

# Medical Lab Technician (MLT)

## Referral Checklist and FAQ

### What is the MLT Program?

Graduates of a Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) program are members of the healthcare team who provide clinical information for disease prevention, medical diagnosis and treatment of a patient by processing specimens and performing laboratory tests. Medical Laboratory Technicians (MLTs) are trained to perform a variety of general laboratory tests in hospital, clinic or private medical laboratories. The laboratory procedures performed by MLTs use an array of precision instruments and a variety of automated and electronic equipment. Upon completion of an MLT program, students will receive either an Associate degree in Medical Laboratory Technology or for those individuals already possessing a degree, a certificate. Students will be eligible to sit for a certification examination approved by Laboratory Field Services.

***MLT programs are designed to be completed in two years, but some schools offer alternative scheduling to accommodate part-time students.***

### What is a Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT)?

- MLTs are an important part of the medical team. Working together with pathologists, specialists and Clinical Laboratory Scientists (CLS) they help determine the presence, extent or absence of disease and provide vital data to evaluate the effectiveness of treatment.
- MLTs are mid level laboratory professionals who under the supervision of a Clinical laboratory Scientist perform routine testing in the clinical laboratory. MLTs operate, maintain and troubleshoot high tech automated medical instrumentation.
- MLTs are graduates of nationally accredited or state approved MLT training programs which include academic and practical training. Core courses include: Chemistry, Hematology, Immunology, Blood Bank (nationally accredited programs only), Urinalysis and Body Fluids, Coagulation, Microbiology. Practical training includes hands-on experience in each area of a clinical laboratory.
- MLTs pass a national exam certifying them as a Medical Laboratory Technician.
- MLTs are required to complete 24 hours of continuing education each 2 year period as a condition of California MLT license renewal.
- MLTs are the second step in the Career Ladder between a Phlebotomist and a Clinical laboratory Scientist (CLS)

### How do I become an MLT?

- Obtain an Associates degree or certificate from a nationally accredited or state approved MLT training program.
- Pass a state approved MLT certification examination
- MLT training programs can be completed in 2 years, but many schools offer alternative scheduling to accommodate part-time students.



### MLT Program Locations

#### San Francisco Bay Area

DeAnza College  
Diablo Valley College

#### San Diego

Southwestern College  
Miramar College

#### Orange County

Saddleback College

#### Los Angeles

College of the Canyons

#### Sacramento

Folsom Lake College

### What kind of classes do I need to take before being accepted into a MLT program?

Each MLT Program will have their own specific program prerequisites. Check the specific school's website for exact courses. This field requires a strong background in science which may include courses in:

- Human Anatomy & Physiology
- Chemistry
- Microbiology
- CA Phlebotomy certification (CPT-1) – this may be included in an MLT training program, check the specific school's website

### As an MLT will I find a job?

- Currently there are severe laboratory staffing shortages nationwide including California. Position vacancy rates range from 9%-20%.
- Job projections predict the need for clinical laboratory professionals will increase in the next 8 years due to increase demand for testing and replacement of retirees.
- MLTs enjoy excellent salaries and benefits as well as great opportunities for lifelong learning through continued education.

### As a MLT, where can I work?

- Hospital laboratories
- Clinics
- Physician Offices
- Commercial laboratories
- Veterinary laboratories
- Research laboratories
- Biotechnology
- Pharmaceutical companies



### Will I make a good MLT?

- Are you a problem solver who enjoys challenging questions?
- Are you interested in combining the study of biology and chemistry with the exploration of state of the art technology to make a difference in patient care?
- Are you interested in becoming part of the health care team, performing testing to assist in the detection, diagnosis and treatment of disease? 85% of diagnostic treatment formulated by physicians is based on information obtained by laboratory professionals.
- Are you interested in becoming part of the health care team, performing testing to assist in the detection, diagnosis and treatment of disease? 85% of diagnostic treatment formulated by physicians is based on information obtained by laboratory professionals.
- Are you deeply committed to a laboratory profession and truly fascinated by all that science has to offer?
- Do you possess these qualities: accurate, dedicated, self-motivated, problem solver, always looking for a challenge, welcoming responsibility, reliable, possess good communication skills, and work well under pressure?
- Do you have the ability to relate to people, a capacity for calm and reasoned judgment and commitment to the patient?
- Can you keep patient data confidential?

### Are there opportunities for advancement?

MLTs are the 2nd step in the Laboratory Career Ladder after Phlebotomist and under Clinical Laboratory Scientist (CLS).

CALIFORNIA  
LAB SCIENCE CAREERS  
PROJECT