



**PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY  
FORM 160 MT**

**POLICY RELATING TO REGISTRATION AND TRAINING OF  
STUDENT MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENTISTS, INTERN  
MEDICAL TECHNOLOGISTS, STUDENT MEDICAL  
TECHNICIANS AND STUDENT LABORATORY  
ASSISTANTS**

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## 1. DEFINITIONS

“**Act**” means Health Professions Act, 56 of 1974;

“**Board**” means the Professional Board for Medical Technology (PBMT)

“**Intern**” means a person registered as such under this Act in a profession which provides for internship training;

“**Intern-Medical Technologist**” means a person registered as such under the Act;

“**Medical Technologist**” means a person registered as such under the Act;

“**Student Medical Technician**” means a person registered as such in terms of the Act;

“**Medical Technician**” means a person registered as such in terms of the Act;

“**Student Medical Laboratory Scientist**” means a person registered as such under the Act;

“**Laboratory Assistant Student**” means a person registered as such under the Act;

“**Laboratory Assistant**” means a person registered as such under the Act;

“**Unprofessional conduct**” means improper or disgraceful or dishonorable or unworthy conduct or conduct which, is improper or disgraceful or dishonorable or unworthy;

“**accredit**” means recognition or certification by the council or the relevant professional board in terms of the Act;

“**accredited educational institution**” means an institution which has been granted recognition by the board after an evaluation process for the teaching and training of medical laboratory practitioners registered with the Professional Board for Medical Technology;

“**examination**” means an assessment of competency conducted by an educational institution accredited by the board or examiners appointed by the board;

“**medical laboratory scientist**” means a person registered as such in terms of the Act;

## **2. SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

This policy applies to all Higher Institutes of Learning, Clinical facilities, Student Medical Laboratory Scientists, Student Medical Technologists, Intern Medical Technologists, Student Medical Technicians and Laboratory Assistant Students.

## **3. THE LEGISLATIVE MANDATE AND ROLE OF THE BOARD REGARDING TRAINING**

- a. In terms of Section 16(1) of the Health Professions Act 56 of 1974, no person or educational institution, excluding a University or a University of Technology, may offer or provide any training having as its object to qualify any person for the practicing of any profession to which the provisions of the Act apply, or for the carrying out of any other activity directed to the mental or physical examining of any person or to the diagnosis, treatment or prevention of any mental or physical defect, illness or deficiency in man, unless such training has been approved by the professional board.
- b. Section 16(2) of the Health Professions Act, any person or educational institution wishing to offer such training is referred to in subsection (3) of the Act shall, before offering such training, apply to the professional board concerned in writing for its approval of such training and shall furnish such particulars regarding such training as the professional board concerned may require.
- c. In terms of section 16 (3) of the Act the Professional Board may grant or refuse any application made in terms of subsection (2) and, having granted such application, may prescribe such conditions and requirements as it may deem fit, subject to which the training in question may be provided.
- d. Section 16 (5) prescribes that any person who contravenes or fails to comply with any provision of this section shall be guilty of an offence and on conviction liable to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months or to both such fine and such imprisonment.
- e. In the case of student or Internship training, the role of the Board is to ensure that students and interns are adequately trained and sufficiently competent on completion of their student or internship programmes. This will ensure that newly qualified practitioners are adequately prepared to practice their professions in a manner that protects the public.
- f. The Board will in terms of section 15(b) of the Health Professions Act, appoint examiners and moderators, conduct examinations and charge such fees in respect of such examinations as may be prescribed.
- g. In terms of section 15(c), the Professional Board may subject to prescribed conditions, approve training schools.

## **4. THE ROLE OF THE LABORATORY IN TRAINING**

- a. The laboratory must have a valid certificate of accreditation from the HPCSA in the category and discipline of the training to be offered including the training of Laboratory Assistants.

- b. If a laboratory requires training status they would be required to complete HPCSA form 108b with supporting documentation attached and email to the Professional Board for Medical Technology.
- c. Laboratories are required to provide proof of meeting a minimum of 80% of the training criteria for the training of respective student/intern concerned. Should a training institution meet only a proportion of the minimum training criteria required (80% of scope of testing within the syllabus), the Board may accredit the institution for the minimum requirement of the training that the laboratory is in a position to provide. The said institution must then provide documentary evidence of an agreement that training that cannot be facilitated at the specific site be facilitated elsewhere at an accredited training facility.
- d. The laboratory **MUST** ensure that registration with HPCSA for all newly employed Student Laboratory Assistants(LAS), Student Medical Technicians (GTS), Intern Medical Technologists(MTIN) and Student Medical Laboratory Scientists (MLS) be completed as soon possible at the beginning of their training. It is the responsibility of the Laboratory Manager or Head of Department of University of Technology to ensure that the candidate is registered as an intern or student with the Board within three (3) months of commencing the training program.
- e. The training must be provided within the specified registration category.
- f. In the case of student MLS, the respective clinical training institutions and the Universities of Technology share a joint responsibility for student learning and development. The roles and responsibilities of the respective training institutions and the various stakeholders contributing to education and training must be clearly defined and formally documented to provide clear guidance for teaching and learning.
- g. Ensure that planned and structured training programmes are in place for students when entering a training program including but not limited to an orientation programme, a rotation schedule and support (learning material).
- h. Keep a record or log of training periods completed by students in relevant disciplines using **Form 25** (*available on HPCSA website*).
- i. The minimum requirements to act as training supervisor are :
- Appropriately trained, qualified and registered in the required discipline
  - Practicing within the scope of the qualification
  - Evidence of Continuing Professional Development
  - Registered as a qualified medical technologist for at least 3 years
- j. Supervision of the student or intern's work is essential and must be conducted by at least one full-time Practitioner registered in the same category as the intern/student. Supervision, communication related to learner progress/performance and learner feedback must be formally documented.
- k. The Laboratory must have sufficient senior qualified and registered personnel available to provide the necessary training to the interns and students as per 1:5 Ratio :
- One (1) Registered Medical Technologist/MLS may only be responsible for the supervision of a combination of five practitioners constituted according to the

following six practitioner categories, all of whom must always work under supervision:

- Qualified Board Registered Technicians
  - Registered Intern Medical Technologists
  - Registered Student Medical Laboratory Scientists / Student Medical Technologist
  - Student Technicians
  - Registered Laboratory Assistants
  - Student Laboratory Assistants
- l. The prescribed ratio of interns to each supervising Medical Technologist as determined according to the accreditation specifications may not be exceeded. Where the ratio requirement cannot be adhered to, the Professional Board for Medical Technology must be approached for approval of such arrangements.
- m. At no time, must students/interns work unsupervised.
- n. It is further required that the training be conducted in a multi-professional context. The intern needs to function as a full member of a multi-disciplinary team and be led progressively to assume increased responsibility.
- o. The Training Laboratory must provide the student or intern with an array of experiences in the field (according to the approved syllabus) and must be equipped with sufficient facilities to ensure this.
- p. Training records must be signed by the students and trainers and must be accessible and filed.
- q. The laboratory and supervising practitioner are obliged to ensure that each intern is evaluated at least once every four-months and a report written and filed as a minimum requirement. Evaluations are conducted according to the criteria for students or interns training in the relevant category. Students or Interns must be informed of their progress on the basis of this evaluation and copies of their progress on these reports and this must be sent to the supervising university. These reports will be retained for the use of the Professional Board if requested.
- r. Submit an annual report (Appendix C- HPCSA Form 108B) to the PBMT Committee Coordinator during each four-year accreditation cycle and until next evaluation by the HPCSA.

## **5. THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY IN TRAINING**

- a. Universities of Technology are obliged to provide candidates entering a professional degree/qualification in medical technology with details concerning registration at the time students enter academic course(s) which lead to registration.
- b. NOTE: All training institutions involved in the education and training of the various categories of student medical laboratory practitioners must ensure that there is adequate focus on the scientific, technical competency and professionalism development of students. It is necessary to ensure that education and training is directed towards developing well rounded future medical laboratory practitioners

with the required technical competencies as well as the appropriate behavioral and professional competencies required of them as health care practitioners.

- c. All WIL student must rotate in an accredited training laboratory.

## **6. THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT AND INTERN IN MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY AND MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE (MLS) RESPECTIVELY**

- a. All students/interns are expected to ensure that they are registered with the HPCSA accordingly on commencement or within 3 months of their studies or internship.
- b. The term internship and Clinical practice refers to the minimum period of full time supervised practical training in a specific registration category of Medical Technology/Biomedical Science.
- c. The primary purpose of an internship and the 4<sup>th</sup> year of student medical laboratory scientists Clinical training/practice is to integrate, apply and refine student attitudes, competencies and skills that are necessary for independent functioning as a Medical Technologist and Medical Laboratory Scientist in a variety of settings. Expected competencies vary according to the specific registration category.
- d. An internship/MLS Clinical training provides potential Medical Technologists/MLS with hands-on, authentic experience in a work setting. Ideally, internships/MLS Clinical training enable interns/MLS to:
  - integrate and use the knowledge and skills gained from their academic training,
  - discover where further competence is needed,
  - take steps to acquire that competence under supervision, and
  - become better acquainted with the types of work settings in which such competence can be applied.
- e. The internship/MLS Clinical training must be conducted under supervision within the specified registration category for which the candidate has been trained.
- f. Since clients of Medical Technology/MLS services have the right to receive quality services and adequate feedback, the internship training institution, should have a process in place for addressing concerns regarding an internship's/MLS's performance.
- g. In the event of unsatisfactory performance of an intern/MLS, a written report should be prepared by the training institution (and the supervising University in the case of Medical Laboratory Scientists). The report should be submitted to the Education Committee of the Board with recommendations, where applicable for:
  - the termination of the internship/MLS Clinical training at a given date; or
  - the extension of the internship/MLS Clinical training with clearly specified objectives; such an application for an extension is to be submitted to the Board.

## **7. UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE OF THE INTERN/STUDENT**

Should an intern/student become mentally or physically impaired and unable to perform professional acts in medical technology as is required professionally, the matter should be reported to the Health Committee of the Council. The Committee will investigate the

circumstances and will provide guidance on the treatment and rehabilitation of the intern/student or deal with the matter as circumstances dictate.

## 8. STUDENT MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENTISTS

These are students who are registered for a BHSc. degree at a University of Technology and undergo work integrated learning in the laboratory for Laboratory Practice 3 in the second semester of the third year and for clinical practice in the fourth year. The student chooses the discipline or specialisation during the fourth year of the B.H.Sc to be registered with the HPCSA.

- a. On entering the BHSc degree program at a University of Technology, students will register with the HPCSA as Student Laboratory Scientists within 3 months. Re-registration is not required when entering the workplace in the fourth year of clinical practice.
- b. The student medical laboratory scientist trains and works in the laboratory for the minimum of twelve months after which they write a University exam before exiting.
- c. During the clinical practice at the Laboratory the student must provide a logbook as evidence that they have been trained and are competent in all tests as prescribed on the standardized syllabus.
- d. All training and competency records, logbooks, assessments and reflective journals must be filed by the students and available at the university should the HPCSA require this.
- e. On successful completion of the examination they may register with the HPCSA as Medical Laboratory Scientists.
- f. Training is conducted under the constant supervision of competent, qualified, technical staff. The Student Medical Laboratory Scientist will be trained in the different sections of the laboratory on a rotational basis as per a training roster. All the required sections according to the syllabus must be trained until competency is achieved. Records of training are retained by the department in their personal training files. ***Refer to the Student Manual and Guide (Clinical Laboratory Practice Work Integrated Learning), issued by the University of Technology, for detailed practical training and competency processes and records.***
- g. During the training period the Student Medical Laboratory Scientist is required to read and sign the standard operating procedure (SOP) for the tests/tasks completed.
- h. In addition to the practical training given in the laboratory, the Student Medical Laboratory Scientist will attend lectures given by staff members



from the University and attend the laboratory journal club/continuing professional development (CPD) programme.

- i. During the training period all aspects of quality assurance and good laboratory practice will be highlighted, and the Student Medical Laboratory Scientist will be instructed on how to comply with all aspects of accreditation.

## 9. INTERN MEDICAL TECHNOLOGISTS

- a. On appointment of an Intern Medical Technologist, the intern shall undergo internship training for a minimum period of 12 months in an accredited Training Laboratory in addition to their 6 months WIL and is then eligible to write the National Board Examination.
- b. If an internship has been completed, but the intern has not complied with all the requirements for registration as a Medical Technologist and the Board examination has not been successfully completed, the performance of ANY act of a Medical Technologist or professional registration as a Medical Technologist **WILL NOT BE PERMITTED**.
- c. The maximum period for registration as an intern Medical Technologist is two years after the 12 months of structured training. Therefore, an Intern Medical Technologist has four (4) attempts to write the Board examination in two years.
- d. An intern may remain in the MTIN register for a period not exceeding three (3) years.
- e. The following structure has therefore been approved for the training and registration of Medical Technologists in South Africa:
  - i. A three-year National Diploma in Biomedical Technology or equivalent including experiential training (WIL) completed at an accredited higher education institution and an accredited training laboratory.
  - ii. A structured practical training (internship) for a minimum period of not less than 12 months in an approved training laboratory, followed by,
  - iii. An examination recognized by the Professional Board for registration purposes.
    - i. A Medical Technologist Board examination may be written in the following categories:
      - Haematology
      - Clinical Pathology
      - Microbiology
      - Cytology
      - Cytogenetics
      - Histology
      - Blood Transfusion

- Chemical Pathology
  - Pharmacology
  - Immunology
  - Immunohaematology
  - Virology
- iv. A student in Medical Technology (at a University of Technology) must be registered with the HPCSA as a Medical Technology Student. (MTS -Form 53).
  - v. On enrollment onto the internship programme, the student needs to change their registration status with the HPCSA as a Medical Technology Intern (MTIN – Form 26 MTIN).
  - vi. A motivation submission will have to be submitted to the Medical Technology Board for consideration if an intern is, because of extenuating circumstances, unable to fulfill the above.
- f. The Professional Board resolved that: Should the maximum registration period of three years as Student Medical Technologist expire without successfully passing the Board Examination. the candidate shall be required to apply to sit for the Board Examination for registration as a Medical Technician.
  - g. In this instance the candidate does not need to serve another training period, provided the attempt at the Medical Technician examination is in a discipline in alignment with the training received in the Technologist discipline after registration as a Student Medical Technician with the HPCSA.

## 10. STUDENT MEDICAL TECHNICIANS

- a. On appointment, a Student Medical Technician will undergo training for a period of 24 months at an accredited Training Laboratory and then will sit the Board Examination. The student Medical Technician may however write the Board Examination after 18 months of Training and if successful in the Board Examination, the Student Medical Technician must work in the training laboratory for another 6 months to register as a qualified Medical Technician in the category of the examination passed. Registration as a Medical Technician will be affected on completion of the 24 Months training and a successful Board examination.
- b. If the Medical Technician training has been completed, but the student has not complied with all the requirements for registration as a Medical Technician and the Board examination has not been successfully completed, the performance of ANY act of a Medical Technician or professional registration as a Medical Technician **WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.**
- c. The maximum period for registration as a student Medical Technician for training purposes is four (4) years. This is inclusive of the 24 months training period thus allowing a student Medical Technician three (3) attempts to write the Board examination in four years (ie. If the first attempt was at 18 months).
- d. A Student Medical Technician may remain on the GTS register for a period not exceeding four (4) years.

- e. The Regulations for registration of student Medical Technicians specify that the name of a student medical technician shall be removed from the register:
  - a. As soon as he/she shall have been registered as a medical technician, or
  - b. As soon as proof is given to the satisfaction of the registrar that such student has discontinued his medical technician studies, or
  - c. After a period of four years of registration as a student medical technician.
- f. No person shall be eligible for registration as a Medical Technician until a period of two years has lapsed since the date of his/her registration as a Student Medical Technician
- g. The Professional Board resolved that: Should the maximum registration period of four years as Student Medical Technician expire without successfully passing the Board Examination. the candidate shall be required to apply to sit for the Board Examination for registration as a Laboratory Assistant.
- h. In this instance the candidate does not need to serve another training period, provided the attempt at the laboratory Assistant examination is in a discipline in alignment with the training received in the Technician discipline after registration as a Student Laboratory Assistant with the HPCSA.
- i. In order to obtain registration as a Medical Technician an applicant has to:
  - ii. Be appointed in a Student Medical Technicians post,
  - iii. Register as a Student Medical technician (GTS) with the HPCSA (Form 53/GTS).
  - iv. Complete structured practical training for a minimum of 18 months in full time employment (prior to the examination) in an approved training laboratory under the supervision of a registered medical practitioner or a registered medical technologist who is registered in that discipline/category.
  - v. Complete a further six (6) months of structured training if the candidate has been successful at the Board examination after 18 months of structured training'
  - vi. Submit proof of 24 months training in an approved training laboratory on application to write the Board examination.
  - vii. Successfully complete the examination of the Professional Board which is written annually in October.
  - viii. The Professional Board may waive the practical training requirements or parts thereof, under exceptional circumstances.
  - ix. A Medical Technician Board examination may be written in the following categories:
    - Haematology
    - Clinical Pathology
    - Microbiology
    - Cytology
    - Histology
    - Blood Transfusion
    - Chemical Pathology

- TB Mycobacteria
- Immunology
- Virology
- Phlebotomy Techniques

## 11. STUDENT LABORATORY ASSISTANTS

- a. On appointment, a Student Laboratory Assistant will train for a period of 12 months in any accredited training laboratory. In the event of a prospective Student Laboratory Assistant not being able to secure a placement at an accredited training Laboratory, the Student Laboratory Assistant student shall apply in writing to the Professional Board for a once off approval for undergo training at a non-accredited Training Laboratory; provided such an application is accompanied by a motivation letter which specifies the following:
  - i. the name and physical location of the laboratory
  - ii. Laboratory ownership details and registration details
  - iii. list of practitioners who will supervise the prospective student Laboratory Assistant and their registration particulars
  - iv. the individualized training programme for the student Laboratory Assistant and the frequency of supervision provided such a programme is based on a syllabus determined by the Professional Board
  - v. Motivation on the suitability of the laboratory to accommodate the training of Laboratory Assistants.
  - vi. Conditions of a learning agreement which will apply to the Student Laboratory Assistants.
  - vii. Arrangements for staff continuing professional development.
- b. All Laboratories are required to submit a report on the training of every laboratory assistant in a format prescribed by the Board. Every Laboratory Assistant shall be subjected to a Board Examination on completion of training.
- c. The Maximum period for registration as a student Laboratory Assistant for training purposes is three (3) years. Therefore, a student Laboratory Assistant has two (2) attempts to write the Board examination in three years.
- d. If the Laboratory Assistant training has been completed, but the student has not complied with all the requirements for registration as a Laboratory Assistant and the Board examination has not been successfully completed, the performance of ANY act of a Laboratory Assistant or professional registration as a Laboratory Assistant **WILL NOT BE PERMITTED**.
- e. The Student Laboratory Assistant may remain in the LAS register for the duration not exceeding three (3) years.
- f. In order to obtain registration as a Medical Laboratory Assistant an applicant has to :
  - i. Be appointed in a Student Laboratory Assistant post,
  - ii. Parties are expected to register as a Laboratory Assistant Student with the HPCSA (Form 53 GTS/LAS) within 4 months of entering the training program.

- iii. Complete structured practical training for a minimum period of 12 months (prior to the examination) in an approved training laboratory under the supervision of a registered medical practitioner or a registered medical technologist.
  - iv. Write a Board examination presented by the SMLTSA for Laboratory Assistants after a period of twelve months of registration as a student Laboratory Assistant. The candidates may have two (2) attempts of passing in a two-year registration period after the 12 months of structured training.
  - v. Submit proof that a total of 12 months in an approved training laboratory has been completed.
- g. Applicants may choose to register in the following categories:
- Clinical Pathology / Media
  - Histology/ Cytology or Cellular Pathology
  - Blood Transfusion

## 12. REGISTRATION IN ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES

1. Registered Medical Laboratory Scientists; and Medical Technologists, wishing to register in an additional discipline/category are required to:
  - a. Register with the HPCSA as a Medical Technologist Intern **OR student MLS** (Form 26 MTIN/applicable Form) in the additional category that they wish to pursue.
  - b. Complete full-time structured practical training in an accredited training laboratory for a period of at least 12 months under the guidance and supervision of a suitably qualified Medical Technologist/MLS in that discipline and pass the applicable assessment as prescribed by the Professional Board.
  - c. In the case of the additional category for the MLS, registration with the university will be required according to the regulations.
2. Registered Medical Technician wishing to register in an additional discipline/category are required to:
  - a. Register with the HPCSA as a Medical Technician (Form 53 GTS) in the additional category that they wish to pursue.
  - b. Complete full-time structured practical training in an approved training laboratory for a period of at least 24 months under the guidance and supervision of a suitably qualified Medical Technologist/MLS in that discipline and pass the applicable assessment as prescribed by the Professional Board.