

Canterbury Health Laboratories (CHL)

Thank you for taking the time to consider the possibility of training as a Specialist Pathologist in Christchurch, New Zealand. Canterbury Health Laboratories (CHL) has a longstanding history of successfully training registrars in all areas of Pathology.

We would love to have you visit the laboratory and have a first-hand experience of our departments. Feel free to make an appointment and we will show you around.

Why specialise in Laboratory Testing?

Operating from modern well equipped facilities opposite Christchurch Hospital, CHL provides laboratory services to general practice surgeries throughout the Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB), provides a level 6 tertiary care laboratory service for CDHB's hospitals and performs reference tests for all medical diagnostic laboratories within New Zealand.

CHL offers specialist clinical and medico-legal tests, and has significant experience in providing laboratory testing services to both primary and secondary care settings.

Further to this, CHL runs an extensive routine automated laboratory service, with a long history of collaborative relationships over specialist testing. This includes involvement in contracts for the Newborn Metabolic Screening Program, Quality Improvements for Antenatal Downs Screening and Other Conditions, the National Cervical Screening Programme and acting as the WHO National Measles reference laboratory. Daily requests are received to perform specialist tests from laboratories and workplaces throughout New Zealand, using an established national courier network which uplifts specimens at the end of each working day.

CHL has a highly skilled workforce of dedicated staff with close links to many clinical professionals in various speciality areas throughout New Zealand.

It is the combination of all of these provided services that ensure CHL has the biggest 'catchment' area of any medical laboratory in New Zealand.

Career prospects

Canterbury Health Laboratories is one of the largest laboratories in New Zealand, and has links to laboratories, and specialist related bodies internationally.

CHL delivers core medical diagnostic services, as well as a diverse range of specialist testing disciplines.

More than 2000 different types of tests are conducted at Canterbury Health Laboratories. Blood tests to biopsies, smears and genetic testing are all part of the service. On average CHL process over 2500 patient requests a day - of all kinds of bodily fluids including sputum, faeces, blood, urine and semen. In many instances CHL are the only laboratory in New Zealand conducting particular testing, and performs a range of testing that puts it on a world class footing.

CHL aims to be the first laboratory in New Zealand to deliver new tests and technology advances that can have the on flow effect of improving patient care.

New Fellows are presently experiencing a relative ease in securing consultant posts soon after completing their FRCPA either in New Zealand or in Australia.

National contracts

Canterbury Health Laboratories holds several National Health Contracts including the following:

National Screening Unit (Ministry of Health)

National Cervical Screening Programme

Quality Improvements for Ante Natal Downs and Other Conditions

World Health Organisation

New Zealand National Measles Reference Laboratory

Most common private services offered include:

Immigration Medicals

Occupational Screening

Workplace Drug Testing

Wellness Tests (staff cholesterol, glucose checks etc)

Medical Kaimahi (Staff) in our service

A wide range of people of different backgrounds and skill sets are employed at CHL, encompassing:

- Specialist Pathologists
- Medical Laboratory Technicians
- Registrars
- Phlebotomists
- Medical Laboratory Scientists
- Scientific Officers
- Support and Administration Staff

All about our service

Canterbury Health Laboratories has been involved in medical diagnostic testing for research purposes for many years. The laboratories work closely with clinical staff from DHBs and private laboratories throughout New Zealand to design research and set up new testing practices. Staff are actively involved in the development of new testing practices, and attend conferences and meetings in their disciplines to encourage progression of technology in medical diagnostic science.

A dedicated research studies team work between the laboratory staff, and private organisations wanting to develop clinical studies to test the benefits of various treatment options or discover new links for biological markers and disease. Laboratory staff also have close ties with Otago University Christchurch School of Medicine, and other major research tertiary institutions in New Zealand. Laboratory staff tender for new screening or testing initiatives developed by the Ministry of Health, and work with ESR, and community health bodies to monitor the flow of disease throughout New Zealand.

Training in our service

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Pathologists (RCPA) defines the training requirements and sets the examinations for Fellowship of the College. This is the principal post-graduate qualification in pathology in Australasia and it is automatically recognised in Australia and New Zealand. Full details of the regulations governing training are available from the College website: www.rcpa.edu.au

The pre-requisite to becoming a clinical pathologist is generally a year or two spent as an RMO before commencing training as a registrar. The minimum training time is five years in at least two laboratories accredited by the RCPA for registrar training positions.

Trainees have consultant supervisors who have direct responsibility for the progress and judgment of the trainee's capabilities. Individual face-to-face supervision of at least one hour per week provides a forum for detailed discussion of clinical and theoretical issues. Part-time training is accepted under exceptional circumstances.

Christchurch has a well-established specialist training programme in all fields. The Training Programme is integrated with the clinical services provided by Canterbury District Health Board (www.cdhb.govt.nz) with academic input from the Department of Pathology of the University of Otago, Christchurch (www.otago.ac.nz) and is focused around Trainees gaining the qualification of FRCPA (Fellowship of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Pathologists).

Research

Research is an important part of specialist pathologist training. Trainees in Christchurch are encouraged to become involved in at least one research project at some point in the Programme. Even for those with no long-term interest in research, involvement in a project will increase awareness of the strengths and limitations in different research methodology and enable more critical reading of the literature. Subject to appropriate supervision and ethical approval, research may be undertaken at any time and in any setting, and involve any topic of interest. It is usually easier for trainees to become involved with pre-existing projects, but new ideas and new projects are actively encouraged.

SMO / Kaimahi (staff) support

The level of commitment to maintaining and improving our Training Programme is high. Despite Consultants' busy work load, trainees are well supported and seldom have difficulty getting their training needs met. Registrars typically feel very much part of the team.

Advantages to training at Canterbury Health Laboratories, Canterbury District Health Board Working for Canterbury Health Laboratories, means working for one of the largest laboratories in New Zealand, as well as working with the largest employer in the South Island, and one of the biggest District Health Boards in New Zealand.

Our employees work a variety of shifts and rosters, from full-time to part-time, contract and casual. The work is challenging and varied in an environment that is strongly team oriented, and above all - highly supportive.

Working with Canterbury Health Laboratories will provide you with opportunities for career development and enhancement, and you will gain extensive experience in a variety of settings.

Enquiries

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