

29th October 2003

FILE COPY

Chief Executive Officer

Each Health Board
Each Voluntary Hospital
Irish Blood Transfusion Service

**Re: Implementation of Report of the Expert Group on Medical Laboratory
Technician/Technologist Grades (now Medical Scientists)**

I refer to previous correspondence regarding the implementation of the Expert Group Report on Medical Laboratory Technicians and Technologists (H.S.E.A. Circulars dated 22nd March 2002 and 16th October 2002 refer). Discussions have been protracted regarding some residual elements of the Report and I wish to advise that agreement has now been reached with the M.L.S.A. on the following issues.

Revised Grading Structure of Departments within Laboratories

Within a Department employing 6 or more (w.t.e.) medical scientist staff it is accepted that a position of Chief Medical Scientist may be created where such does not exist at present.

The following schedule sets out the position as it should now apply in the case of Departments within Laboratories. (Agreed arrangements have already been implemented in respect of smaller multi-disciplinary Laboratories.) The arrangements below supersede the 1981 Grading Structure Agreement for these grades.

/...

Laboratory Department Grading Structure

Total No. of Wholetime Staff	Chief Medical Scientist	Senior Medical Scientist	Medical Scientist	Comments
1		1		
2		1	1	
3		1	2	
4		2	2	
5		2	3	
6	1	1	4	
7	1	1	5	
8-10	1	2	5-7	
11-14	1	3	7-10	
15-19	1	4	10-14	
20-23	1	5	14-17	
24-27	1	6	17-20	
28-31	1	7	20-23	
32-35	1	8	23-26	
36-38	1	9	26-28	
39-43	1	10	28-32	
44-47	1	11	32-35	
48-50	1	12	35-37	

Note: The above grading structure is based on overall approved wholetime equivalent numbers and does not involve any entitlement to additional posts.

These arrangements will apply for grading structure purposes and do not convey any implication that “new” or “developing” specialities within the field of Medical Science are being recognised for the purposes of further sub-division of hospital Laboratories.

First Filling of Chief Medical Scientist Posts in Existing Departments (with 6 or more medical scientist staff)

- A. It has been agreed that where, it is recognised and accepted by management that an individual Senior Medical Scientist is currently in overall charge of a Department then such individual may be up-graded to Chief Medical Scientist without recourse to confined competition.

Up-gradings in any such case is subject to:

- (i) The individual involved holding the qualifications necessary for appointment as Chief Medical Scientist as set out by the Department of Health and Children. Where the requisite qualifications are not held the post falls to be filled by confined competition among eligible staff.

and

- (ii) A position of Chief Medical Scientist is merited in accordance with the revised grading structure i.e. the Department has 6 (w.t.e.) or more Medical Scientist staff employed.
- (iii) The effective date of appointment for such up-gradings will be 1st January 2003.
- (iv) No additional posts are being introduced/created as a result of the up-grading.
- (v) Assimilation to the new scale will be by starting pay on promotion regulations.

B. Where there is currently no Senior Medical Scientist in overall charge the following arrangements will apply.

- (i) Post will be filled by confined competition.
- (ii) No additional posts are being introduced/created.
- (iii) Applicants must possess the qualifications necessary for appointment as Chief Medical Scientist as set out by the Department of Health and Children.
- (iv) The effective date of appointment will be the date of promotion of the individual involved.
- (v) Assimilation to the new scale will be by starting pay on promotion regulations.

Recognition of New Disciplines or Departments within Laboratories

The 1981 Grading Structure Agreement recognised six departments for grading structure purposes. The six departments are Clinical Biochemistry, Haematology, Blood Transfusion, Microbiology, Histopathology and Immunology.

The Report of the Expert Group recommended that "claims for the existence of separate departments should be judged against agreed objective criteria". It is considered inappropriate to seek to resolve this issue in a premature fashion having regard to the various factors which may influence any decisions. The parties will

need to discuss further the establishment of an independent assessment process in this regard through which individual hospitals could pursue matters.

Specialist Medical Scientist

Agreement has been reached between the parties on the allocation of positions of Specialist Medical Scientist. Agreement has also been reached on the indicative criteria for selection and identification of posts. Agreement has **not been reached**, however, on the appropriate remuneration of Specialist Medical Scientists. It is management's position that a pensionable annual allowance, available to both Medical Scientists and Senior Medical Scientists, is the most appropriate mechanism for addressing this issue, while it is the view of the M.L.S.A. that a new Specialist grade should be created.

The criteria set out below will be utilised to identify specialist roles and select individuals for appointment.

This information is by means of an advance notification to allow preparatory work take place in the relevant organisations regarding the identification of Specialist Medical Scientist posts. A further circular will issue on this matter when formal agreement is reached.

A. Allocation of positions

It has been agreed that these positions will be introduced throughout the service on the following basis:

Western Health Board	7
Mid-Western Health Board	4
Midland Health Board	3
Southern Health Board	7
Mercy Hospital	1
South Eastern Health Board	4
North Eastern Health Board	3
North Western Health Board	3
Northern Area Health Board (James Connolly)	1
Mater Hospital	3
Beaumont Hospital	3
Temple Street Hospital	2
Rotunda Hospital	1
South Western Area Health Board (Naas/Cherry Orchard)	2
St. James's Hospital	4
AMNCH, Tallaght Hospital	3
Crumlin Hospital	2
Coombe Women's Hospital	1
East Coast Area Health Board (St. Columcilles)	1
St. Vincent's University Hospital	3
St. Luke's Hospital	1
Holles Street Hospital	1
St. Michael's Hospital	1

B. These positions are subject to:

- (i) No additional posts being introduced/created.
- (ii) Specialist Medical Scientists will be identified by way of a confined selection process.
- (iii) No additional positions are contemplated other than those provided for above.
- (iv) In the case of Health Boards, it is a matter for each Board to determine the distribution of positions within its laboratories in accordance with prevailing circumstances.

C. Eligibility

Applicants must possess a post-graduate qualification in a specialist area of laboratory practice or demonstrate a proven record of clinical/academic achievement including continuing development in their specialist field.

D. Indicative Criteria for Selection

In addition to their existing role and responsibilities a Specialist Medical Scientist will:

- Demonstrate advanced knowledge and skills within specified areas of practice.
- Demonstrate evidence-based practice through the process of clinical reasoning and decision making, allowing knowledge to be applied to complex/different situations.
- Demonstrate an educational role for example as a mentor or advisor to other Laboratories.
- Generate and disseminate new knowledge and skills.
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the context in which practice occurs for example interdisciplinary and interprofessional collaboration.

E. Indicative Criteria for identification of posts

- (i) Posts should be flexible to allow for future changes in recognition of the continuously changing environment within lab services e.g. where a post becomes vacant. It may be that the post would be used to develop a more appropriate specialism.
- (ii) Posts should be created as a result of clearly established service need. This needs driven approach will take cognisance of changes in

professional practices as well as changes in wider health services environment.

- (iii) The identification of Specialist Medical Scientists requirements should be undertaken by the Laboratory Manager in association with the Human Resources Department.

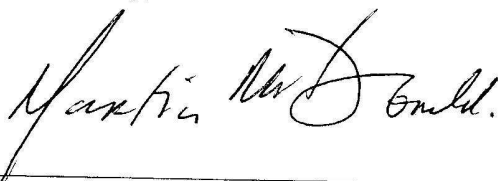
It is intended that flexibility will be available to individual Laboratories in relation to the identification of specialist roles in accordance with the prevailing service needs. The identification of a basis for creation of a specialist position in one Laboratory may not be utilised as grounds for seeking the creation of a similar position elsewhere.

Funding Provision

Funding arrangements in respect of pay adjustments arising from the implementation of these regradings are referred to in the 2003 Letter of Determination issued to each Health Board and the Eastern Regional Health Authority by the Department of Health and Children.

Any enquiries in relation to the provisions outlined in this circular should be directed to Ms. Aoife O'Riordan. (E-mail: aoifeor@hsea.ie).

Yours sincerely,



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