

# MEDICAL LABORATORY ASSISTANTS



## BCSLs CERTIFICATION INFORMATION

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# ARE YOU BCSLS CERTIFIED?

**TEST:** You are BCSLS certified if your membership number has a 'M' 'C' or 'CM' in it. (i.e. 9999CM)

Did you know that current MLA members who are also BCSLS certified are covered by **professional liability insurance?**

## Membership .vs. Certification

Membership and BCSLS MLA certification are two different issues.

**Certification** is a one time process and cost. The BCSLS MLA Certificate is awarded to an individual to recognize the individual's completion of an education program (or equivalent) approved by the BCSLS (presently Vancouver Community College, University College of the Cariboo, Stenberg College, CDI College, Camosun College and West Coast College of Health Care, Thompson Rivers University, MTI ), or have certification through OSMT.

If you choose to join BCSLS (membership) at the same time as you apply for certification, you are eligible for a years reduced membership rate. Both certification and membership are voluntary – you can apply for certification only, membership only or both.

**Membership** is renewed each year for a 12 month period. Membership has many benefits –Leadership opportunities, significant discounts on educational seminars and Congress, bursaries, our newsletter, the right to vote at the Annual General Meeting and hold elected office in BCSLS and Liability Insurance (if BCSLS Certified).

If you qualify for certification and **wish to apply**, please apply on our website BCSLS/Membership – look for purple registration button. You will need to email or fax a copy of your diploma/certificate.

# **MEDICAL LABORATORY ASSISTANT CERTIFICATION**

## **INFORMATION PACKAGE**

### **1. GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **BRITISH COLUMBIA SOCIETY OF LABORATORY SCIENCE (BCSLS)**

The BCSLS is a recognized provincial, professional association representing Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLT's) and Medical Laboratory Assistants (MLA's). The BCSLS's mission is to provide leadership and opportunities that meet the needs of its members for Education, Representation and Fellowship. BCSLS established a voluntary certification program for medical laboratory assistants in 1996 which relies on the cooperation of employers, educational institutions and medical laboratory professionals. As members of the BCSLS, MLA's will have a voice in their future, the opportunity to plan their role within the laboratory, and participate in the Continuing Education Programs offered by the Society.

#### **BCSLS POSITION STATEMENT ON MEDICAL LABORATORY ASSISTANTS**

There is a role in laboratory medicine for support personnel to perform tasks requiring skills that do not require laboratory test evaluation, interpretation or assessment. These support functions have a direct effect on the health and well-being of patients; therefore it is necessary for people who perform these functions to be appropriately trained.

The BCSLS recognizes these support functions and the role of the MLA within the field of laboratory medicine. The BCSLS has established a curriculum and basic standards for the training of MLA's. To gain BCSLS endorsement, training programs must follow the curriculum guidelines as outlined in a separate document.

The BCSLS encourages MLA's to join the Society, and benefit from the advocacy, fellowship and professional development opportunities offered by the Society. Laboratory test results have a direct impact on the diagnosis of disease and on patients'

treatment and follow-up. In the interests of patient safety, trained and qualified individuals should perform laboratory testing.

## 2. **DEFINITIONS**

### *Certification:*

Certification is a process in which an individual's training/education is formally evaluated and recognized as meeting certain predetermined standards. The certification process is usually undertaken by a professional organization. The purpose of certification is to assure that certified individuals meet specified standards to ensure the safe, ethical practice of a profession or service.

### *General Certification (Medical Laboratory Assistant)*

For the purposes of certification a Medical Laboratory Assistant is a person employed in a medical laboratory who has been trained in phlebotomy, specimen processing and electrocardiography. A certified Medical Laboratory Assistant has demonstrated theoretical knowledge and practical competence for the procedures and tasks they perform.

### *Subject Phlebotomy Certification (MLA)*

For the purposes of certification, an MLA – Subject Phlebotomy – is a person employed in a medical laboratory who has been trained in phlebotomy and specimen processing. A certified (subject phlebotomy) MLA has demonstrated theoretical knowledge and practical competency for the procedures and tasks they perform.

## 3. **BCSLS CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:**

In order to become BCSLS certified, individuals must qualify under one of the following four categories:

**ONE:** successful completion of a BCSLS approved MLA program which includes a practicum and/or work experience of a minimum of 120 hours in a Canadian laboratory. The MLA programs offered by the following schools have been BCSLS approved:

1. VCC: Vancouver Community College (1998)
2. Thompson Rivers University (2003)
3. Stenberg College (2003)
4. Camosun College (1998)
5. West Coast College of Health Care (1998)
6. MTI Community College (2006)
7. CDI College (2008)
8. University College of the Cariboo (1998 - 2004)
9. Vancouver Career College (2013)

**TWO:** Successfully write the challenge exam through OSMT <http://www.osmt.org/>, Phone: (416) 485-6768, and then with that certificate, you can apply for BCSLS certification.

**THREE:** Successfully completed the first year of one of the BC MLT programs. You will be issued a temporary Phlebotomy MLA Certificate.

**FOUR:** If your diploma is from Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

#### 4. **APPLICATION PROCESS**

1. Complete application (On-line or Mail in form) found on the website. You will need to email/fax the office a copy of your diploma/certificate.
2. The BCSLS will review all applications to determine whether the requirements have been met.
3. When the application has been approved, the applicant will be issued a certificate.

Note: CSMLS certification for MLA's does not have an ECG component that BC requires to work - so anyone wanting BC certification should consider getting certified through BCSLS instead of/as well as CSMLS.

# **CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS FOR MEDICAL LABORATORY ASSISTANT TRAINING**

## **Curriculum Outline:**

- The role of the Medical Laboratory Assistant
- Professionalism and Customer Service
- Confidentiality, Medical Legal and Ethical Issues
- Interpersonal Communications
- Quality Assurance/Improvement
- Anatomy and Physiology
- Laboratory Terminology and Measurement
- Safety, including WHMIS and Infection Control
- Specimen collection: Terminology and Conditions
- Blood collection
  - Venipuncture
  - Micro collection
- Urine and Miscellaneous Specimens
- Patient Preparation
- Sample Requirements
- Specimen Handling, Transport, Including TDG, Storage and Disposal
  - Protocols and procedures for Chemistry, Hematology  
Microbiology Immunohematology, Histology
  - Laboratory Equipment
  - Documentation Requirements
  - Test Libraries
- Cardiology
  - Anatomy of the Heart and Conductive System
  - Lead Theory
  - Electrocardiogram Equipment
  - Recording Electrocardiograms
  - Identification of normal/abnormal Electrocardiograms