

Quality assurance programmes

In 1988, the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) consolidated a number of established stand-alone quality assurance programmes as a specialised organisation – RCPA Quality Assurance Programmes Pty Ltd – to provide these programmes at ‘arm’s length’ from the RCPA.

Laboratories undertake external quality assurance programmes as part of their quality systems.

Participation in external quality assurance is a requirement of all laboratory accreditation standards, such as ISO 15189:2003 *Medical laboratories – Particular requirements for quality and competence*, against which diagnostic laboratories are assessed. All public and private medical laboratories in New Zealand participate in these quality assurance programmes.

There is also a mandatory requirement for all New Zealand medical laboratories to maintain registration with International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ), which is the national authority for the accreditation of testing and calibration laboratories, inspection bodies and radiology services. IANZ is the accreditation body of the Testing Laboratory Registration Council, an autonomous Crown entity established by the Testing Laboratory Registration Council Act 1972.

Furthermore, pathologists employed in New Zealand have to participate in a range of separate quality assurance and professional development activities required by their employer, as a condition of their employment. Pathologists across the country will be subject to a range of clinical audit, peer review, credentialling, teaching of undergraduate and postgraduate medical students (and other health professionals) and research activity to varying degrees, depending on their role and sub-specialty.

Ref: Royal College of Pathologists