

MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNICIAN (MLT) CERTIFICATION

WHO ISSUES THE CERTIFICATION?

The [American Society for Clinical Pathology \(ASCP\) Board of Certification \(BOC\)](#).

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CERTIFICATION?

The [MLT](#) verifies that the holder is highly qualified to collect and process biological specimens to perform routine laboratory tests and thus protect public health.

WHAT IS THE CAREER LEVEL OF THE CERTIFICATION AND WHO IS IT GEARED TO?

The MLT is an entry-level certification geared to graduates of associate's degree programs either in allied health or those that include at least six credit hours in both chemistry and biology.

WHAT ARE THE EDUCATION AND/OR EXPERIENCE PREREQUISITES FOR THE CERTIFICATION?

There are multiple routes to the MLT, all of which require one of the following in addition to various other requirements:

- » An associate's degree or at least 60 credits earned from a college/university accredited by a regional or national accreditation agency.
- » Completion of an Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) or National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) accredited medical laboratory technician program within the last five years.

WHAT IS THE COST AND STRUCTURE OF THE CERTIFICATION'S EXAM(S)?

The application fee for the certification is \$215, which also includes the exam. ASCP BOC uses computer-adaptive testing that is criterion-referenced in a two-and-a-half hour, 100 question exam of knowledge and skills that is administered at a Pearson VUE test center.

WHAT IS THE GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE OF THE CERTIFICATION?

International.

IS THE CERTIFICATION ACCREDITED?

Yes, ASCP BOC meets the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB) accreditation program requirements and those set forth in ISO/IEC 17024:2012 *Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons* for the MLT program.

HOW LONG IS THE CERTIFICATION VALID?

It is valid for three years.

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IS THERE A PROCESS FOR RENEWING THE CERTIFICATION, OR RECERTIFICATION?

Yes, ASCP BOC has a certification maintenance program, and MLTs must accrue a minimum number of points that are awarded for various achievements (e.g., completing qualifying courses, obtaining employer or equipment vendor instruction, or through documentation by a supervisor of continuing competency in specific technical areas).

CAN THE CERTIFICATION BE REVOKED?

Yes, but it is rare and involves either fraudulent claim of recertification or of having a higher certification than what was originally earned. A bigger problem for ASCP BOC is pursuing action against individuals who fraudulently claim to have the certification.

IS THE CERTIFICATION LINKED TO LICENSURE?

Yes, 11 states license medical laboratory technicians.

HOW DOES THE CERTIFICATION RELATE TO OTHER ASCP CERTIFICATIONS OR THOSE OF OTHER CERTIFICATION BODIES?

ASCP BOC also offers a Medical Laboratory Scientist (MLS) certification, but most people who obtain the MLS do so without first obtaining the MLT, as it is not a prerequisite for the MLS. However, there is an eligibility route by which you can advance to the MLS if you have the MLT, a bachelor's degree, and additional experience. There are also competing certifications offered by the American Medical Technologists.

WHAT ARE SOME ORGANIZATIONS OR INDUSTRIES THAT RECOGNIZE OR USE THE CERTIFICATION?

Hospitals, clinics, blood banks, reference and research laboratories (e.g., Abbott), public health agencies, and large physician practices.

ARE THERE ANY COMPANIES, CORPORATIONS, OR OTHER ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE PUBLICLY DECLARED THEY PREFER OR REQUIRE THE CERTIFICATION?

Federal regulations set standards for the training of laboratory personnel, and for legal and insurance reasons, the big hospitals and reference labs find that by requiring the certification, which has higher standards than the regulations require, they can conveniently meet the requirements of the regulations. On the other hand, many rural hospitals and doctor's offices will not require or even prefer it for hiring because they have difficulty attracting candidates, but request that new hires obtain it within the first year or two of employment if they do not already have it.

WHAT OCCUPATIONS USE THE CERTIFICATION?

Medical laboratory technicians are among several occupations within the medical laboratory setting, including phlebotomist, medical laboratory scientist, cytotechnologist, and histotechnician/histotechnologist.

DOES ASCP OFFER TRAINING MATERIALS TO HELP INDIVIDUALS PREPARE FOR THE CERTIFICATION EXAM?

Yes, ASCP offers a study guide and practice exam, which costs \$99 for members or \$119 for non-members. They also sell online preparatory courses and other materials.