



ASCP BOARD OF
CERTIFICATION

Medical Laboratory Job Titles and Descriptions for the 21st Century

Overview

The Model Job Titles and Job Descriptions that follow are based on “Standardizing the Professional Title of Medical Laboratory Professionals,” a joint position paper from the American Society for Clinical Pathology Board of Certification (ASCP BOC) and the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS).

In 2020, the American Society for Clinical Pathology Board of Certification (ASCP BOC) and the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS) adopted a position paper entitled “[Standardizing the Professional Title of Medical Laboratory Professionals](#).”

The paper supported standardization of nomenclature for certified baccalaureate-educated clinical laboratory personnel to be called Medical Laboratory Scientists (MLS). Subsequently ASCP BOC formed a task force to encourage implementation of the position paper’s recommendations. The task force issued a [report](#) in 2022 recommending the following:

- All individuals holding a baccalaureate degree and performing the work typically assigned to medical technologists/medical laboratory scientists/clinical laboratory scientists should have the title “medical laboratory scientist.”
- Individuals performing the work typically assigned to medical technologists/medical laboratory scientists but qualified to work only in a single department or area (i.e. categorical) should have the title “medical laboratory scientist”.
- Medical laboratory scientist staff who hold national certification should be recognized for their achievement and investment in their job titles and designations.

To follow are sample job descriptions and job titles for baccalaureate, entry-level categorical and generalist medical laboratory personnel performing moderate and high complexity testing as defined by the CLIA (Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments) standards. These may be used as a model and be modified as needed to conform to institutional practices or licensing requirements, while implementing the spirit of the position paper and the task force report. They should also guide job titles for more experienced staff and for supervisory roles thus creating consistency in job titles that will contribute to greater recognition for the medical laboratory science profession. A comparison of MLS to Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) job descriptions and qualifications is provided to assist in providing clarity on the expected distinctions.

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Model Job Titles and Job Descriptions based on “Standardizing the Professional Title of Medical Laboratory Professionals”

TITLES AND QUALIFICATIONS

These recommendations apply to organizational job titles. Currently, institutional job titles and credential titles do not always match; that is, an individual certified as MLS(ASCP) may have a job title of “medical technologist.” Furthermore, job titles are not consistent across institutions. It is hoped that these inconsistencies will diminish over time as more institutions adopt these recommendations. When new job titles are adopted or implemented, it will not change credential titles of individuals; that is the purview of their certifying agency. Laboratory professionals should consult their credentialing agency for proper credential designations.

Individuals presenting combinations of academic degrees, credentials, and work experience not conforming to these models may be classified according to organizational precedents and practices. However, only certified individuals should carry the designation “certified” in their position title.

Job title	Certified Medical Laboratory Scientist	Medical Laboratory Scientist	Certified Medical Laboratory Technician	Medical Laboratory Technician
Designation	cMLS	MLS	cMLT	MLT
Education	Minimum of a Bachelor of Science degree from an accredited college or university in medical laboratory science, clinical laboratory science, medical technology or related biological or chemical science.	Minimum of a Bachelor of Science degree from an accredited college or university in medical laboratory science, clinical laboratory science, medical technology or related biological or chemical science.	Minimum of an Associate degree from an accredited college or university in medical laboratory technology, clinical laboratory technology, or related biological or chemical science.	Minimum of an Associate degree from an accredited college or university in medical laboratory technology, clinical laboratory technology, or related biological or chemical science.
	and	and	and	and
Credential	Certification from an accredited certifying body as MLS generalist, categorical (BB/H/M/C), or specialist (SBB/SC/SH/SM) or other categorical certification by the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) Board of Certification (BOC) or equivalent is required. and State license as required.	State license as required.	Certification from an accredited certifying body as an MLT or equivalent. State license as required.	State license as required.
	and		and	
Experience	Experience working in a medical/public health laboratory setting as obtained from prior work experience or that obtained in clinical rotations through required education.	Experience working in a laboratory setting as obtained from prior work experience desirable; medical, public health, or clinical laboratory work preferred.	Experience working in a medical/public health laboratory setting as obtained from prior work experience or that obtained in clinical rotations through required education.	Experience working in a laboratory setting as obtained from prior work experience desirable; medical, public health, or clinical laboratory work preferred.

As pertains to job titles and qualifications, employers and laboratory hiring managers should also ensure their job descriptions align to current, applicable CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) CLIA (Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments) personnel standards and state regulations (including but not limited to licensure).

MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENTIST (MLS) DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

May vary with organizational structure, individual responsibilities, and organizational culture.

Contributes to high-quality, safe laboratory practices in service to patients.
Handles and processes specimens, ensuring proper identification.
Performs accurate clinical/diagnostic testing, routine, specialized, and esoteric testing, according to standard operating procedures (SOPs) on human biological samples within the scope of practice of one's education and training.
Recognizes and resolves problems that result in inaccurate test results, relying on procedures and applying scientific knowledge.
Analyzes, interprets, and reports laboratory results according to protocols and regulatory requirements.
Exercises independent judgment and critical thinking in non-routine circumstances to solve problems.
Maintains accurate, current, and complete records.
Operates laboratory equipment correctly, performs troubleshooting according to procedures and explores new solutions as needed to resolve problems.
Communicates effectively to other shifts and interdepartmentally when appropriate, regarding patient and operational issues.
Performs required quality control testing on equipment and reagents. Knows acceptable levels of performance.
Documents corrective actions taken for problem resolution, instrument maintenance, or quality control/test performance.
Meets all personnel standards in governing, regulatory and accreditation requirements for clinical laboratory testing.
Participates in proficiency testing and competency assessments to meet regulatory requirements.
Maintains controlled inventories of reagents and laboratory materials.
Conducts education and training for new personnel, fellows, residents, students and visitors within the MLS scope of practice.
Listens, anticipates, and responds to the needs of internal and external customers and strives to meet expectations.
Communicates clearly, accurately, and respectfully with customers and colleagues, ensuring that necessary information is shared.
Notifies management or other key stakeholders of problems or issues, as appropriate.
Works effectively inter or intra-departmentally and with project teams to meet customer needs and organizational goals.
Participates in quality and process improvement projects.
Attends and participates in continuing education opportunities to maintain relevancy and currency in professional practices and standards.
Applies evidenced based strategies to the solution of laboratory problems and testing decisions.
Conforms to organizational and ASCP Board of Certification Guidelines for Ethical Behavior or standards of practice of the individual's certifying agency and organization.
Maintains patient confidentiality per HIPAA guidelines.

MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNICIAN (MLT) DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

May vary with organizational structure, individual responsibilities, and organizational culture.

Contributes to high-quality, safe laboratory practices in service to patients.
Handles and processes specimens, ensuring proper identification.
Performs accurate, routine clinical/diagnostic testing according to SOPs on human biological samples within the scope of practice of one's education and training.
Recognizes and resolves problems that result in inaccurate test results, according to procedures.
Analyzes, interprets, and reports laboratory results according to protocols and regulatory requirements.
Maintains accurate, current, and complete records.
Operates laboratory equipment correctly, performs troubleshooting according to procedures as needed to resolve problems.
Communicates effectively to other shifts and interdepartmentally when appropriate, regarding patient and operational issues.
Performs required quality control testing on equipment and reagents. Knows acceptable levels of performance.
Documents corrective actions taken for problem resolution, instrument maintenance, or quality control/test performance.
Meets all personnel standards in governing, regulatory and accreditation requirements for clinical laboratory testing.
Participates in proficiency testing and competency assessments to meet regulatory requirements.
Maintains controlled inventories of reagents and laboratory materials.
Assists as directed in education and training of new personnel, fellows, residents, students and visitors within the MLT scope of practice.
Listens, anticipates, and responds to the needs of internal and external customers and strives to meet expectations.
Communicates clearly, accurately, and respectfully with customers and colleagues, ensuring that necessary information is shared.
Notifies management or other key stakeholders of problems or issues as appropriate.
Works effectively inter or intra-departmentally and with project teams to meet customer needs and organizational goals.
Participates in quality and process improvement projects.
Attends and participates in continuing education opportunities to maintain relevancy and currency in professional practices and standards.
Conforms to organizational and ASCP Board of Certification Guidelines for Ethical Behavior or standards of practice of the individual's certifying agency and organization.
Maintains patient confidentiality per HIPAA guidelines.

Skills and Knowledge Required

- Prioritize patient safety and high-quality work.
- Demonstrate effective time management and organizational skills to perform multiple laboratory functions simultaneously.
- Demonstrate strong attention to detail and analytical ability to evaluate and ensure accuracy of data related to laboratory results and patient information.
- Possess effective verbal and written communication skills necessary to explain factual and theoretical information to advise stakeholders and coworkers as needed.
- Solve problems effectively and think critically.
- Work independently and as a team member.

Tools and Technology Used

- Personal computer (desktop, laptop, tablet).
- General office equipment (computer, printer, fax, copy machine).
- Microsoft® suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook).
- Laboratory information systems (LIS) and electronic health records (EHR).
- General laboratory equipment including, but not limited to large, sophisticated laboratory analyzers as well as centrifuges, automated cell washers and incubators/ waterbaths for performing clinical tests.
- Other, per organizational requirements.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS AND WORKING CONDITIONS

Institutional requirements should be inserted here, depending on organizational structure and specific position responsibilities, and organizational culture.

This job description reflects the current assignment of essential functions and is not meant to be all-inclusive or in any way construed as an employment contract. Duties and responsibilities may be assigned or reassigned to this position at any time and may be modified to reasonably accommodate an individual with a disability or for other reasons solely at management's discretion.

Mark as appropriate to the position: (1 = Rarely/Never; 2 = Occasionally; 3 = Frequently and 4 = Consistently)

Activity	1	2	3	4
Eye-Hand Coordination				
Climbing				
Kneeling				
Pulling				
Pushing				
Reaching				
Standing				
Sitting				
Stooping				
Walking				
Range of Motion				
• Arms				
• Shoulders				
Talking				
• Normal Conversations				
• Loud Commands or Public Speaking				
Hearing				
• Normal Conversations				
• Other Sounds or Auditory Alarms				

Activity	1	2	3	4
Vision				
• Acuity, Near				
• Acuity, Far				
• Color Vision				
Use of Hands				
• General Manual Dexterity				
• Keyboard Skills or Typing				
Lifting				
• Over 50 lb				
• Over 25 lb				
• Under 25 lb				
Memory				
• Short Term				
• Long Term				
Analytical Thinking				
Attention to Detail				
Concentration				
Decision Making				
Reading				
Writing				