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# Ethical Considerations With Standards In The Medical Laboratory

By Sheila Woodcock



## Sheila Woodcock MBA, ART, FCSMLS(D)

*President & Principal Consultant QSE Consulting Inc*

Sheila Woodcock, the founder of QSE Consulting Inc., is a quality management specialist, with many years' experience in health care, education, professional regulation, and consulting. She served for 8 years as the Convenor of ISO/TC212 WG1 Quality and competence in the medical laboratory, and project leader for the recent revision of ISO15189.

Sheila volunteers with the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) and Canadian Standards Association (CSA) for ISO /TC212 Medical laboratory testing and in vitro diagnostic test systems and ISO/TC304 Healthcare organization management. Projects and speaking engagements have taken her across Canada and around the world. At home in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, Sheila is a keen community volunteer and serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the IWK Health Centre in Halifax, providing care for women and children in the Maritimes.

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## Ethical Considerations With Standards In The Medical Laboratory

Ethics is a topic rarely addressed in the medical laboratory. In today's world when laboratories are constantly working under pressure, personnel may be tempted to take shortcuts, or otherwise avoid doing the right thing. The ISO 15189:2022 standard requires personnel to act ethically. This can only be successful in a supportive environment; ethical behavior has to be cultivated, not learned.

This presentation will define ethics and describe the responsibilities of laboratory leaders, as well as other personnel. Laboratory workers may not realize that they face ethical challenges every day. Accepting and rejecting samples, reviewing QC results, reporting examination results, equipment maintenance; these are just a few examples of when there is a need to act ethically. Ethical behavior is also a component of risk management. How a just culture environment supports ethical behavior will be discussed, as well as the role of research ethics boards/committees.

### **Key Presentation Impact Points:**

#### **Participants will be motivated to consider:**

- ✓ What is the meaning of ethics and acting ethically?
- ✓ Where does responsibility for ethics lie in the medical laboratory?
- ✓ The expectations of ISO15189:2022 for personnel to act ethically.
- ✓ The conflict that can arise between working under pressure and working ethically.
- ✓ How does ethics contribute to managing risk?
- ✓ The link between ethics and a just culture.