

# Clinical Pathology Accreditation (UK) Ltd

## Guidelines for Single-Handed Consultant Practice in Medical Laboratories

The relevant CPA standards relating to this matter are B1.1, B 1.2, B 2.1, E 1.2 g and G 5.1

**B 1.1** Each discipline shall be professionally directed by a consultant pathologist or clinical scientist of equivalent status. Competence shall be demonstrated in the following ways:

a) by evidence of training and experience in a pathology specialty as normally exemplified, in the United Kingdom, by membership of the Royal College of Pathologists or its equivalent.

Appointment as a consultant, or equivalent, by a properly constituted Advisory Appointments Committee, is an acceptable alternative OR if the laboratory is providing a limited range of specialised tests it shall be directed by an appropriately trained consultant with special qualifications or skills in the area of these tests.

b) by evidence of continuing practice and experience in the specialty, with participation in appropriate continuing professional development.

c) by recorded attendance at regular departmental meetings to review service issues and to set quality objectives.

**B 1.2** In a laboratory without on site consultants in each discipline, professional direction by the off site consultant shall also satisfy the following criteria:

a) provision of a written statement of the sessional input for each consultant sufficient to meet the needs of the service

b) regular on site laboratory attendance as needed to match the needs of the service; normally at least weekly

**B 2.1** Laboratory management shall ensure that there are appropriate numbers of staff, with the required education and training, to meet the demands of the service and appropriate national legislation and regulations.

**E 1.2** The information for users shall include:

g) availability of clinical advice and interpretation

**G 5.1** Laboratory management shall ensure that advice on examinations and the interpretation of results is available to meet the needs and requirements of users.

Due to the lack of sufficient consultant, or equivalent, staff some laboratories find these standards difficult to fulfil. This applies especially to laboratories that have only one consultant, or equivalent, in post.

As agreed by the Board, following consultation with the shareholding bodies, CPA does not grant accreditation to Histopathology laboratories that have single-handed consultants.

However there are single-handed consultants in Clinical Biochemistry, Haematology, Microbiology and Immunology and these departments can achieve accreditation provided that they can comply with the following guideline.

A single-handed consultant must have formal, agreed, deputy cover for all absences. This will ensure availability of professional advice similar to that normally provided. The amount of cover provided on site by the deputy will depend on the level of expertise of the staff in the department. Telephone and or electronic cover may be acceptable if there is on site a grade B scientist (of level 17 or above), or an Associate Specialist, or a Specialist Registrar who is within 3 months of obtaining a CCST.

CPA Professional Advisory Committee  
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