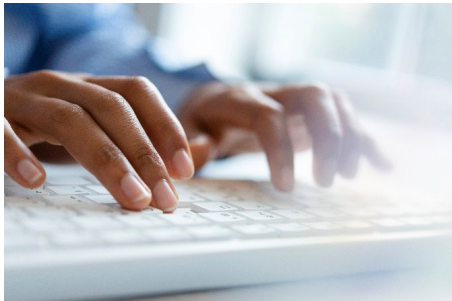
Other feedback regarding the guidance we provide to applicants will be updated on our website. This includes the clarity around the purpose of the practice exam. The quantity of items in the question bank per the various domains have also been evaluated to determine where we need to prioritise our efforts in the creation of more content.

Registered but not active

It's important to keep your contact details up to date with the Council – on the Register.

From time to time, we undertake a process called 'Managing the Register'.

This involves us attempting to contact practitioners who haven't held a practising certificate for a certain period and asking them if they want to remain on the Register.



We use the contact details that are on our Register so it's vital that you keep them up to date. It's also a requirement under the [Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 No 48 \(as at 15 June 2023\), Public Act 140 Health practitioners must notify Registrar of addresses for service – New Zealand Legislation](#).

If we don't get a response the first time, we try to get in touch then we'll write to them again six months later, asking the same questions. If after two attempts, we still don't receive a response then under instruction from the Council, practitioners can be removed from the register.

The process we're required to follow sits under section 144 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act - you can find it here: [Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 No 48 \(as at 15 June 2023\), Public Act 144 Revision of register – New Zealand Legislation](#).

How to get back on

If you've been removed from the Register and want to be put back on, you'll need to follow a process - you'll find all the details, including relevant forms, [here](#).

If you have any queries about this, please don't hesitate to contact us by email msc@medsci.co.nz or phone +64 4 801 6250.

Te Ama Tōtika

Te Ama Tōtika | The Māori Practitioners Advisory Committee - is made up of representatives from different scopes of practice (as well as lay people) from consumers of health care services. They assist with reviewing key standards and codes of conduct. They also provide advice to the Council. Tokowaru nga tangata o Te Ama Tōtika. Ko rātou ngā māngai o nga momo hōkaitanga katoa (me nga tangata reimana hoki) mai i nga kirtaki o nga ratonga hauora, hei awhina i te arotake i ngā paerewa matua me nga tikanga whakahaere. He kaitohutohu hoki ratou ki te Kauniher.

For more about the Committee and its members view information on the website [here](#).

Māori practitioners hui

On 26 February 2025, The Council and Te Ama Tōtika hosted an inaugural Māori practitioners' hui in Tāmaki Makaurau. After hearing about what the Medical Sciences Council does, and how Te Ama Tōtika was formed and what it does for the Council, participants were treated to a presentation by Dayna Samuel who spoke about her masters thesis: From warfare to wellbeing – reimagining the narrative of pre-colonial phlebotomy/bloodletting in Aotearoa. After lunch, practitioners shared stories and lived experiences of being a Māori practitioner and discussed how to attract more Māori into the professions. Feedback received on the gathering was very positive and we hope to hold further hui in the future.

Call for expressions of interest

We currently have two vacancies for this rōpū and are keen to hear from anyone who would be interested in joining. We're specifically looking for an anaesthetic technician, and a pre-analytical technician. The contracts are for three years.

If you're interested or you know someone that might be, and want to know more, please get in touch by emailing msc@medsci.co.nz

Changes to the Council

Following the recent Council meeting, new Chairs and Deputies have been appointed: **Ruth Beeston** was appointed as the Chair - **Dr Nicola Swain** was appointed as the Deputy Chair.

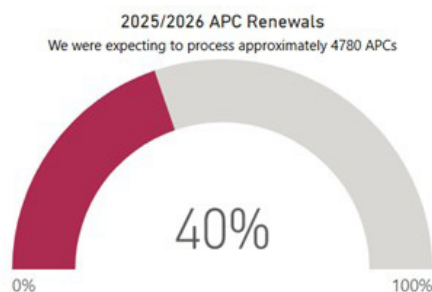
You can read their bios, and those of the other members, on the website [here](#).

It's APC time - have you applied?

It's that time of the year when we remind registered practitioners to apply for their annual practising certificate (APC) – the one they need to work in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The application period runs from 14 February to 31 March and the process includes, not only the applications, but also the fees. It's a busy time for staff doing the processing so we've provided a good amount of FAQs on the website [here](#). The list covers, amongst other things -

- **Why you need an APC – it's a legal requirement but it's also key to how we regulate and monitor practitioners in the professions of medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology – making sure they are competent and fit to practise. It also shows to the public that you are a competent and qualified member of the profession in which you practise.**
- The difference between being registered and holding an APC
- How often you need to apply for an APC (**the clue is in the title**)
- How long it takes to 'get' an APC
- What you must do
- How your employer pays your APC fees (**if that's what you've both agreed, and it's been arranged with us**)
- What happens if you don't apply for your APC by 31 March
- Who to contact if you're having trouble resetting your 'my profile' password
- How to find out what the fees are
- What if you're starting work before 1 April and don't have an APC (**you can't start work without an APC so you really need to read this FAQ asap**)
- What to do if you're on leave
- Etc.



Less than 13 working days to go!

Also, did you know...

You can have two scopes of practise within your profession, but you're only required to pay one APC fee. You will,

however, need to demonstrate competence for both scopes when completing recertification requirements (view the Continuing Professional Development policy about this [here](#)).

Also, when somebody searches you on the register all the scopes you practice in will show.

AT SOP review outcomes

We've done the review – consulted – held webinars to discuss the outcomes, published that information on the website (including updated FAQs) and gazetted changes – some coming into effect right away and others coming into effect on 1 April 2025. You can find all this information on the website under: [Anaesthetic Technician Scope of Practice review \(including supervision policy and competence standards\), 23 January 2025](#).

The review represents several years of work by the Council, with input from practitioners and stakeholders alike. It's an evolving practice – hence the need for reviews. Information on the website includes a list of those included in discussions, links to the consultations that happened in 2024, standards and policies that have now been published and the consultation outcomes. This notice comes into effect on 1 April 2025. We've updated the FAQs so have a look to see what's different: [Scope of practice and competence standards, 23 January 2025 AND AT SOP FAQs competence strds post webinar](#)

This policy ensures new practitioners are appropriately supported when beginning practice – a series of resource have been developed to provide support in understanding expectations. This policy came into effect in January 2025 (it applies to new graduates): [New graduate recertification \(supervision\) policy, 23 January 2025 AND AT SOP FAQs supervision post webinar](#)

If you have any queries about any of this, please contact us at msc@medsci.co.nz

Te Awa Tārai - career development guide

Allied Health | Hauora Haumi developed a career guide for professionals, educators, industries and organisations – it includes information about improving access to the broader range of health services designed around people's needs. You can view it on their website [Te Awa Tārai – A career development guide for Allied Health - Hauora Haumi | Ministry of Health NZ](#)