

MEDICAL LABORATORY ASSISTANT (MLA)



What do I do?

A Medical Laboratory Assistant works in various areas of the laboratory, registering patients, collecting samples, and assessing the acceptability of samples for testing. Processes samples for testing including centrifugation, aliquoting, storage, and shipping. Provides support for clinical testing including preparing slides, loading instruments, and reviewing results. Performs waived and point-of-care testing.

My typical day includes:

- **Proper identification** of each patient in order to collect the correct specimen.
- **Accurate labeling** of each specimen and **proper handling**.
- **Timely receipt** and **processing of samples** within the laboratory for testing.
- **Performing instrument maintenance** to monitor analytic equipment status.
- Performing quality control assessments.
- Preparing samples to ship for referral lab testing.

Necessary Skill Sets



COMMUNICATION

Includes both written and verbal communication skills. Medical Laboratory Assistants need to communicate clearly and efficiently with patients and others in the laboratory and healthcare team.



TECHNICAL SKILLS

Develop an in-depth knowledge of proper processes for handling patient specimens and for oversight of the medical equipment used in diagnostic testing.



INTERPERSONAL

Also known as “people skills”, these include cooperation and teamwork. Active listening is an example of a skill integral to the respect, as well as, co-workers in the laboratory and others on the healthcare team.



TIME MANAGEMENT

Prioritize tasks and responsibilities so work is performed in an efficient and timely manner for optimal patient care.



ATTENTION TO DETAIL

This refers to being thorough and accurate when performing tasks because a patient's care is dependent upon error free work.



ANALYTICAL SKILLS

Assessing each activity from specimen collection, labeling and processing to evaluation of instrument performance and quality control to ensure an accurate, high quality result.

Education Requirements

Must have a minimum of a high school diploma.

Note: For examination eligibility requirements, including alternate education/training routes, refer to the link provided under certification section.

Certification

[Earn certification as a Medical Laboratory Assistant \(MLA\) from the American Society for Clinical Pathology Board of Certification \(ASCP BOC\).](#)

Salary

Mean Annual Salary*: \$41,200 (Median: \$38,200)

* Salaries are based on a national average and will vary by location, years of service and other factors. [\(ASCP Data\)](#)