A word of welcome with the second newsletter of the Professional Board of Medical Technology. It gives me great pleasure to report and highlight the progress and successes of this Board during the year under review. This clearly reflects the commitment of this Board to effectively achieve and deliver on the mandates as set in our Strategic Goals and Objectives for the term of this Board.

We have achieved some of our objectives and much of the others are in progress.

Committee of Preliminary Inquiry
In terms of the mandate the Committee of Preliminary Inquiry was authorized within the current policy parameters as determined by the Board, to deal with all matters relating to Preliminary inquiries regarding complaints and fines.

This Committee has received a few cases recently and is meeting with the representatives of the Legal department for discussion on these professional conduct matters.

Education
In order to develop and maintain a professional practice framework appropriate for the South African context and benchmarked against best practices, a career ladder was developed from the Laboratory Assistant qualification to the Bachelor of Health Science, Medical Laboratory Science. This new qualification has already been implemented at Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Based on the recommendations of the Education Committee in November 2011 as well as input received from the General Manager: Professional Boards, the following matters were considered and are in progress:

- The naming of the new qualification be amended to Bachelor of Health Science, Medical Laboratory Science (BHSc Medical Laboratory Science)
- Recommendations to the Council that a new Register for Medical Laboratory Scientists be established, with a view to accommodate professionals qualifying with the new qualification, BHSc Medical Laboratory Science. The Legal Department is in the process of compiling draft regulations for this Register.

- The different options/cases for the articulation process from the National Diploma to BHSc Medical Laboratory Science qualification was presented by Prof Johan Esterhuyse during the Laboratory Medicine Congress in September 2011.

To maintain, enhance and monitor standards of education and training, the guidelines for the evaluation of clinical facilities were revised. To build and expand capacity for the evaluation of laboratories, training sessions were co-ordinated and implemented in the different regions. These training sessions were facilitated by current and previous Board Members.

This Board now has a database of trained evaluators. A schedule for the evaluation of those clinical laboratories that have applied for training status is in the process of being compiled, many of which will be completed in this financial year. A certificate of compliance, reflecting training status and designated category/ies will be awarded to those laboratories who have been granted their training status.

This certificate will be a requirement when the Intern Medical Technologist and Trainee Medical Technician applies to write the Board Examination.

A five year plan/roster for the evaluation of higher education institutions is in progress.

Cape Peninsula University of Technology
(CPUT) has been evaluated. Evaluations for Central UOT and Vaal UOT have been identified for the latter part of this year, and evaluators have been identified.

A memorandum of Understanding between the Board of Medical Technology and SMLTSA is in place. Board Examination risks and a review of examination processes were revisited.

The Board is effectively playing its monitoring and regulatory role by ensuring effective disciplinary action on transgressions.

To protect the Scope of the Profession and to address the overlap of scopes, a task team has been established. The Committee for Medical Science, after consultation with various stakeholders, has redefined their scope. The scope was approved by their Committee and submitted to the Professional Board to identify the possible overlap with the Scope of Medical Technologists. The Task Team is scheduled to meet with members and Chair of the Scientists Board.

The Board was involved in meetings with the Department of Health, Pathology Task Team for the formulation of principles for the management of Pathology practices. The Board provided input towards the development of the National Policy on Mid-level healthcare workers.

**CPD**

The ethical practice of the health professions requires consistent and ongoing commitment from all healthcare practitioners concerned to lifelong learning to update and develop their knowledge, skills and ethical attitudes that underpin competent practice.

Following the conducting of randomly selected audits on practitioners registered with the Board of Medical Technology since 2010, the audit reports were considered by the Board. The Board is seriously concerned with the large number of professionals found to be non-compliant with the CPD requirements due to various factors.

The Board appeals to all practitioners to contribute to CPD compliance and manage their non-compliance.

The Board has now implemented serious interventions to address this non-compliance either by suspension of the practitioners or to work under supervision, which ever applies to the practitioner. This obviously has serious implications for the practitioner as well as for the employer.

**Communication**

To improve our relations with the various stakeholders, the Board has implemented effective strategies including updating the Board’s website/ printing of newsletter & bulletin and meetings with practitioners. This also ensures transparency and informs stakeholders on matters of importance with a pro-active approach.

**Budget**

The Board ensures financial stability by implementing effective budgeting in line with strategic objectives. The Board is financially well managed with no unauthorised expenditure and overspending.

**New registers**

The new Registers for the registration of Medical Technicians in the Category Virology; Mycobacteriology and Immunology has been approved. Practitioners who have passed the board examination in these categories are encouraged to register.

**Tariff Committee**

The regulations provided for the functions of Council as a regulator and not an interest group and therefore had to provide a tariff framework. It was agreed that the Board as a regulatory body would assume responsibility for the involvement in the setting of tariffs for professional services. The tariff committee is authorized to prepare a draft schedule of tariffs for professional services to be published by the Board.

A word of appreciation is extended to all the dedicated professionals practicing within the ethical and professional framework and ensuring service excellence to our clients!

Roshini Bridgemohan
Chairperson
This professional degree is up and running at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and has to date successfully attracted a high calibre of students into the 2011 and 2012 intake. The other universities are still in the process of obtaining permission to offer this degree.

The Professional Board for Medical Technology has already put the wheels in motion in order to create a new Register for those qualifying with this degree at the end of 2014.

The question that arises is: how do all the practitioners who are already - and will be qualified and Board registered as Medical Technologists fit into this new register: “Medical Laboratory Scientist”?

The following articulation process was, after consultation with all the role players in the profession, proposed by Professor Johan Esterhuyse of CPUT. It was submitted to the Education Committee of the Professional Board where it was approved and further ratified by the Board in 2012.

All qualified and Board registered Medical Technologists (MT) will be able to apply for transfer to the Medical Laboratory Scientist (MLS) Register. Each professional will be assessed on an individual basis by populating a matrix with information regarding their academic qualifications, work experience and additional courses undertaken. The matrix will be assessed by a University of Technology (UOT), at this stage only CPUT, for articulation requirements. Any parameters that are missing in the matrix will have to be fulfilled by the applicant in order to gain transfer from the MT Register to the MLS register.

**Articulation from MT to MLS requirements**

The following categories encompass practitioners in the field to date:

- **Board registered Medical Technologist with a B-TECH degree**
  - All parameters in the matrix will be fulfilled except a mini research project will have to be undertaken and scientifically reported. Those universities that currently require their students to do a research project for the B. Tech. degree will need to make a submission to the Board in order to ensure that their requirements for the project meet the articulation standard.
  
  Once this parameter is fulfilled the applicant may apply for transfer to the MLS Register.

- **Board registered Medical Technologist with a National Diploma (ND) Biomedical Technology**
  - The matrix will indicate that the applicant must obtain a B. Tech. degree (with a mini research project). In view of this it is very important that all Medical Technologists in this category embark on obtaining their B. Tech. degree as soon as possible because it is not known how long the B. Tech. in our field will be available.

- **Board registered Medical Technologist with a Master’s or Doctoral degree (in a Medical Technology related field)**
  - All parameters in the matrix will be fulfilled; therefore these applicants may apply for immediate transfer to the MLS register.

- **Medical Scientists**
  - Medical Scientists will have to make application to a university that offers the BHSc: MLS for articulation. The curriculum they followed will be considered against the said matrix with consideration, particularly of the specialist subjects. Any subjects not fulfilled will have to be undertaken at the university in addition to the required internship, research project and Board examination. HPCSA, MTPB registration for the right to practice will be required.

These will populate the matrix and give an indication for which subjects RPL/CAT can be offered.

**Board registered Medical Technologist with a B-TECH degree**

- worked for at least two years in a Molecular Biology laboratory;
- undertaken special courses/workshops in Molecular Biology;
- undertaken Laboratory Management courses/workshops;
- successfully managed a laboratory for two years;
- undertaken research methodology courses/workshops;
- undertaken a mini research project for publication and/or presentation at a national or international congress.

Medical Scientists

Medical Scientists will have to make application to a university that offers the BHSc: MLS for articulation. The curriculum they followed will be considered against the said matrix with consideration, particularly of the specialist subjects. Any subjects not fulfilled will have to be undertaken at the university in addition to the required internship, research project and Board examination. HPCSA, MTPB registration for the right to practice will be required.
An automated instrument is a medical laboratory instrument designed to measure different chemicals and other characteristics in a number of biological samples quickly, and with minimal human assistance.

These measured properties of blood and other fluids may be useful in the diagnosis of disease.

At a recent meeting the Board resolved that the following rulings be adopted, namely that:

- Medical Technicians could in exceptional cases sign-off abnormal results or reports on a once-off basis, in the field that they had been trained and registered, provided that the test results were verified by a qualified Medical Technologist or Pathologist, the following day, who would assume responsibility for the results;
- A Medical Technologist or Medical Technician could only sign-off test results in his/her field of training and registration;

It was further resolved that consultations be conducted with the Medical and Dental Professional Board on the use of automated instruments for the issuing of test results and the impact on the current practices in the fields of medical technology and pathology.

THE USE OF AUTOMATED INSTRUMENTS IN THE FIELD OF MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY

By Emmanuel Chanza

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IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYERS ENSURING PRACTITIONERS IS CPD COMPLIANT

Modern healthcare is a complex dynamic system. Partnerships are created between disciplines, professions, agencies, organisations, patients and with the public. Communication and co-operation are important for improving healthcare for patients. Thus CPD activities take into account the obtaining environment within which medicine is practiced.

Many practitioners are non-compliant. In many instances the reason given for non-compliance, is that the employer does not afford them the time to attend CPD activities.

The Board urges employers to ensure that they enable their staff to attend CPD activities by allowing them time off for that and by possibly even presenting CPD accredited activities for their staff members.

Employers must remember that the ultimate purpose of CPD is to contribute to high-quality patient care and a healthier society.

The responsibility of CPD compliance lies with the practitioners, but, employers should make CPD activities more accessible to practitioners to enable them to be compliant.
The purpose of CPD is to help improve the quality of care provided to the public. It is essential that healthcare professionals remain competent and update their knowledge throughout their working years.

The Council has a statutory duty to promote high standards for all healthcare professionals. It places a responsibility on all healthcare professionals to comply with the requirements for CPD.

Random audits have been conducted since January 2009. From January 2009 to 31 March 2012 a total of 3,254 practitioners were audited. Of the 3,254 practitioners audited 2,136 (66%) submitted their portfolios. 1,110 (34%) did not submit their portfolios.

Of the 3,254 practitioners who were audited, a very low percentage of 22.3% were compliant and 77.6% were non-compliant. Of the non-compliant practitioners 57.1% did not respond to the audit call.

After several audits; it is evident that practitioners are non-compliant for the following reasons:

- Practitioners do not submit portfolios when randomly selected;
- The ethical component is non-compliant;
- Contact details are not updated with the Council;
- To a lesser extent practitioners are non-compliant with both the clinical and ethical component;
- Practitioners are not working or are working in a rural area.

The following suggestions are offered to assist practitioners in becoming compliant:

- Attend activities that are accredited for CPD purposes. If you are attending activities that are not approved, submit it to the Accreditors of the Board for approval;
- Keep your contact details and your postal address updated at the HPCSA;
- Employers should have all their training approved by an Accreditor;
- Providers are encouraged to make more electronic activities/journals available;
- Postgraduate studies can be undertaken (personal and professional growth);
- Learning portfolio could be attended to (guidelines on website);
- Establish small groups/journal clubs/discussion groups that meet every month or bi-weekly to discuss topics of interest in your specific scope of practice (has to be approved by the Accreditor), which could ensure that if you attend all those meetings you may be compliant with the CPD requirements every year at no or very minimal cost;
- Employers should afford employees time off to attend CPD activities;
- More activities for ethics should be made available;
- Send an email to the CPD Section to find out if you were audited (cpd@hpcsa.co.za).

For contact details of the Accreditors please visit the HPCSA website, www.hpcsa.co.za
SUPERVISION AND LIABILITY OF INTERNS AND STUDENTS

By Jenny Hind

A decision was taken that the current Professional Board for Medical Technology will be proactive rather than reactive. In order to fulfil this mandate, all registered teaching laboratories and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) offering Biomedical Technology will undergo an audit on a five-yearly schedule in order to evaluate whether the facility fulfils the minimum standards set by the Board.

Those laboratories that have been audited and gained accreditation for training must ensure that they submit an annual report to the Board, with special mention in this report regarding changes in staff, expansion of diagnostic tests, additions and removal of equipment and any other facilities that impact on training. Higher Education Institutions are required to submit an annual report regardless of whether they have been evaluated or not. All reports must be submitted on or before the last working day of December each year.

All practitioners are requested to report irregularities. The Board reminds practitioners that if you are aware of any information regarding infringements, malpractices and transgressions and do not report them, you are, in fact, personally in contravention of the Health Professions Act, Gazette 26497, Regulation Gazette 7991, 2 July 2004.

Laboratories are to ensure that staff record files are up to date with all copies of Diplomas, Degrees, HPCSA registration documents and SMLTSA Board Examination Certificates. Although it is only a requirement for all these documents to be certified by a notary public for Board registration purposes, it is suggested that such documents for Staff files follow the same procedure. This will assist the Board in eliminating possible fraud. All letters of appointment, which must state the practitioner’s job profile, of the relevant posts of the employees must be in the staff files.

PLEASE NOTE:
- A trainee Medical Technologist must be appointed as such in the relevant category;
- A trainee Technician must be appointed as such in the relevant category;
- A trainee Laboratory Assistant must be appointed as such in the relevant category.

Evidence of registration of the Student/Intern/Trainee in the relevant category and intended qualification with the Professional Board for Medical Technology must be in the staff member’s file.

Example: A staff member appointed as a Data Capturer may not apply to the SMLTSA to write a Laboratory Assistant or Technician examination. This means that the staff member has been undertaking laboratory tasks out of scope of their employment agreement. This is a form of exploitation and is illegal. In this instance the employer has to re-appoint the person into the relevant post and register as such with the Board. The employee is then required to fulfil the mandatory training time in the laboratory AFTER being employed into the relevant post with Board registration in the relevant category for a specific qualification.

A further example:
The ‘Scope of Practice’ for Laboratory Assistants is only pre-analytical. It is not mandatory that a laboratory has Board accreditation for training of Laboratory Assistants. Such candidates may not write the Technician’s Board examination unless they have been re-appointed into a Student Technician post and registered with the Board as such. The required training period must then be completed in a Board accredited training laboratory AFTER being employed into the relevant post.

Employers, training officers and Laboratory Supervisors in Training laboratories are expected to familiarise themselves with all HPCSA and SMLTSA rules, regulations and requirements and are also expected to fulfil specific responsibilities as a training facility. All accredited facilities commit to this in writing when obtaining HPCSA accreditation.

Clarification:
Medical Technologists who are qualified and registered in their relevant category with the Board may train or prepare Medical Technologist interns, Student Technicians and Laboratory Assistants for the Board examination in that category. However, a Board registered Medical Technician who has many years of technical experience and is the most competent within their scope of practice may teach a Medical Technologist intern or Medical Technician student bench work only in their registered category. All other competencies for preparation for the Board examination for Medical Technologists, such as transfer of theoretical knowledge, interpretation of case studies, calculations, assessments and results must be taught by a Medical Technologist registered in the relevant category. Only a Medical Technologist may assess or award competency.

Cross category/discipline training in general areas of syllabi, such as common equipment, is acceptable provided the Medical Technologist, who is training, is acting within their scope of practice – i.e. All aspects required for the training is covered within the category they are Board registered in and are therefore deemed competent. Training involving category/discipline specific topics and areas must be offered by a Medical Technologist whose scope of practice allows it.

Under no circumstances may a Medical Scientist train, assess or award competency for Medical Technologists or Medical Technicians for the Board examination and Professional Board registration.

NB: Students must only undergo training at accredited clinical facilities

Consult HPCSA website for a list of accredited facilities
Medical Technologists analyse samples of body fluids and cells. They study the specimens for bacteria and parasites or determine what chemicals they may contain. Medical Technologists also perform blood matches for patients who require transfusions and analyses the drug levels in a patient’s blood to determine how he is reacting to treatment.

**Performance of Professional Acts by Medical Technologists**

A Medical Technologist:
- Shall confine himself or herself to practicing in the specific discipline of medical technology in which he or she was educated, trained and registered;
- Shall not conduct a Private practice without obtaining:
  - Post registration experience of at least two years;
  - Prior written approval from the Board;
- shall, if he or she does not comply with the above requirements be expected to work under the direction of a Medical Practitioner or a Medical Technologist registered in the relevant discipline.

**Performance of Professional Acts by Medical Technicians**

A Medical Technician:
- Shall confine himself or herself to practicing in the specific discipline of medical technology in which he or she was educated, trained and registered;
- Shall perform professional acts only under the supervision of a medical Practitioner or medical Technologist who is registered in the relevant discipline;
- Shall not conduct a private practice.

**Performance of Professional Acts by Intern Medical Technologist**

An Intern Medical Technologist:
- Shall perform professional acts only under the supervision of a practitioner who is registered in the relevant discipline;
- Shall limit the acts referred to act directly related to his or her education and training as part of the formal internship in his or her discipline of study;
- Shall not conduct a private practice;
- If he or she has completed his or her internship, shall not perform any professional acts until he or she has satisfied all the academic requirements for registration as a Medical Technologist and has been registered as such.

**Performance of professional acts by a student in medical technology**

A student in Medical Technology:
- Shall perform professional acts only under the supervision of a practitioner who is registered in the relevant discipline; and
- Shall limit the acts referred to acts directly to his or her education and training in his or her discipline of study.

**Performance of professional acts by a Laboratory Assistant**

A Laboratory Assistant:
- Shall confine himself or herself to performing acts in the specific discipline of medical technology in which he or she is educated, trained and registered;
- Shall perform professional acts only under the supervision of a Medical Practitioner or Medical Technologist who is registered in the relevant discipline; and
- Shall not conduct a private practice.
According to the Health Professions Act, a practitioner registered with the HPCSA, may only perform acts in the category in which he/she is registered in.

In terms of performing professional acts, the Board discerns between the Scope of a Profession (applicable to a profession as a whole) and the Scope of Practice (applicable to a practitioner). The Scope of the two professions are very similar, i.e. acts pertaining to the various professions without being specific. The Scope of Profession is used mainly to prosecute unregistered persons practicing illegally within the scope of a particular profession.

The Scope of Practice of a particular practitioner is determined by his/her training and experience. The HPCSA’s “Ethical rules” states that a practitioner may only perform professional acts for which he/she has been adequately trained and in which he/she is sufficiently experienced.

The role of the HPCSA is to guide the professions and to protect the public. The HPCSA deems a person to be competent:

- If he/she has fulfilled all the requirements to obtain a qualification in the specific discipline;
- Has trained for the prescribed period in an accredited training laboratory;
- Has passed a Board examination.

Registered in that specific discipline or category
This applies to Medical Technologists (MT) as well as Medical Scientists (MS).

The Scope of Practice of a Medical Technologist is therefore discipline specific, the student is trained for the prescribed length of time at an accredited training facility, has passed the National Board Examination in a specific discipline and is registered with the HPCSA in that specific discipline.

The Scope of Practice is guided by the applicable syllabus. Transgression of scope with the industry should therefore be easily traced during audits performed by the HPCSA or during SANAS (South African National Accreditation System) accreditation audits.

The Scope of Profession of Medical Scientists includes the professions of Medical Biological Scientists, Genetic Counselors and Medical Physicists as Medical Scientists are currently registered in the following disciplines:

- Human Genetics;
- Biological Sciences;
- Medical Physics;
- Reproductive Biology.

Training of Medical Scientists include: student registration to acquire a BSc qualification; a Masters qualification which involves a research generic component but which is not discipline specific; an exit examination with a Pathologist at their specific tertiary institution which is portfolio-based with evidence of competency. No National Examination currently exists, however the Medical Science Committee is working towards implementing this.

Medical Scientists historically are involved primarily in research and development but do perform diagnostic tests for purposes of research and development which are often linked to clinical trials. New tests are also developed.

It is in this area, where in recent years, an overlap between the Scopes of practice of Medical Technologists and Medical Scientists are noted. As stated above, Medical Technologists are specifically trained in 13 different disciplines which are diagnostically based whereas Medical Scientists are mostly broad-based trained.
The Medical Scientist’s Revised Scope of Profession does state however:

“Any person who wishes to perform any of the acts prescribed in Regulation two (2) of the Scope shall comply in the prescribed manner to the Board for registration as a Medical Scientist in a relevant discipline to which the Act pertains and submit proof of having complied with the prescribed requirements for such registration.” An assessment of prior learning to also form part of the assessment when approving registration was agreed upon.

Main differences between Scopes of Practice are that:

- Not registered with the Board in specific disciplines;
- Not required to register with the HPCSA if doing research. Therefore the acts they are performing are not covered by the public protection of the HPCSA. If these individuals move to work in a diagnostic setting, the registration criteria shall apply.

Hence, the current status quo is such:

The Medical Technology Board, under the auspices of a Task Team consisting of members of the MT Board and the Chairperson of the Medical Scientists Committee agree that there is currently an overlap of Scope of Practice between Medical Technologist and Medical Scientist.

- To better define this issue: a scope of practice of Medical Scientists is to be added to the Revised Scope of the Profession to attempt to clarify registration issues;
- A national curriculum for Medical Scientists is to be developed;
- Training institutions will provide the Medical Science Committee with their current approved training programmes for each discipline so that the Committee may develop the National Curriculum from the submitted programmes.

A National exit examination has also been advised by the Medical Science Committee. It has been agreed upon by the task team addressing this issue that under the current status quo, a Medical Technologist may perform diagnostic work and may issue and interpret results based on their training and registration with the HPCSA.

A Medical Scientist primarily performs acts of research and development and if performing routine diagnostic work, they need to undergo 24 months of training at an accredited training facility in that particular discipline and pass the SMLTSA Board Examination in that particular discipline.

It was also agreed upon at a recent meeting of the task team, that due to the acknowledged overlap of some practices, open communication regarding transgression of scope be practiced and that the outstanding issues be addressed as soon as possible as both the Medical Technology and the Medical Biological Scientists are a critical skill which is in scarce supply in our country.

INDEMNITY COVER FOR PRACTITIONERS

By Emmanuel Chanza

Following the introduction of a mandatory indemnity cover for private health establishments in terms of the National Health Act 61 of 2003, the various Professional Boards have urged all practitioners in private/independent practice to comply with the new legislation.

Indemnity cover for practitioners protects both the consumers of healthcare services as well as healthcare practitioners in terms of practitioners’ financial ability to comply with court judgments. It will further compel practitioners to be more mindful of the standards of professional practice and conduct in their daily dealings with their patients.

The public is becoming increasingly aware of their patient and civil rights and some of our practitioners are realising they could face litigation for unprofessional conduct. As a result of the high standards of care our people have become accustomed to, and in an effort to maintain these standards of practice and conduct, the Board will ensure compliance with the provisions of the Act is observed and encourages registered healthcare practitioners to have indemnity cover for their practices.

According to Section 46 of the National Health Act, every private health establishment must maintain insurance cover to indemnify a user for damages that he or she might suffer as a consequence of a wrongful act by any member of its staff.

For practitioners registered to practice their professions in the public sector, the Department of Health is held responsible if one is sued for malpractice. In the case of those in private practice no one but the practitioner is held responsible and in some cases the practitioner’s property may end up being attached by a court of law for damages resulting from malpractice.
REGISTRATION OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (BSc) GRADUATES
AS MEDICAL TECHNOLOGISTS

Bachelor of Science (BSc) graduates were registered with HPCSA under the Professional Board for Medical Technology in terms of the same criteria as foreign qualified applicants as required by Form 176 MT.

In the past, a certain category of BSc graduates were allowed to write the Board examination in a specific discipline without obtaining additional subjects. A number of Medical Technology Laboratories requested the Professional Board for Medical Technology to explore the possibility of employing BSc graduates who complied with the requirements set by the Board in the Medical Technology field, due to a shortage of Medical Technologists in South Africa.

The Education Committee in February 2007 resolved that it be recommended to the Professional Board that:

- BSc graduates be considered for registration as Medical Technologists based on compliance with a two year internship training at an accredited laboratory in their discipline of study and on successfully passing of the Board examination administered by SMLTSA;
- Candidates be registered as student Medical Technologists with the HPCSA for the duration of their internship at an approved training laboratory;
- Each application for registration by a BSc graduate be considered by the Education Committee based on majors; and
- The regulations for the registration of Medical Technologist be amended to provide for this requirement of BSc graduates.

The recommendation of the Education Committee be confirmed namely that:

- BSc graduates could apply for registration as Medical Technologists as per Form 176 MT;
- All applications had to be considered by the Education Committee based on the suitability of their qualifications;
- If approved, the BSc graduates would be required to register for a two-year internship at an approved training laboratory and sit for the Board examination after 18 months of internship. However, registration as a Medical Technologist could only be affected after completion of a period of two years of internship.

The process of articulation can be summarised as follows depending on major subjects:

- Candidates who possess a BSc honours, may apply to the Medical and Dental Board to be registered as an Intern Medical Scientist.
- Candidates with no medically related subjects, and who want to pursue a career as a Medical Technologist, should:
  - Register as a student Medical Technologists at a University of Technology (UOT) and follow the prescribed course, OR
  - Register as a student Medical Technician, follow the in-house course and write the board examination after at least 18 months, then, if they pass, they can then register as a Medical Technician after 24 months. Now they are eligible to do a conversion course to a Medical Technologists on a part-time basis.

NOTE: This actually means that their BSc-degree is of no use to them in this environment, as they are treated the same as a person just leaving school with Grade 12.

- If you have subjects that are relatively similar to those followed by medical technologists you can apply to a UOT to evaluate their degree and then they might have to follow additional subjects to obtain equivalent status to that of the ND in Biomedical Technology. They will therefore have to register as a student Medical Technologist via UOT, after obtaining status they have to complete a year internship in an approved training laboratory and write the Board examination before they can register as a Medical Technologist.

ANNUAL FEES REMINDER

A friendly reminder that 2013/2014 Annual Fees are due by 1 April 2013

BANKING DETAILS
Bank: ABSA
Branch: Arcadia
Branch Code: 3 49 45
Account number: 405 00 33 481 (Annual fees ONLY)

INCLUDE YOUR HPCSA REGISTRATION NUMBER AS REFERENCE TO ENSURE PAYMENT IS ALLOCATED TO YOUR NAME

We thank you for your timely payment.
The Minister of Health has recently promulgated the regulations which gave effect to the establishment of the Registers for Medical Technicians in the categories: Immunology, Mycobacterium (TB) and Virology.

Practitioners who have been successful in the Board examinations in any of these relevant disciplines may now apply for registration. Enquiries and application forms can be obtained from the Professional Board Manager, Emanuel Chanza at the following contact details: Emmanuelc@hpcsa.co.za, 012 338 9339 or Sibusiso Nhlapo, Sibusison@hpcsa.co.za.

The Registrar may register any person as a Medical Technician in any of these three new categories upon submission of authoritative information verifying that the applicant has obtained an approved training course and has passed an examination conducted by the Board in terms of section 15B(1)(b) of the Health Professions Act.

**Establishment of New Registers for Medical Technicians**

Medical Technology involves the analysing and interpreting the results of human tissues using sophisticated instruments and techniques.

Practitioners in the profession work in different medical disciplines and specialise in clinical pathology (chemical pathology, haematology and microbiology), histology, cytology, blood transfusion and more.

The Professional Board of Medical Technology registers cadres at three levels as students and qualified practitioners i.e. Medical Technology (MT and MT Student), Medical Technician (GT and GT Student) and Laboratory Assistant (LA and LA Student).

Universities of Technology offer training for Medical Technology diploma and degree programmes; while Accredited Laboratories offer training for Medical Technicians (Two year training programme) and Laboratory Assistants (One year training programme).

Following the training, cadres are expected to write a Board examination facilitated by the Society for Laboratory Technology of South Africa (SMLTSA), www.smltsa.co.za.

To enter the profession, cadres must register as students by completing Form 53, pay R 147 Registration fee and provide a certified copy of ID.

Once training as a Medical Technician and Laboratory Assistant at an Accredited Training Laboratory has been completed and Board examination has been successfully passed, cadres can register by completing:

- Form 24 MT or 24 LA, Form 25 (intern duty certificate);
- Registration fee of R 465 plus pro-rata fee;
- Certified copy of ID;
- Copy of student registration certificate;
- A Medical Technologist is expected to work a further 12 months as an Intern at an Accredited Laboratory before registering as Independent Practice Medical Technologist;
- Form 24 MT needs to be completed, original diploma/ Degree or notarised copy, or From 23 duly completed;
- Registration fee of R439 plus the pro rata Annual Fee obtained from HPCSA Call Centre;
- A copy of results from SMLTSA, Form 25 duly completed a certified copy of ID and a copy of student registration certificate.

For more information please contact us on 012 338 9301, email: info@hpcsa.co.za or log on to our website, www.hpcsa.co.za.

**Medical Technology Registration Made Easy**

**The Board appoints a new Board Manager**

In terms of the process of capacity building and staff development, Emmanuel Chanza was appointed as Board Manager to the Professional Board for Medical Technology effective from April 2012.

Emmanuel has 12 year’s experience as a Board Manager and has managed a number of Professional Boards including the following:

- Environmental Health Practitioners;
- Dental Therapy and Oral Hygiene;
- Optometry and Dispensing Opticians;
- Emergency Care;
- Optometry and Dispensing Opticians;
- Psychologists.

He is also serving as Board Manager for the Professional Board for Dietetics and Nutrition as well as the Professional Board for Radiography and Clinical Technology.

He is committed to ensuring practitioners and the various Professional Boards are served with courtesy and expediency.

Welcome Emmanuel!
The Laboratory Medicine Congress Committee (LMC) invites all stakeholders in the Medical Technology field to attend the next congress to be held from 28 to 31 July 2013 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre.

The LMC 2013 promises to be a memorable professional and scientific experience, building on the success of the first combined Laboratory Medicine Congress held in Johannesburg in 2011, which attracted 1200 delegates.

The congress incorporates Pathologists, Medical Scientists, Medical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians, as well as all laboratory suppliers, from all fields of Laboratory Medicine, covering all the latest diagnostic and research technology pertaining to hematology, clinical chemistry/biochemistry, medical microbiology, virology, and immunology, pharmacology, forensic medicine, public health and other related Laboratory Medicine fields.

This is an ideal opportunity to share knowledge and gain deeper insight into all aspects of laboratory medicine not only by participating in workshops, attending oral and poster presentations, but also by visiting the trade exhibition where all the latest in technological advances will be displayed as well as an opportunity to network with fellow peers.

This is also an opportunity for the Medical Laboratory Suppliers to participate in the trade exhibition where they will gain exposure current and potential customers from all fields of laboratory medicine under one roof.

We trust that you will be excited as we are about hosting this memorable event in Cape Town and that you will join us in sharing the wonders of Medical Laboratory Science beneath one of the wonders of the world, Table Mountain.

Important dates:

- Registration opens: 15 October 2012
- Abstract submission closes: 28 February 2012
- Early Bird Registration closes: 1 April 2013
- Standard Registration closes: 14 June 2013

COUNCIL APPOINTS A NEW REGISTRAR /CEO

Dr Buyiswa Mjamba-Matshoba took up her new position as Registrar/Chief Executive Officer of the Health Professions Council of South Africa on 2 May 2012.

Dr Mjamba-Matshoba was appointed after a rigorous selection process from across the country which saw applications from leaders in the South African healthcare industry.

Well-known in the medical industry, Dr Mjamba-Matshoba was previously the General Manager/Chief Director of the Eastern Cape Department of Health, a position she served in since 2002. She also held the post of General Manager: Quality Health Care Assurance Systems at the Eastern Cape Department of Health. Before that she was Chief Superintendent at the East London Hospital Complex (which included the Frere and Cecilia Makiwane Hospitals).

This Medical Practitioner, who was born and bred in the Eastern Cape, has come to Pretoria with two key focus areas – to bring around a turnaround in service delivery and to create partnerships between practitioners, the public and the Council.

Her past experiences in the service delivery and quality assurance fields made her the obvious choice to lead the regulator into the future.

“One of my first priorities will be looking at our processes and systems and see how we could better serve our practitioners.” Having been involved in healthcare her entire career, she understand the frustration some practitioners are experiencing and is busy looking at areas that may have been perceived as being slow in the organisation. “We need to make things as effective as possible for our practitioners – that is one of the reasons why the Council was established”, she passionately explains.

President of the HPCSA, Professor Sam Mokgokong, welcomed Dr Mjamba-Matshoba to her new position, and said it was a dawn of a new era. “We are ecstatic at being able to secure someone like Dr Mjamba-Matshoba to lead the HPCSA into the future,” Professor Mokgokong said, “Right now South African healthcare professionals face an immense number of challenges and opportunities, and we feel she is the right person to lead the HPCSA forward.”
Congratulations to the Department of Biomedical Science, Cape Peninsula University of Technology with the implementation of the new qualification, BSc Medical Laboratory Science as from January 2011!

This internationally comparable degree is the first in South Africa and has been developed with the assistance of academics in the field of Biomedical Sciences of the CPUT and other educational institutions, the Professional Board, the Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists of South Africa (SMLTSA) as well as the public and private practice stakeholders.

This qualification will meet the needs of the market for competent Medical Technologists with the ability to provide vital information on the patient’s state of health. Their input is necessary in the diagnosis, monitoring and treatment of disease. The analytical and diagnostic services provided by this group will require a strong scientific knowledge, as well as trained reasoning ability and empathy for humanity.

The Medical Laboratory Technologist qualified with this qualification will play an integral role in the healthcare of society as health practitioners rely on their effective diagnosis and management of patient care. They have an integral role in the implementation and management of a legislative framework that protects people’s rights to reliable and accurate healthcare services.

The need to renew the curriculum has been long overdue and this new qualification not only covers the requirements of the current profession but also falls under the auspices of the HPCSA in line with the new Higher Education Qualification Framework.

Healthcare professionals in industry have identified a need for this type and level of qualification. This qualification has been structured to meet that need through the development of higher level competencies associated with this professional degree at NQF Level 8.

The acquisition of advanced competencies is required by the sector in order to meet the legislative and operational requirements of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) as well as the advancing competencies required by practitioners in the health profession in line with new developments in technologies, application and diagnosis both locally and internationally. This qualification is intended to eventually replace the National Diploma: Biomedical Technology, NQF 6.

Six focus areas contribute to medical laboratory sciences, namely:

- Diagnostic techniques required for the diagnosis and subsequent treatment of patient care;
- Keeping abreast of new trends in technology, equipment and diagnostic methodology that ensure the continued professional development (CPD) of the medical laboratory scientist and, in turn, promote improved health services to society;
- The development of research potential to place South African medical services at the forefront of international patient care;

The e-Bulletin is a monthly electronic-newsletter from the Council.

We are looking for new ways of strengthening our communication with you.

Through this short but informative read, we would like to touch on important issues for the professions and also share relevant information with you.

E-Bulletin is a platform to engage with you, so please ensure we have your correct contact details.

Please send us an email to update your details: records@hpcsa.co.za
• The management and quality assurance skills required for effective, efficient and sustained delivery of quality laboratory services supporting the medical profession;
• The ethical and safety considerations required to underpin the profession; and
• The empathy and communication skills required by practitioners to deliver relevant and accurate information to the different health care participants and sectors.

The skills and competencies reflected in the level descriptors associated with an NQF 8 qualification enable the qualifying learner to take up the role of Medical Laboratory Scientists in owning, or working for laboratory diagnostic services as well as undertaking research. The following positions are possible:

• Medical Technologist (existing nomenclature)
• Laboratory Managers
• Head of Department
• Quality Assurance Officers
• Training Managers
• Academia
• Researchers and Research Assistants
• Medical Representatives
• Forensic Scientists

The role of the Medical Technologist included diagnosis, interpretation of results and consultation. The Professional Board on the issue of Mathematical Literacy and Mathematics directed that Mathematics would be a required subject.

International comparability was undertaken approximately halfway through the generation process once the qualification framework had been generated but before broader consultation took place. Findings were used to inform changes in the framework.

The qualifications selected for comparison were not only confined to first world countries but also included those of SADC countries. The qualifications of SADC countries were used for comparison as the status of health delivery in these countries was similar to that of South Africa. South African higher education institutions assist neighbouring countries with training of Medical Laboratory Technologists to address the shortage of these professionals as the infrastructure in these countries is not sufficient.

Qualifications from countries which have mixed economies like South Africa, such as China and Vietnam, were also considered. For example the Higher Education Department of the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training has looked at South African higher education institutions to develop a model on which to base their qualifications with a professional orientated approach.

In conclusion, the South African professional qualification compares well with the Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Science as offered by the University of Technology: Sydney; Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Sciences (Level 7) 480 credits offered by Auckland University of Technology; the BSc. (Honours): Biomedical Sciences offered by University of Wales Institute, Cardiff; the Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Sciences (Honours) offered by the University of Zimbabwe and the Bachelor of Biomedical Sciences degree offered by the Polytechnic of Namibia. The comparison is particularly strong with regard to the core operational areas of medical laboratory sciences. All the qualifications used for comparison are four-year qualifications that require professional recognition before the learners can practice.

In the qualifications selected for comparison a similarity of competencies is clearly identifiable, and in some instances, in order to meet the South African requirements in the field of medical laboratory sciences the South African qualification provides a broader scope of choice of specialisation. These requirements are catered for by the intended learning time in the work place, research competencies and the national standards set for the integrated exit level assessment.

In contrast to all international qualifications investigated, assessment in the South African professional degree is strengthened by incorporation of the professional body requirements into the final summative Board examination which is nationally based and under the authority of the professional body, the Council for Higher Education, by virtue of the registration with SAQA as a professional degree (NQF level 8) and the registered training providers, which will consist of higher education providers. In addition, the South African qualification is further strengthened over all other qualifications...
investigated by the incorporation of a substantial research project undertaken by learners.

It is clear from the comparison of qualifications that a similar approach is followed with different focus areas to provide for South Africa’s unique requirements. The main areas of competence shared amongst the qualifications are certainly on par.

The qualification addresses the following Critical Cross-Field Outcomes as embedded in the Exit Level Outcomes and Associated Assessment Criteria of the qualification:

**Communicate effectively**
Effective communication is enabled through the maintaining of relevant communication as per organisational requirements within the healthcare and educational environment, using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation. Cultural and aesthetic sensitivity is demonstrated when dealing with patients, colleagues and communities.

**Identify and solve problems**
Problems are identified and solved in the context of medical laboratory sciences.

**Collect, analyse, organise, and critically evaluate information**
Information is collected, analysed, organised and evaluated in the performing of available resources management at operational level.

**Work in a team**
Teamwork is supported in the operational environment and the execution of medical laboratory sciences in the context of work practice and healthcare communities.

**Maintain effective working relationships**
The maintaining of effective working relationships is supported by the management and communication competencies required in medical laboratory sciences.

**Use of Science and Technology**
The use of Science and Technology is supported by the use of relevant technology employed in the undertaking of diagnostic techniques and research in medical laboratory sciences.

**Articulation possibilities**
The qualification provides the following possibilities for articulation:

**Horizontal Articulation:**
Credits towards the qualification will be awarded for those with:
- National Diploma: Biomedical Technology
- Bachelor of Science
- National Higher Diploma: Medical Technology
- B.Tech: Biomedical Technology

**Vertical Articulation:**
This qualification will meet the minimum requirement for admission to a cognate Master’s Degree, e.g., Masters in Medical Laboratory Sciences or related fields.

**Learning pathway**
- National Certificate: Medical Technician NQF level 5
- Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Sciences NQF 8
- Master’s degree
- PhD NQF level 10+

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**BOARD SURVEY**

The Professional Board would like to know how many practitioners are practicing in the public or private sector and is also compiling a database of private practices in the country.

The Board would like to request practitioners to complete the following survey:

**Practitioner**

Name: 

HPCSA Reg. No: 

Gender: [ ] M [ ] F

Telephone No: 

Email address: 

Public practice [ ] Private practice [ ]

**Practice**

Name of Practice: 

Physical Address: 

Tel: 

Email address: 

Name of Owner: 

**Number of employees in practice:**

Medical Technologists: 

Medical Technicians: 

Laboratory Assistants: 

Intern Medical Technologists: 

Medical Technology Students: 

Kindly return to:

Ms Abegail Nkosi

012 338 9380

abegailn@hpcsa.co.za
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Practitioners are encouraged to forward their contributions to Sipho Mbele at siphom@hpcsa.co.za