

Sterile Sciences Technician Career Framework

Te Anga Mahi Kairahurahu Pūtaiao Whakaparakore

**Capital & Coast, Hutt Valley, Wairarapa, Hawkes Bay,
MidCentral and Whanganui DHBs**

What is the Sterile Sciences Technician (SST) Career Framework?

The SST Career Framework supports the growth and development of the SST workforce through the development of advanced technical and/or leadership roles.

The Framework has a focus on ensuring SST staff are equipped to meet current and future health care needs of our population in line with innovative and evidence based practice.

It is designed to be used across the Central Region DHBs so that a consistent approach to career progression based on benchmarked expectations of practice is used for SSTs.

This Framework is presented as a living framework. It may change and develop as models for delivering advanced technical practice are implemented and reviewed across the 6DHBs.

Guidance Notes: - How does progression through the Sterile Sciencesⁱ Technician Career Framework occur?

Non-designated positions

Sterile Sciences Technician:

The Sterile Sciences Technician levels, including trainees, have automatic annual salary increments to step 5. These align to the PSA/DHB Allied Health & Public Health MECA (AHPH PSA MECA) clause 5.8.19b.

Trainee Technicians are appointed into technician roles and must complete the Level 4 New Zealand Certificate in Sterilising Technology (or an approved alternate title) within two years. The Level 3 New Zealand Sterilising Certificate applies prior to 2019 and it is not mandatory for this previous Level 3 qualification to be upgraded to Level 4.

Once the trainee has successfully completed this qualification they are transitioned onto the Sterile Sciences Technician role description.

To move beyond the automatic steps on the Sterile Sciences Technician level the Technical Merit Progressionⁱⁱ process is followed. Except that Sterile Sciences Technicians who hold the NQF Level 5 NZ Sterilising Technology Diploma (or an approved alternate title) shall be able to progress to Steps 6 and 7 by way of automatic annual increment.

For further information refer to the [Technical Merit Policy](#) and/or the AHPH PSA MECA.

Endoscopy Sterile Sciences Technicians

Within the scope and roles of Sterile Sciences, Sterile Sciences Technicians now have the ability to train for and take on the role of Endoscopy Technician. This fits within the Sterile Sciences Technician scope, though it is necessary to work and gain the relevant qualification, competency and experience in the areas of decontamination, packing and inspection and sterilisation prior to taking on this extension of role. There is also an expectation the relevant training (supported by the service) will have been successfully completed prior to independently completing this role

At this stage as this is an expansion of the role and responsibilities of Sterile Sciences Technicians it is appropriate to recognise Technicians taking on these duties via Merit Progression (for those positioned on the top automatic step). *This may need to be reviewed if MECA changes occur in the future.*

Designated positions

Sterile Sciences Co-ordinator/Educator & Sterile Sciences Manager:

To progress beyond the Sterile Sciences Technician level the employee must apply for a designated position (Coordinator, Educator or Sterile Sciences Manager) via normal appointment processes as vacancies arise.

Designated positions on the framework have a salary banding as per AHPH PSA MECA clause 5.8.19a.

Sterile Sciences Co-ordinators/Educator are encouraged to complete the NQF Level 5 NZ Diploma Sterilising Technology (or an approved alternate title). If attained the technician will commence on step 8. Those without commence on Step 6 unless attained Technician Merit Step 7.

Each role has a role description that has consistent levels of expectations of practice for roles at the same level, though these can be customized to have specific requirements/expectations, of the same level as per the service area requirements specific to the role. The New Zealand Sterile Sciences Association (NZSSA) expectations of practice and expectations that have been set for other Allied Health professions have been utilised to guide the

development of role descriptions. This aims to provide consistency within Sterile Sciences that aligns with other professional groups (as appropriate) using the pillars of practice outlined below.

Where new designated roles emerge in the future they can be aligned to the Co-ordinator/Educator level and/or reviewed to determine if further development of the framework is required.

For designated positions there is no automatic progression. Progression to a higher step shall be through operation of the [Technical Merit process](#) to progress within the set salary banding.

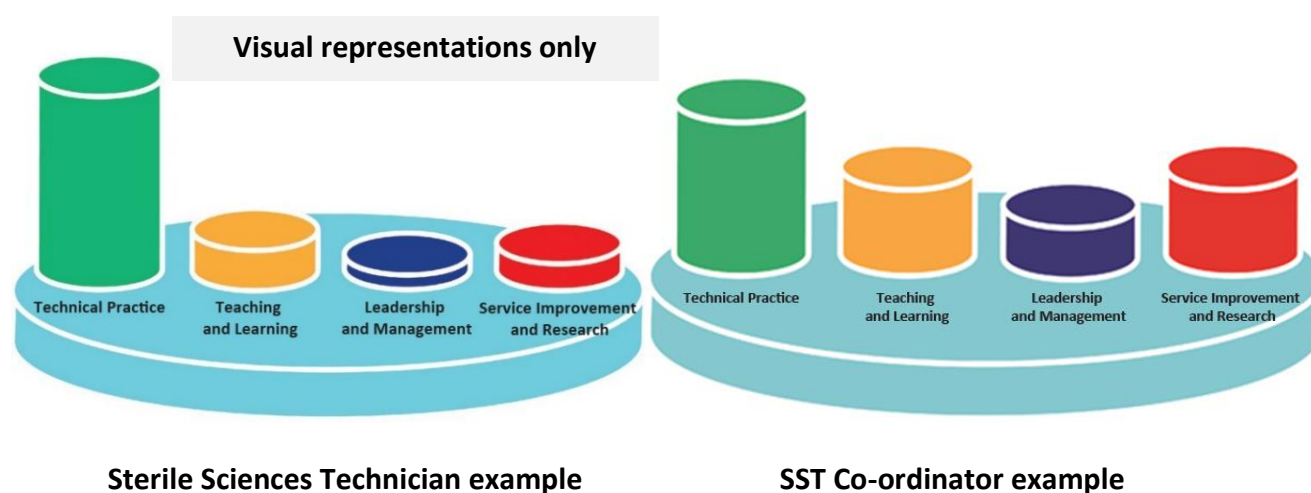
Progression is dependent on the scope, responsibilities, service needs and opportunities available in the DHB or service in which the employee works. The framework informs workforce planning in relation to skill mix, recognising that not all teams will have or require all roles.

Pillars of Practice

Each role on the career framework is divided into the same four pillars of practice ⁱⁱⁱ which are consistent across AHST frameworks:

1. Technical (or Clinical) Practice / Te Mahi Hangarau
2. Teaching & Learning / Ako Atu, Ako Mai
3. Leadership & Management / Te Ārahi me te Whakahaere
4. Service Improvement and Research / Te Whakapai Ratonga me te Rangahau

Every role requires all Pillars of Practice. However, at different levels, and for different roles on the framework, different amounts of time and focus are spent on different pillars, e.g. for a sterile sciences technician, the focus on technical practice will be greater than any of the other pillars. In comparison a manager will have a much smaller focus on technical practice with a greater focus of their role on the pillar of leadership & management. An educator will have a greater focus on the pillar of teaching and learning.



All positions on the SST Career Framework have set deliverables (expectations of practice) that are aligned to the pillars of practice. SS employees are expected to work to this level while they hold that post. Each position on the career framework builds upon the deliverables of the position lower on the framework. Therefore an assumption is that all employees will have also met all the deliverables for the positions prior to their current one on the career framework. In most cases this will be achieved as a matter of course e.g. in order to achieve the expectation: “Participates in auditing processes in sterile sciences,” each employee will have already met the expectation; “identifying gaps in service, and participates in work / projects that may result from the planning process”.

Salary levels for roles on the framework

The roles on the framework are aligned to the Sterile Sciences Technician salary scales and the Management scale clause 5.6 (for Sterile Sciences Manager if appropriate) of the AHPH PSA MECA. If there are any changes to salary bandings (as per MECA changes) the framework will align itself as needed to these changes.

The Sterile Sciences Manager will be placed on the most appropriate scale based on qualification, previous knowledge and requirements for a clinical component. This may be on the Management Scale (5.6 PSA/DHB Allied Health & Public Health MECA).

Professional Development

Professional development is an on-going requirement for all employees. The professional development needs of each employee will change over the duration of their career and as they move through the career framework.

It is expected the NZSSA professional development guide and the career framework will support staff (and managers) in identifying opportunities and learning needs that match their current level and service need, while also identifying future development opportunities to support career planning and advancement.

It is expected all staff will engage in an annual performance review and set professional development objectives annually.

<https://nzssa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Professional-development-guide-v2.pdf>

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	QUALIFICATION LEVEL	Salary Banding (for full information on salary bandings refer to MECA)
Sterile Sciences Technician Trainee	A member of the Sterile Sciences team who is undertaking the Level 4 qualification alongside developing a range of core sterile sciences technician skills in a workplace setting with support from more experienced technicians and leaders.	Can be employed without qualification and complete this on the job; Level 4 New Zealand Certificate in Sterilising Technology (or an approved alternate title) within two years of employment. Prior to 2019 a Level 3 Certificate.	Steps 1-5 Automatic progression up to step 5.
Sterile Sciences Technician	A member of the Sterile Sciences team who has completed the Level 3 or 4 qualification. They have attained a range of core sterile sciences technician skills so they meet best practice standards for sterile sciences as per AS/NZS4187:2014 and normative references in respect of the reprocessing of reusable medical devices. They take responsibility for ensuring that they maintain and update their qualifications and scope of practice. Contributes to the setting of quality standards, and implementing continual quality improvement processes.	Completed Level 4 New Zealand Certificate in Sterilising Technology (or an approved alternate title). Prior to 2019 a Level 3 Certificate. For merit, including the option of completing NQF Level 5 NZ Diploma in Sterilising Technology (or an approved alternate title)	Steps 1-7. Automatic progression up to Step 5. Merit steps 6, 7.
Sterile Sciences Co-ordinator/ Educator	Works within the scope of the technician role and provides support to the line manager by undertaking delegated duties and operational tasks to deliver a high standard of service to both internal and external customers. This role is responsible for delegated staff and service management tasks. Meets best practice standards for sterile sciences as per AS/NZS4187:2014 and normative references. Coordinates day to day sterile sciences processes including staff shift allocation, education and staff supervision. Contributes to the setting of quality standards, and implementing continual quality improvement and education processes within Sterile Sciences.	Minimum completed Level New Zealand Certificate in Sterilising Technology (or an approved alternate title). Prior to 2019 a Level 3 Certificate. NQF Level 5 NZ Diploma in Sterilising Technology (or an approved alternate title) or working towards this is desirable.	Steps 6-11 Merit steps progression applies Note those with a Level 5 qualification commence on step 8. Merit step progression applies for further progression.

<p>Sterile Sciences Manager</p>	<p>Provides day to day leadership to the SS Technicians.</p> <p>Coordinates the operational and clinical activities within the technical team as required by the service on a day to day basis in order to deliver a sustainable, high quality service that contributes to the achievement of organisational goals.</p> <p>This role will also be required to provide direct operational and technical duties as appropriate to the needs of the service area.</p>	<p>NQF Level 5 Diploma in Sterilising Technology (or an approved alternate title) or working towards achieving.</p>	<p>The Sterile Sciences Manager will be placed on the most appropriate scale based on qualification, previous knowledge and requirements for a clinical component. This may be on the Management Scale (5.6 PSA/DHB Allied Health & Public Health MECA).</p>
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ⁱ The term Sterile Supply, Sterile Service and Sterile Sciences Technician is interchangeable dependent upon Collective Agreement coverage.

ⁱⁱ Merit Progression process is governed by the Collective Agreement which applies.

ⁱⁱⁱ Acknowledgement is made to NHS Scotland, for the development of these pillars for allied health practice.