



HEALTH CAREER OPTIONS GUIDE

for internationally educated health professionals

Medical Laboratory Assistant

This profession is also known as

- medical laboratory technician

What is a medical laboratory assistant?

Medical laboratory assistants conduct routine medical laboratory tests and set up, clean and maintain medical laboratory equipment in medical laboratories.

What are the main duties of a medical laboratory assistant?

Medical laboratory technicians perform some or all of the following duties:

- Collect blood, tissue and other samples from patients
- Log patient samples and prepare them for testing
- Set up medical laboratory equipment
- Conduct routine laboratory tests and sample analyses
- Perform quality assurance of testing techniques
- Clean and maintain medical laboratory and medical laboratory equipment.



What personal characteristics or desired traits should I have for this profession?

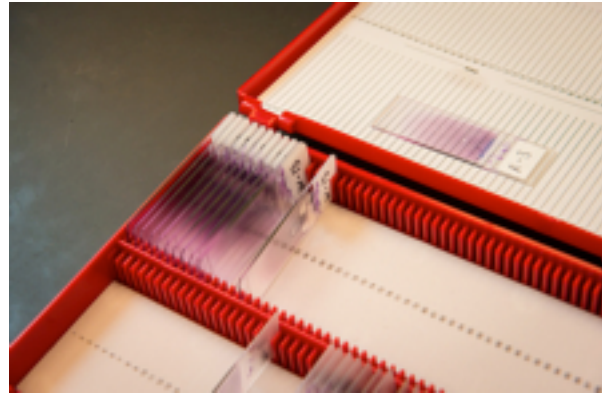
You need to demonstrate:

- empathy
- attention to detail
- organizational and time management skills
- efficiency and accuracy
- good fine motor skills
- normal colour vision
- confidence to work independently or with a team
- adaptability
- cooperation and collaboration
- problem solving skills
- currency or the ability to keep up-to-date technically and apply new knowledge

Where do Medical Laboratory Assistants Work?

A medical laboratory assistant is able to work in a variety of settings such as a:

- hospital
- private medical laboratory
- community health department
- educational institution
- long term care facility
- correctional facility
- the home and bedside of the patient
- in private industry



What are typical work conditions of a medical laboratory assistant?

A medical laboratory assistant:

- Uses technological equipment in a well-appointed laboratory to process tests and provide information accurately and in a timely manner.
- may perform a variety of tasks, or repeat the same tasks throughout the day
- spends a lot of time standing or sitting while working
- Uses solutions and reagents that may cause unpleasant odours
- May work with infectious patients or samples, or hazardous chemicals, so they must take safety precautions to reduce risks

The work schedule for a medical lab assistant may be full or part time, and seasonal or year-round work. The hours worked depend on the setting. He or she might work regular hours, for example 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Monday to Friday, but shift work or on-call hours are common.

What qualifications do I need for this profession?

You may need:

- Qualifications that are set by the employer
- Specialized on-the-job training
- College certificate program in medical laboratory science
- Certification by the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science may be required

What communication skills do I need?

Medical lab assistants are required to:

- read procedure and equipment manuals.
- write brief comments in patients' files and on collection lists.
- give instructions and provide support to patients before, during, and after specimen collection.
- Explain each step of collection procedures, and comfort and reassure nervous patients.
- provide instructions for proper use of home test sampling kits and special collection procedures
- give post-donation instructions to blood donors in clinics

For a list of the essential skills you may need, view http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/es_view_profile-eng.do?prof_id=152&lang=eng

What wage may I be paid for this work?

- Average hourly wage for MLAs in Canada is: **Low 14.00 Median 23.00 High 37.50**
http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/LMI_report_bynoc.do?noc=3212&reportOption=wage
- Career Outlook
http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/LMI_report_bynoc.do?noc=3212&reportOption=outlook

Are there opportunities for advancement?

Opportunities for advancement depend on a medical laboratory assistant's abilities, experience, and education.

Learn more about Medical Laboratory Assistants by viewing these sites:

- National Occupation Code 3212
The government of Canada has given a code to each occupation/profession. Use this code to learn more about medical laboratory assistants through government sites.
<http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2011/QuickSearch.aspx?val65=3212>
- Self Assessment Readiness Tool™ for Medical Laboratory Assistants
This tool describes the role of the Medical Laboratory Assistant and the professional requirements.
<https://assesshealthcareers.ca>
- Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science
Currently, MLAs do not require certification to practice. However, MLA certification is gaining recognition quickly as the standard requirement in the profession.
[http://www.csmls.org/Medical-Laboratory-Professionals/About/Medical-Laboratory-Assistants-\(MLA\).aspx](http://www.csmls.org/Medical-Laboratory-Professionals/About/Medical-Laboratory-Assistants-(MLA).aspx)

References

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<http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2011/Welcome.aspx>
- Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC)
<http://cicic.ca/>
- Self Assessment Readiness Tool for Medical Laboratory Assistants 04/25/2016
<https://assesshealthcareers.ca/>
- CSMLS web site, Alternative Careers for MLT 04/25/2016