

Thinking of Pathology?

Pathology is the study of disease, or any condition that limits the quality, length or enjoyment of life. From the time a new life is created to the time it ends, pathology is involved. Pathology touches every facet of medicine and is central to all diagnoses, disease monitoring, screening and treatment decisions.

Overview of Pathology

Pathologists are medical doctors with at least 13 years of training. As both a pure and applied science, many major advances have been made in medical practice as a result of research carried out by pathologists and medical scientists – immunisation against infectious diseases, organ transplantation, safe blood transfusion, genetics and forensics.

Pathologists diagnose every detected cancer in the world and oversee the diagnosis and monitoring of all acute and chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, blood disorders and infections. They are often also intimately involved in the management of life threatening conditions and the impacts of intervention or treatment programmes with pharmaceuticals, radiation, diet and/or public health measures.

Most pathologists work with a range of medical specialists, including general practitioners and laboratory scientists and the work frequently involves the integration of laboratory and clinical medicine.

Specialty Training

Vocational training in pathology is undertaken through the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) in one of nine specialty sub-disciplines - Anatomical Pathology, Chemical Pathology, General Pathology, Genetic Pathology, Forensic Pathology, Haematology, Immunopathology, Microbiology and Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology.

The RCPA also provides vocational training and Fellowship in Oral and Maxillofacial pathology to dental practitioners, in addition to a Fellowship of the Faculty of Science – which is open to both medical practitioners and senior scientists. The RCPA has also established a Faculty of Clinical Forensic Medicine.

Please note:

The RCPA disciplines of Chemical Pathology, Haematology, Immunopathology, and Microbiology have joint training programmes with the [Royal Australasian College of Physicians](#).

Doctors choosing to study these clinical pathology disciplines graduate with joint Fellowships in Pathology and Medicine.

RCPA provides a minimum 260 week (five years) pathology training programme undertaken in specialty specific, accredited training laboratories in District Health Boards and community laboratories.

Successful completion of a Fellowship in Pathology requires employment and experience in a minimum of two appropriate training laboratories, coupled with passing of three major examinations. The first of these (Basic Pathological Science exam) may be taken before the commencement of training. In their third year of training, trainees usually sit a Part 1 Discipline specialty exam, with Part 2 usually sat in their fifth or final year.

Further information can be found in the [RCPA](#). [A day in the life of a pathologist](#).

It is highly likely that you need to complete placements in multiple DHBs whilst completing vocational training

Personal qualities required to be a Pathologist

- Strong aptitude for, and interest in, the scientific basis of medicine and in laboratory work
- An enquiring mind and an interest in problem solving
- Leadership potential is essential
- Attention to detail
- Clinical experience is essential and candidates should have the ability to mix and match their laboratory and clinical roles seamlessly
- An ability to communicate in a variety of forums, written and spoken, in lay terms, scientific and academic

Specialty Training Programme Information

Medical College

[Royal College of Pathologists of Australia \(RCPA\)](#)

Fellowship/Qualification

Fellowship of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australia (FRCPA)

[Initial Registration Details](#)

Details of the training programme:

Entry requirement

Minimum of two years of postgraduate experience

Application process and Selection criteria

- Applicants must be employed in an RCPA accredited training laboratory before seeking registration with the College
- College is not involved in selecting applicants to its Fellowship training programme. There are guidelines available for employing laboratories to use

Please see here for [Key dates](#)

Duration of vocational training – six years

- At least 2 year of pre-Registrar general medical experience
- 5 years of advanced training as registered trainees with RCPA
- Experience in at least two laboratories

Examination requirements

- A pass is required in the Basic Pathology Science examination normally in the first year of advance training.
- A pass in the FRCPA Part I examination in a chosen subspecialty is required in the third year of advanced training.

A pass in the FRCPA Part II examination in a chosen subspecialty is required in the fifth year of advance training.

[Overseas Trained Specialists and Exam Exemptions](#)

Recognition of Prior Learning

The RCPA has a training time credits programme in place so prior learning of applicants can be recognised. For more information [click here](#)

Transferability of registration to other countries/across training sites

Transfer is possible across Australasia as the RCPA has accredited training laboratories and Registrars in Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia. This is subject to regulatory requirements in regard to medical registration.

Further information can be obtained on the [Royal Australasian College of Physicians \(RACP\) website](#)

Resident Medical Officer (RMO) Information

Demand for vocational Training Posts is currently not available

RMO training registrar positions contracted

Northern	Midland	Central	South Island	Total
20.2	2	6	16	44.2

(September 2016 RMO census)

Regions

Northern:

Northland, Waitemata, Auckland, Counties Manukau DHBs

Midland:

Lakes, Tairāwhiti, Bay of Plenty, Waikato, Taranaki DHBs

Central:

Hawke's Bay, Wanganui, MidCentral, Wairarapa, Capital and Coast, Hutt Valley DHBs

South Island:

Nelson Marlborough, Canterbury, South Canterbury, Southern, West Coast DHBs

Senior Medical Officer (SMO) Information

Year	Number of NZ New Fellows
2015	9
2014	7
2013	7
2012	10
2011	9
2010	17
2009	9

Average Age of SMOs	Number registered with the Medical Council	% of international medical graduates in the workforce
51	289	47

Number of Pathologists by Region (September 2016 SMO census)

Northern		Midland		Central		South Island		Total	
FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount
79.8	91	11.8	13	0.7	1	20.1	29	112.4	134