

Alberta's Health Regions and Voluntary Organizations and the Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA)

This classification specification identifies representative duties and responsibilities, and is intended to assist in the determination of the appropriate classification level within each discipline. Some duties and responsibilities may overlap between class levels. The classification specification is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of all duties performed.

Classification Title: **Medical Laboratory Assistant I**

Date Updated: **May 20, 2008**

Job Summary:

This position performs specified technical functions including procurement, handling, processing, dispatching and testing of specimens.

Medical Laboratory Assistants (MLA's) will work in one or more of the following core areas: Phlebotomy, Anatomic Pathology/Histology, Cytology/Genetics (cytogenetics, molecular DNA, and biochemical) or Microbiology.

Key Responsibilities and Typical Duties:

Core Duties

The following are duties that are performed by all MLA's:

- Performs computer functions including patient registration, test order entry, specimen receiving, result inquiry and report printing.
- Collects specimens/samples.
- Dispatches patient reports and responds to phone calls for results.
- Accessions and packages specimens for shipping to referral labs and arranges appropriate transportation.
- Receives, matches and accessions specimens.
- Performs various methods of sterilization.
- Performs urinalysis and pregnancy tests and occult blood tests as required.
- Performs basic preventative maintenance and troubleshooting of laboratory equipment.
- Performs and records quality assurance for equipment.
- Stocks supplies and maintains inventory.

Phlebotomy

- Correctly identifies and prepares patients prior to collecting samples and obtains patient consent. This includes giving instructions to patients regarding specimen collection including home collections and fasting procedures.
- Collects blood samples including macro and micro samples, and cross-matches in a variety of settings.
- Processes swab samples, urine samples, stool samples, bodily fluid samples and ensures patient information is complete and matches requisition.
- May perform analytical processes for ECG's, hemoglobin and glucometers.

Anatomical Pathology/Histology

- Assist Pathologist with gross dissection: prepares tissue in preparation of embedding, identifies specimens, labels and submits tissue blocks, labels cassettes.
- Prepares reagents and stains.

Cytology

- Stains gynecological and non-gynecological specimens.
- May prepare fluid specimens submitted, using cyto-spin and cell block techniques.

Microbiology:

- May prepare a large variety of laboratory media, reagents, antibiotics and stains.
- Labels, plants and streaks media and conducts gram stain preparation.
- Performs parasitology preparation.
- Operates a variety of equipment such as plate pourers, autoclaves, balances, automatic pipettors and pH meter.
- Receives commercial media and distributes in house media products to other lab areas as required.
- May perform membrane filtration or multiple tube method on water samples.

Other Related Duties

The following are duties that are performed by all MLA's:

- Reports safety incidents or deficiencies to the technologist in charge and completes required documentation.
- Ensures equipment is in safe working order and maintained in keeping with standards.
- Assists the supervisor in the assessment, introduction, modification and evaluation of methodologies, supplies, equipment and physical layout of the area.

Leadership

- Participates in the orientation, training and evaluation of staff and students.

Decision-Making

- Recognizes unusual or abnormal patient samples or situations, and reports to appropriate individual(s).
- Directs patient flow, handles patient inquiries and redirects calls.

Knowledge:

Education

- Graduation from a recognized Medical Laboratory Assistant (MLA) Certificate Program or equivalent.

Additional Qualification/Designations/Certifications

- May require Transportation of Dangerous Goods certification.
- May require additional microbiology, urinalysis and histology courses.

Registration Requirements

- Eligible for registration, as a MLA with Alberta College of Medical Laboratory Technologists (ACMLT).

Working Conditions:

Physical Demands

- Walking, bending, lifting and long periods of standing required.
- Assists with patient transfers and helping people in and out of collection chairs.
- Close visual attention required for extended periods of time.

Work Environment

- Exposure to needlesticks, infectious microbes, a variety of biological hazards, chemical hazards, toxic fumes, and concentrated acids.
- Exposure to heat, cold and noise.
- Requires protective clothing.
- Potential exposure to patients who just had radiation exposure.