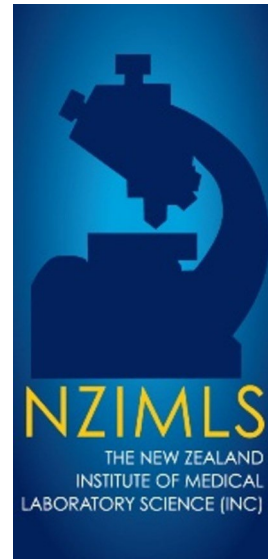


Guidance and Code of Conduct for Supervisors and Candidates for Fellowship and QMLT Training



General comment

Laboratories are complex environments and to make them work efficiently there are everyday considerations to ensure a good work environment and respect for colleagues. Ultimately the protection of the health and safety of the public is the responsibility of all laboratory workers and while there are protocols, regulations and a law to ensure there should be no harm, many aspects of laboratory work rely on individual work practice and integrity. The “Guidance” notes in this document will help the individual identify their responsibilities in the work place as either Supervisor or candidate.

For the qualifications provided by the NZIMLS (Fellowship and QMLT) it is advisable for the candidates to have supervision during their preparation. The candidate support is not primarily for those in trouble, rather it is to provide an integral part of professional and technical training within the laboratory environment. This can be achieved in a number of ways.

Types of candidate support

- Helping with academic difficulties
- Study skills advice
- Provide feedback on technical work and the development of the thesis or Practical Assessment
- Advice on professional and ethical approaches to the work
- Mentor for personal problems
- Peer support programme with a more senior scientist or pathologist

What does a supervisor need to know?

Supervisors have the responsibility to provide ongoing support, advice and training facilities. It is expected that a supervisor is well trained, knowledgeable and skilled in the practice of the profession. This would include:

- Being familiar with the discipline area
- Being familiar with the relevant NZIMLS regulations
- Knowing who the best people to contact for special discipline areas
- Providing advice and guidance
- Understanding of professional practice

Responsibilities of a supervisor

- Mentoring on Goals and Objectives
- Organising supervisory meetings
- Supervising professional performance training, monitoring and assessment of performance
- Ensure safe and competent practice
- Identifying areas of practice requiring remediation
- Providing proof reading facilities for drafts of the thesis (where applicable) and written material
- Ensuring that the appropriate authorisation has been obtained from the employer
- Ensuring that appropriate ethical approval is obtained prior to the any research
- Ensuring the candidate meets the requirements for the awarding of Fellowship or QMLT
- Providing the candidate with an avenue to gain exposure to any requirements not provided in the immediate work area

External advice

It is permissible to seek external advice relating to the candidates Fellowship research or QMLT training.

Where supervision may go wrong

In general, the training and supervision of Fellowship and QMLT candidates is the responsibility of the host laboratory, however from time-to-time issues arising from supervision may arise. The points provided below are some of the most frequently identified issues relating to when supervision goes wrong.

- Supervisor may be too busy to be effective in their role
- Poor feedback to the candidate(s)
- Lack of commitment or interest in training
- Tension or conflict between the Supervisor and the candidate(s)
- Poor communication and disagreements about training
- Unrealistic expectations either for the candidate or the candidate for the supervisor
- Lack of respect for the candidate or the qualification process
- Not being up-to-date with training requirements
- Lacking experience in the supervision processes
- Personality clashes

Resolution of Supervision issues

A candidate may consider that the supervision or supervisor for the Fellowship or QMLT qualification is not providing sufficient or adequate supervision and may well have concerns about meeting examination requirements. Prior to taking on the role as a supervisor, be aware of the time commitment and establish a set time with candidate(s) to review their work and for comments relating to supervision. During this initial contact, the candidate(s) should be provided with the name of a person who will act as a mentor (or go-to-person) if they have concerns relating to their supervision. This process can often resolve issues that may arise. If the initial supervisor cannot provide adequate supervision, they should enable the candidate(s) to find an appropriate supervisor. In general, if there needs to be resolution with a supervisor some broad rules can be used.

- Talk to a mentor or other senior person about the issue(s)
- Focus on the issues
- Listen carefully to resolve the issues(s)
- Identify key areas relating to supervision
- Prioritise resolving the issue(s)
- Decide the best option for resolution
- Make a decision and act

It is important to consider that the best option may well be a new supervisor for the Fellowship or QMLT candidate(s), and that the role has to be relinquished, but the experience can be built on and for future supervision.

Conflict resolution

Conflicts or disagreements can occur in the workplace and may often arise with people having different ways of doing a task or having a different perspective and ideas. These differences may become a problem in the workplace and inhibit the ability to work together as a member of the team may feel unfairly treated. Conflict resolution is a means to find options or ways of resolving any problems or difficulties for all those involved. It is important that all individuals follow the rules and ethical practices of their workplace and that there is no compromise on these. Many workplaces have conflict resolution processes and these should be used if necessary. Important considerations are:

- understanding the issue or problem(s) from both parties
- avoid direct conflict or defensiveness, focus on the core issue(s)
- find a 'middle road' on the core issue(s)

- keep an open mind and do not seem to be favouring either party, assume there are good intentions
- look for a solution that works for both parties

If the issue cannot be resolved, is serious or is the basis of a formal complaint then consider mediation and consult on the appropriate pathway for the organization.

Code of Ethics

The New Zealand Institute of Medical Laboratory Science (Inc.) has published a “Code of Ethics and Rule Book” and it is advised that all individuals should be familiar with this document. It can be located on the NZIMLS website in the “Member Zone”.

Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand

The Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand is established under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (2003) and is usually referred to as the HPCA Act. It is the body responsible for registration of all laboratory workers in medical laboratory science as well as monitoring individual Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes. An important document is the “Competence Standards for Medical Laboratory Science Practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand (revised February 2018). This can be viewed and downloaded on their website (www.msccouncil.org.nz) as well as other information.

Relevant Legislation and Regulations

Below are listed are the relevant legislation, professional standards for guidance. The latest versions are recommended. This is not an exhaustive list.

Legislation

- Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (2003)
- Privacy Act (1993)
- Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HASNO) Act (2017)
- Dangerous Good Act (2005) Amendments (2010 and 2011)
- Health and Disability Services – Safety Act (2001)
- Health and Safety at Work Act (2015)
- Health and Safety in Employment Act (2015)
- Health and Safety in Employment Amendment Act (2017)
- Human Tissues Act (2008)
- www.legislation.govt.nz Up-to-date legislation can be located at this website

Codes and Standards

- Health Information Privacy Code (1994) revised (2008)
- Competence Standards for Medical Laboratory Science Practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand (Revised February 2018)
- Statement of Cultural Competence (2007) www.msccouncil.org.nz
- Code of Ethics of the New Zealand Institute of Medical Laboratory Science www.nzimls.org.nz
- *ISO 15189:2012 Medical laboratories – Requirements for quality and competence*
- *AS/NZS 2243 Safety in laboratories*
- *Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI) guidelines*
- IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations Manual 2016 edition
- Laboratory Safety Principles and Practices
Fleming D.O., Richardson I.H., Tulis I.1, Vesley D.
American Society Microbiology Washington DC.
- Diagnostic Samples: From the Patient to the Laboratory: The Impact of Pre-analytical Variables on the Quality of Laboratory Results
Guder W.G, Narayansan S, Wisser H, Zawta B
Wiley-Blackwell
- Land Transport Rule Dangerous Goods 2005 <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/rules/dangerous-goods-2005/>
- NZS 8142 2008 Infection Control
- NZS 4304 2002 Management of Healthcare Waste
- NZS 5433 Transport of Dangerous Goods on Land
- WHO Five Moments of Hand Hygiene
- IATA Infectious Substances Guidelines Manual 2015 edition