

# National Certification Scheme for the Medical Laboratory Scientific Workforce

cmls

Australian Council for the Certification of the  
Medical Laboratory Scientific Workforce

qualified ✓

competent ✓

certified ✓

# Overview

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- Background
  - Governance
  - Requirements for Certification
  - Costs
  - FAQ
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# Background

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Australia is one of the few developed nations which does not formally regulate medical scientists and technical officers.

A voluntary certification scheme was established in 2020 following a QUPP funded project which included extensive consultation with stakeholders.

The scheme is operated by a not-for-profit company with 11 professional bodies covering all aspects of medical laboratory science as members.

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# Member grades

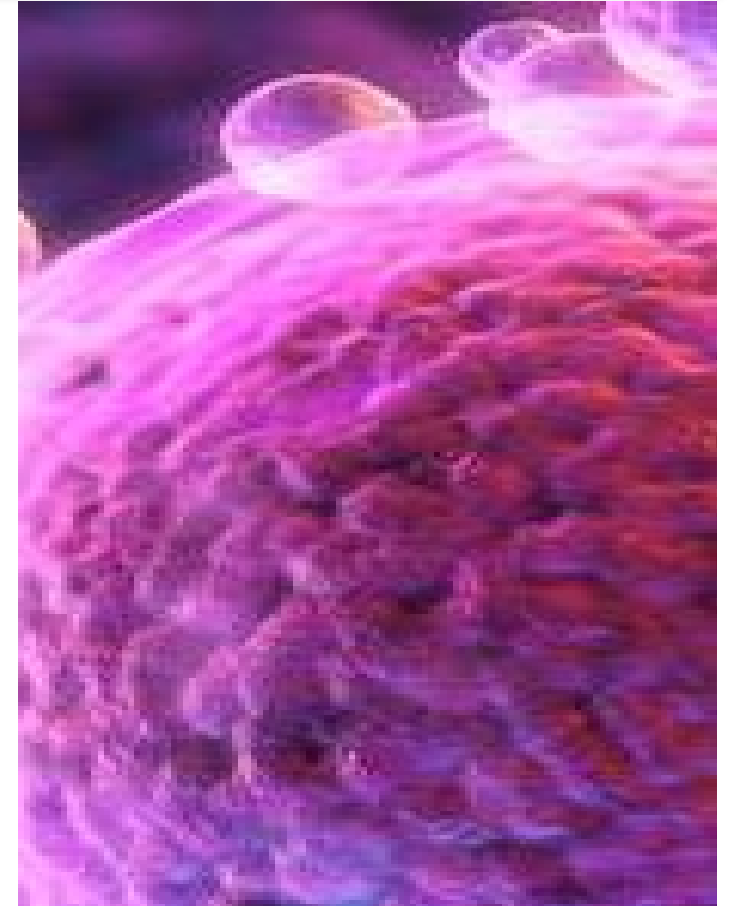
**Level 1** - Professional Associations providing CPD activities to > 1000 actual or eligible certification registrants

**Level 2** - Professional Associations providing CPD activities to 300 - 1000 actual or eligible certification registrants

**Level 3** - Professional Associations providing CPD activities to < 300 actual or eligible certification registrants

Differences in ...

- Membership fee
- Voting rights at AGM
- Board participation



# Company members

AIMS



ASC



AACB



ANZSBT



HGSA



ASCIA



ASM



FSA



THANZ



ACS



HGA



# Governance

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- The company is run by a Board with Directors elected by representatives from each member organisation.
  - The Board is responsible for determining the requirements for certification.
  - Certification is based on 3 requirements:
    - Qualifications relevant to medical laboratory science
    - Demonstrated competency following a minimum period of experience
    - Demonstrated continuing professional development
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# Certification

**Your status as a certified medical laboratory professional is a public guarantee that you are qualified, competent and continuing your professional development.**

- Recognition of scientific qualifications
- Certification aligned with competency development and assessment processes
- Acknowledgement of participation in continuing educational activities
- Increased professional credibility and prestige in the industry
- Support of industry standards
- Demonstrated commitment to superior professionalism
- Advantage in the recruitment process
- *Certified practitioners may choose to have their details displayed on the public register and use the post nominals CCS, CMLS or CMLT.*

# CMLS now offers 3 levels of certification.

## Full Certification

Technical Officers Clinical and Medical Scientists can apply for Certification by completing an online application. The following minimum requirements must be met for your application to be considered by the Board.

### Qualifications

- For a Medical Scientist or Clinical Scientist, a relevant degree in Science or Applied Science (AQF Level 7 or above) which would permit membership as a scientist of a member organisation, or an overseas qualification assessed as equivalent by the Australian Institute of Medical and Clinical Scientists, or an associate qualification conferred by the Australian Institute of Medical Technologists before 1st December 1973. For a technical officer, documentary evidence of completing a relevant VET sector course at AQF 5 or 6 which would permit membership as a technical officer of a member organisation (or higher relevant qualification such as a science degree).



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### Qualifications

In addition, for a Clinical Scientist, one or more of the following qualifications:

- Fellowship of Australasian Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine;
- Fellowship of the Australian Institute of Medical and Clinical Scientists;
- Fellowship of the Australian Society for Microbiology (Medical Microbiology or Clinical Microbiology);
- Fellowship of the Human Genetics Society of Australasia (Biochemical Genetics, Cytogenetics or Molecular Genetics);
- Fellowship of the Australian Society of Cytology;
- Fellowship of the Faculty of Science (by examination) of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia;
- A Doctorate of Philosophy, Australian Qualifications Framework level 10 or equivalent doctoral level degree, in a subject relevant to the scope of diagnostic testing of the laboratory they are supervising.
- For ART laboratories, meets the criteria in the RTAC code of practice for scientific directors.
- For Bone Marrow Transplant laboratories, meets the requirements of the Bone Marrow Transplant Scientists Association of Australasia (BMTSAA).

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### Demonstrated experience and competency

- Evidence of minimum **2 years relevant recent experience for a Technical Officer or Medical Scientist**, and minimum **5 years relevant experience for a Clinical Scientist**.
- Declaration of competency assessment, in a position relevant to the level of certification sought, by applicant's supervisor. CMLS provides a competency checklist employers may use to assist in their assessment.

***Note: If you are employed as a Technical Officer you cannot be certified as a scientist even if you have an AQF level 7 qualification since your competency assessment is against your current role.***

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## **Full Certification**

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### **Demonstrated participation in Continuing Professional Development**

- CPD Certificate from an accredited CPD provider or an outline of CPD activities undertaken in the previous 2 years which meets the requirements of APACE or those of your relevant professional body.
-

# CMLS now offers 3 levels of certification.

## Provisional Certification

- The ACCMLSW Board have recognised that recording of continuing professional development activities (CPD) is something medical laboratory staff have not been required to do in the past and as a result, a number of people wishing to apply for certification are unable to provide the records to meet the CPD requirements for full certification.
- In addition, staff who leave the workforce for a period may not have the opportunity to continue CPD and will again fall short of the requirement for certification upon returning to the profession.
- To address this, the Board have initiated a status of Provisional Certification. There is no need to meet the CPD requirement to apply, however the remaining minimum standards of experience, demonstrated competency and qualifications must be met at the time of application. Those applying for provisional certification need to commit to completing the minimum CPD over the period of their provisional certification to progress to full certification and sign and upload a declaration . There will be no option to extend provisional certification beyond one 2 year cycle.
- Provisional certification is not offered for the Clinical Scientist category.

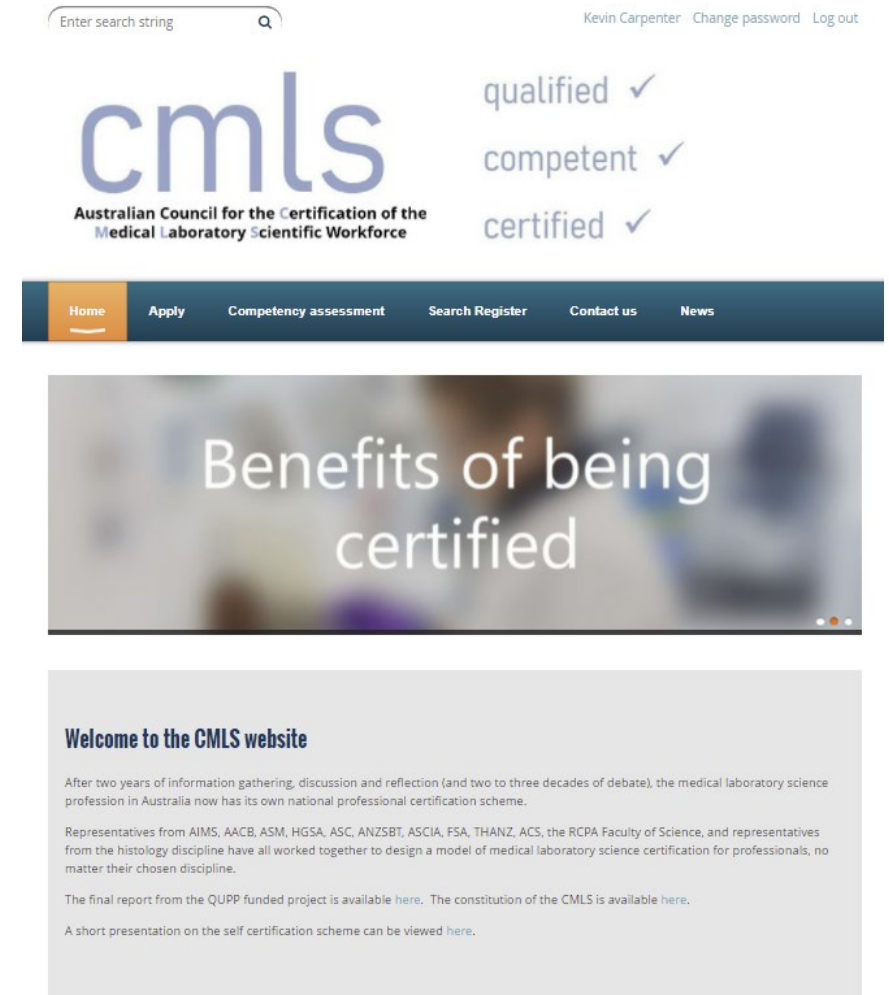
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## Conditional Certification

- For Scientists and Technical Officers who are currently employed and have met the qualification requirements but **do not yet have the minimum 2 years relevant recent experience and CPD record.**
- They must still agree to *Code of Conduct/Ethics* and should provide a declaration from their supervisor that they are employed in a relevant role but with less than 2 years experience and that they are undertaking ongoing training and competency assessment. Applicants for conditional certification also need to commit to participate in CPD activities and recording.
- Conditional certification will run for a maximum of two years, after which they will be required to undergo competency assessment and provide CPD records and transition to full certification.

# Implementation- where are we now?

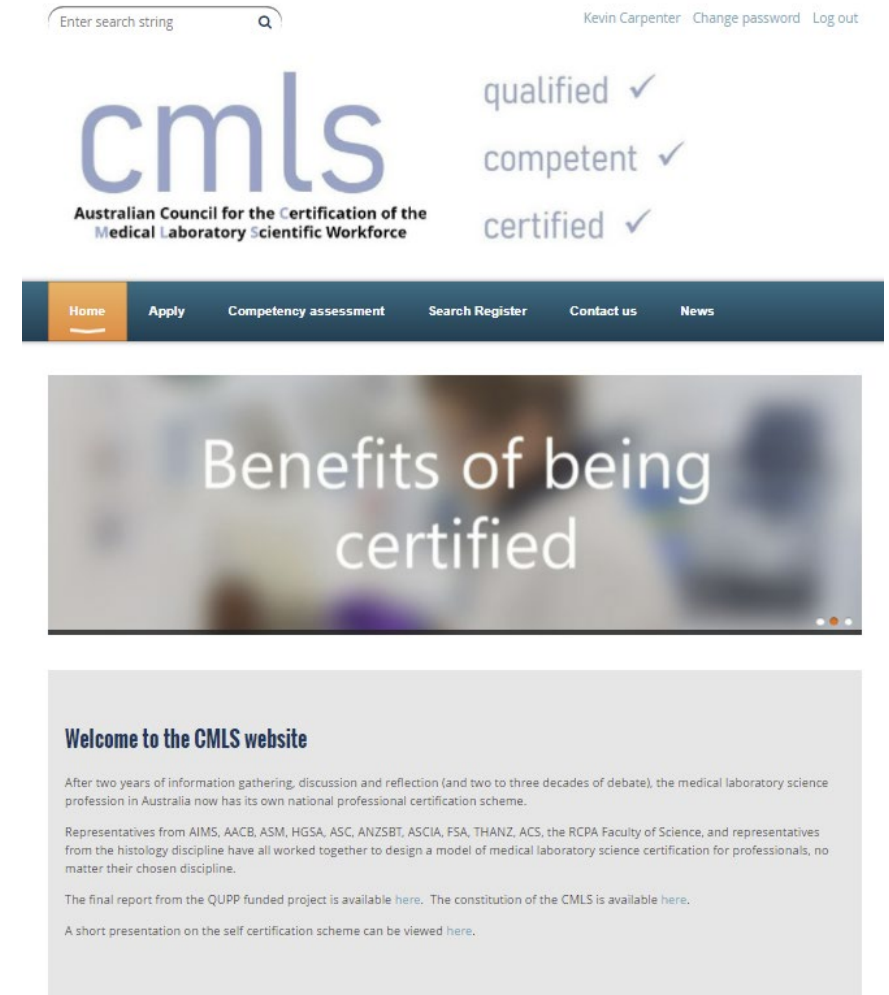
- CMLS established and registered with ASIC in January 2020.
- Website development with online portal for applications and public register completed.
- Accepted qualifications and requirements for certification published on website.
- Pilot program ran until June 2020.
- Formal program launch in July 2020.



The screenshot shows the CMLS website interface. At the top right, there is a search bar with the placeholder text 'Enter search string' and a magnifying glass icon. To the right of the search bar, the user name 'Kevin Carpenter' is displayed along with links for 'Change password' and 'Log out'. The CMLS logo is prominently featured, consisting of the lowercase letters 'cmls' in a large, blue, sans-serif font. Below the logo, the full name 'Australian Council for the Certification of the Medical Laboratory Scientific Workforce' is written in a smaller, dark blue font. To the right of the logo, three status indicators are listed: 'qualified ✓', 'competent ✓', and 'certified ✓'. Below the logo and indicators is a dark blue navigation bar with white text for 'Home', 'Apply', 'Competency assessment', 'Search Register', 'Contact us', and 'News'. The 'Home' link is highlighted with an orange underline. Below the navigation bar is a large banner with a blurred background image of people. The text 'Benefits of being certified' is centered in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below the banner is a section titled 'Welcome to the CMLS website' in bold. The text below the title reads: 'After two years of information gathering, discussion and reflection (and two to three decades of debate), the medical laboratory science profession in Australia now has its own national professional certification scheme. Representatives from AIMS, AACB, ASM, HGSA, ASC, ANZSBT, ASCIA, FSA, THANZ, ACS, the RCPA Faculty of Science, and representatives from the histology discipline have all worked together to design a model of medical laboratory science certification for professionals, no matter their chosen discipline. The final report from the QUPP funded project is available [here](#). The constitution of the CMLS is available [here](#). A short presentation on the self certification scheme can be viewed [here](#).'

# Implementation- where are we now?

- Scheme promoted via member organisations and with key employer support
- With limited initial funds available, AACB services operate the scheme with Kevin Carpenter in Acting Registrar role.



Enter search string

Kevin Carpenter [Change password](#) [Log out](#)

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[Home](#) [Apply](#) [Competency assessment](#) [Search Register](#) [Contact us](#) [News](#)

## Benefits of being certified

### Welcome to the CMLS website

After two years of information gathering, discussion and reflection (and two to three decades of debate), the medical laboratory science profession in Australia now has its own national professional certification scheme.

Representatives from AIMS, AACB, ASM, HGSA, ASC, ANZSBT, ASCIA, FSA, THANZ, ACS, the RCPA Faculty of Science, and representatives from the histology discipline have all worked together to design a model of medical laboratory science certification for professionals, no matter their chosen discipline.

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# Cost of Certification

- ❑ Condition certification for new graduates is \$100 +GST
- ❑ Provisional or full certification costs \$300 for Clinical Scientists, \$200 for scientists and \$180 for technical officers (+GST).
- ❑ Certification is for a 2 year period and renewal will be dependent on demonstrated ongoing competency assessment and CPD.



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# Frequently asked questions

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- **Is it compulsory to be certified?**
- No, the scheme is voluntary and operates in a similar manner to other self managed certification schemes established by other health professionals like social workers, dietitians and genetic counsellors.

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- **Will it be compulsory in the future as with NZ/UK etc?**
- The medical laboratory professional bodies chose to set up the self regulated scheme because the Australian Government decided not to include Medical Scientists and Technical Officers in the professions covered by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) when it was established in 2010. Most developed countries do have formal regulation of Medical Scientists and Technical Officers to protect the public and set minimum standards for ongoing assessment of competency and continuing professional development. It would require the Australian Government to legislate mandatory registration under AHPRA.

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- **Do I need to be a member of a Professional body to apply for certification?**
- No, but if you have already been assessed and approved as a scientist or technical member of most organisations, you should have acceptable qualifications and experience to fulfil most of the certification requirements.

# Frequently asked questions

- **I am already a member of a professional body, do I need to apply for certification as well?**



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- **I am already a member of a professional body, do I need to apply for certification as well?**
- Yes, you need to join to protect the public and set minimum standards for ongoing assessment of competency and continuing professional development as determined by the 11 professional associations who have formed the CMLS company. All recognise that their initial requirements for membership do not assess ongoing competency. Participation in CPD schemes is also voluntary for most association members. The new scheme is designed to formalise the requirement for ongoing CPD and regular competency assessment in order to have your name displayed on the register.

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- **Do I need to be in one of the member organisation CPD schemes to join?**
- For the first round of applications we will consider CPD records which have not been formally lodged with a CPD provider such as APACE. However, assessing these records does generate a significant administrative load and for re-certification the expectation is you would be able to provide a certificate of meeting CPD goals set by a member organisation. CPD records from organisations using APACE, AACB or RCPA for Faculty of Science members or the ASC's CEC scheme are acceptable.

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- Using the assessment template provided we require your supervisor to confirm they have assessed your competency and that you demonstrate safe and ethical practice. This is already a requirement for laboratories under ISO 15189

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- **Can scientists that are not working directly on the bench day to day e.g. an industry technical support specialist or a quality officer, apply for certification?**
- Yes they can, provided they meet all the current criteria. The competency sign off by their supervisor states that they have been assessed as competent “against their current role and position description within the last 12 months and that they demonstrate safe and ethical practice” so this will cover those in associated industries and roles.

# Acknowledgments

- CMLS Board members past and present

Chair A/Prof Tony Badrick

Deputy Chair Prof Denise Jackson

Tony Jennings

Mark Bromley

Jennifer Ross

Kristy Demmers

Louise Carey

Chris Bundell

Tina Pham

Robyn Wells

Vanessa Tyrrell

Matthew Linden

Greg Irwin