



American Society for
Clinical Pathology



ASCP
BOARD OF
CERTIFICATION®

For more information on laboratory
professional credentialing, check out
the ASCP Board of Certification.



How do I start or accelerate my career in the laboratory?

Many career opportunities are available as a laboratory professional, spanning the healthcare continuum and including laboratory medicine, pathology, and other laboratory domains. The professional roles range from entry level through doctoral levels, with significant opportunities for career advancement. These professional development opportunities may be achieved through additional education and credentialing examinations. Learn how laboratory professionals contribute to patient care and join the team that provides up to 70% of medical diagnoses.

Each of these careers plays a critical role in healthcare, diagnosing patients, and saving lives.

EDUCATION & ASCP BOC CREDENTIALS

TIER
5

Doctoral
degree

Anatomic Pathologist (MD)

Specializes in the diagnostic interpretation of organs and tissues (including blood) through a variety of macroscopic, microscopic, and molecular methods.

Mean Annual Salary: \$300,000[†]

Clinical Pathologist (MD)

Directs laboratories and serves as the central link between the patient, the provider, and the laboratory. Reviews and interprets laboratory data from patients to help guide clinical decisions.

Mean Annual Salary: \$300,000[†]

Medical Laboratory Director with Doctoral Degree (including PhD)

Directs medical and public health laboratories specializing in microbiology, chemistry, immunology and molecular diagnostics and serve as clinical consultants to providers.

Mean Annual Salary: \$135–160,000[†]

TIER
4

Master's
Degree

Pathologists' Assistant

Conducts the examination and evaluation of surgical pathology specimens and post-mortem dissections. A highly trained, credentialed healthcare professional who works under the supervision of an Anatomic Pathologist.

Mean Annual Salary: \$105,500 (Median: \$102,000)[†]

Cytologist*

Provides advanced diagnostic services and physician support by performing microscopic interpretations of body fluids and conducting companion technologies.

Mean Annual Salary: \$90,700
(Median: \$92,000)

*Cytology programs are in a transition period, moving to Master's level degrees.

Medical Laboratory Scientist

Performs the majority of tests in clinical laboratories to diagnose and monitor patient health and disease. Techniques include microscopy, immunodiagnostics, culture of microbes, mass spectrometry, PCR, DNA sequencing, and more.

Mean Annual Salary: \$86,900
(Median: \$83,200)[†]

TIER
3

4-year
degree

Histotechnologist

Performs both routine and complex histologic techniques such as enzyme histochemistry, immunohistochemistry, in situ hybridization, and immunofluorescence on tissue samples for microscopic examination by a pathologist to diagnose disease. Knowledgeable in the areas of pathology, management, education, and regulations that impact the field of histotechnology.

Mean Annual Salary: \$89,100 (Median: \$85,500)[†]

TIER
2

2-year
degree

Histotechnician

Prepares tissue samples for microscopic review by a Pathologist. Uses special equipment and techniques to cut tissue and fix it to glass slides prior to performing various staining methods. The Histotechnician is an integral part of the Anatomic Pathology team.

Mean Annual Salary: \$83,900 (Median: \$79,800)[†]

Medical Laboratory Technician

Performs routine medical laboratory tests for the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease. Tasks may be similar to medical laboratory scientist in many laboratories.

Mean Annual Salary: \$68,700
(Median: \$68,800)[†]

TIER
1

Certificate programs
earned through NAACLS
accredited programs. Often
2 years or less in college.

Medical Laboratory Assistant

Manages patient specimens, maintaining quality from collection, labeling, handling, processing, testing, billing and storage. May work in a variety of inpatient, clinic, outpatient, referral, or research settings.

Mean Annual Salary: \$41,200
(Median: \$38,200)[†]

Phlebotomist

Collects blood from patients and is the most patient adjacent member of the laboratory team. Communicate frequently with doctors, nurses and patients.

Mean Annual Salary: \$37,000
(Median: \$35,800)[†]



[whatsmynext.org](https://www.whatsmynext.org)

[†] Salaries are based on a national average and will vary by location, years of service and other factors.

Updated: 06/10/25