

# Medical Laboratory Assistant (MLA)

## Overview

Medical Laboratory Assistants (MLA) collect, label, and process various specimens of the body including blood, body fluids, body tissues, and other samples in accordance with laboratory guidelines and procedures. They also provide support in quality management, maintenance and troubleshooting of the equipment and general support. They handle, shift and discard the hazardous and biological materials following the safety guidelines. They also perform certain testing procedures under supervision. MLAs also provide support in customer service in reception, answer queries, and provide information to the patients and healthcare providers upon their request. Their duties also include administrative duties such as filing, faxing, report distribution, and archiving of the documents.

Areas of clinical laboratory where they work include biochemistry, hematology, immunology, histology and microbiology departments. They operate various delicate, and hi-tech equipment such as light microscopes, advanced analyzing devices, and computers to test the samples.

MLAs may work in various settings such as hospital/clinic laboratories, blood banks, research laboratories of hospitals, universities and colleges.

<b>NOC Code</b>	Medical laboratory technicians and pathologists' assistants (3212)			
<b>Alias Job Titles</b>	Laboratory assistant - medical; Medical laboratory aide; Medical laboratory assistant; Medical laboratory helper; Medical laboratory technical assistant; Phlebotomist; Phlebotomy aide; Renal technician; Technical assistant - medical laboratory; Technical assistant - pathology;			
<b>Qualifications Required</b>	A 5-6 month certificate program on medical laboratory assistant available in many colleges across Canada. For examples:  <a href="#">SAIT</a> , <a href="#">NAIT</a> , <a href="#">Ontario colleges</a> , <a href="#">Saskatchewan Polytechnic</a> etc.  <a href="#">Find more</a>			
<b>Salary Range</b>	Average hourly	Range hourly	Average yearly	Range yearly
	\$23.07	\$11.92 - \$29.56	\$44,989	\$23,241 - \$57,648

<b>Job Demand</b>	<p>High</p> <p>Employment outlook is good to fair in most provinces. More information is available <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<b>Growth Opportunity</b>	<p>It depends on acquiring further education and training such as diploma program of Medical Laboratory Technologist.</p>
<b>Years' Experience Required</b>	<p>None. Requires a certificate program certificate from an <a href="#">accredited institution</a></p>
<b>Training Options (if available)</b>	<p>Programs available at across countries. List of accredited programs can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<b>Personal Qualities</b>	<p>Good communication skills; time management; medical terminology knowledge; Interest to spend long time in lab settings; ability to work in stressful situations at times; very diligent and careful; reasonable physical stamina; must be detail oriented and able to follow strict procedures; must be able to work both independently and as part of a team; should have good interpersonal skills; normal colour vision</p>
<b>Notes/Other Information</b>	<p>Medical laboratory assistants may need to work long time sitting or standing. They are required to be diligent and often need prolonged visual focus and repetitive motions.</p> <p>There is risk of being exposed to strong chemicals, biological hazards, infectious diseases and the potential for needle prick injuries. They need to be extremely cautious and careful to follow laboratory safety procedures to be safe from contracting infection, and ensure the safety of patients and co-workers, laboratory technologists practise safe work procedures.</p> <p>Medical laboratory assistants' work hours may vary. They may work full time, part time, or casual hours. In diagnostic laboratories they may have rotating shifts including day, evening and night shifts, weekends and holidays. In research laboratories, however, they standard weekday hours may apply usually.</p>

This is not regulated. However, certification through the [Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science](#) followed by an exam completion can be an asset for employment.

**Steps towards capacity building to become competitive for this job**

1. Get admitted into a certificate program for medical laboratory assistant in an accredited college with practicum in Canada and successful completion of the program.
2. Write and pass the national certification exam (preferred, not necessary) to be certified by the [Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science \(CSMLS\)](#).