

Diploma in Expert Practice in Histological Dissection (DEP)

Memorandum of Understanding between the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) UK and the New Zealand Institute of Medical Laboratory Science (NZIMLS)



Background

For a number of years Histology dissection has been performed in New Zealand medical laboratories by a diverse workforce ranging from Anatomical Pathologists, Registrars, Medical Laboratory Scientists and Technicians, and Pathology Assistants.

The training has been varied and standards and competencies developed by the medical laboratories themselves to suit their particular requirements. In 2010 and 2014 two dedicated dissection workshops were offered by LabPLUS, ADHB with United Kingdom expert scientists, Gordon McNair and Carol Turnbull presenting and running the theoretical and practical programmes.

During this time, approaches had been made to the three NZ institutions offering the Medical Laboratory Science degree to develop a local post-graduate qualification in Histology dissection. However it was not considered feasible for such a specialist subject.

The Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS), the UK professional body equivalent of the NZIMLS did offer a Diploma of Expert Practice in Histological Dissection, but only to their UK based membership.

Contact was made with the IBMS by the NZIMLS regarding access to the IBMS qualification for suitably qualified NZIMLS members registered as Medical Laboratory Scientists with the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand.

Separate meetings were held with IBMS Councilors Allan Wilson and Gordon McNair while visiting New Zealand to determine and agree on what criteria access would be granted to NZ scientists to the IBMS examination. It was with the support of Allan and Gordon that the IBMS Council has now agreed for NZ based scientists to enter this Diploma programme extramurally on the following terms and conditions.

Candidate Criteria

1. Be a Member of the Institute of Biomedical Science. Application will be supported by the NZIMLS.
2. Be a NZ registered Medical Laboratory Scientist with a current annual practising certificate.
3. Have a Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science Degree or equivalent.
4. Have five years' post-graduation experience in Histology.
5. Have the NZIMLS approval for their application.
6. Have the documented support of their laboratory manager, medical head of department and a named Consultant Pathologist mentor.
7. Have at least two years current practical experience in the dissection of histological specimens.

Candidate Criteria to sit the final examination

1. Be a member of the Institute of Biomedical Science.
2. Satisfactory completion of the IBMS / RCPATH training logbook.
3. A portfolio of evidence approved by the IBMS / RCPATH Conjoint Examination Board.

Roles and Responsibilities

The NZIMLS agrees to:

1. Ensure all candidates are suitably experienced and qualified and to maintain a record of the check for inspection if required.
2. Ensure all candidates complete an IBMS membership application form and return it to the IBMS along with a copy of current annual practicing certificate and Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science Degree (or equivalent) certificate.
3. Ensure all candidates have the signed support of their laboratory manager, medical head of department and a named Consultant Pathologist mentor.
4. Take responsibility for the portfolio submission.
5. Provide a suitable venue and host for the examination.
6. Provide an appropriate member of the NZIMLS for liaison in respect of examination organisation and invigilation.
7. Ensure adherence to IBMS standards of security and confidentiality of papers.
8. Ensure that at least one of the invigilators of the examination will be someone who has no vested interest in the outcome of the results.
9. Oversee the copying of the completed written papers, and to ensure that a copy is retained on file in New Zealand before they are physically sent to the IBMS head office in the UK, and to do this within the time frame stipulated by the IBMS.

The IBMS agrees to:

1. Admit to IBMS Membership suitably qualified and endorsed members of the NZIMLS.
2. Communicate clearly deadlines for portfolio submission and payment for examination fees.
3. Assess the submitted portfolios and respond within the same period as set for UK based candidates.
4. Send the examination papers to a single, key point of contact within the NZIMLS.
5. Undertake the marking of the completed exam papers and respond within the same period as set for UK candidates.
6. Provide diplomas to successful candidates.
7. Provide written feedback to unsuccessful candidates.

The above criteria, roles and responsibilities were the basis of the MoU signed in December 2015 by Nick Kirk, President of the IBMS and myself as President of the NZIMLS.

It is for two years initially and the "pilot" for further development and partnership between our respective organisations and for the ultimate benefit of our membership and medical laboratory science in general, especially for those wishing to advance to further qualifications.

Entry to the DEP in Histological Dissection for NZIMLS members is open from January 2016 and application forms will be available shortly.

In the meantime for those interested in applying for entry, the criteria is clearly outlined above and expressions of interest can be sent to the NZIMLS, PO Box 505, Rangiora 7440 or email to sharon@nzimls.org.nz

Ross Hewett
President, NZIMLS
January 2016.