



OCCLSA

The Oklahoma Consortium of Clinical Laboratory Science Affiliates is a group of representatives from accredited hospitals and affiliated universities that are involved in the education of medical laboratory scientists. The OCCLSA is prepared to meet the challenges and rewards of the future in medical laboratory science education in order to promote the advancement of knowledge in the field and to prepare capable individuals to perform in clinical laboratories. Its purpose is to bring together the university and accredited hospital faculty involved in the education of medical laboratory scientists and to analyze the instructional curriculum of both the university and accredited hospital based programs.

The Medical Laboratory Scientist

Also referred to as medical technologists or clinical laboratory scientists, medical laboratory scientists have the best of both worlds with the challenges and rewards of a combination of medicine and technology. They are vital health care detectives that perform laboratory testing on patient samples to provide information needed to diagnose or monitor treatment. They uncover and provide laboratory information from laboratory analyses that assist physicians in patient diagnosis and treatment, as well as in disease monitoring or prevention. Examples of common laboratory tests include diagnostic testing for:

- Anemia
- Cancer
- Heart Attacks
- Diabetes
- Strep throat
- Identification of bacteria or viruses that cause infections
- Drugs of abuse
- Infectious mononucleosis
- Blood transfusion compatibility



Sophisticated biomedical instrumentation and technology, computers, microscopes, and methods requiring manual dexterity are used to perform laboratory testing on blood and body fluids. A few duties include operating computerized instruments, identifying abnormal cells, assuring safe transfusion of blood products, culturing and identifying bacteria and viruses, correlating test results with patient's condition, selecting and evaluating lab equipment, and monitoring the quality of testing. In addition, they consult with other members of the healthcare team, have the ability to relate to people, and demonstrate a commitment to patient care. A variety of disciplines within the profession keeps the field exciting and interesting:

- Clinical Chemistry
- Hematology
- Immunology
- Immunohematology (blood bank/transfusion medicine)
- Microbiology
- Molecular Biology



Is this profession right for you?

- Have a strong interest in science?
- Want a career in health care with minimal patient contact?
- Like challenge and responsibility?
- Like to solve problems?
- Are you a team player?
- Work well under pressure?
- Are you self-motivated?
- Enjoy working with computers and new technology?
- Are you detail-oriented?



Job Prospects

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the profession is projected to have a 22 percent increase in employment from 2012 to 2022—twice that of all other occupations. Students typically receive one or two job offers in their final semester while doing their clinical internships. Currently there is a shortage in many parts of the U.S. meaning greater job security and employment at higher salaries for graduates.

Earning Potential

The salary for laboratory professionals varies according to their level and geographic location. According to the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) 2013 Wage Survey of Clinical Laboratories in the United States, the national average is \$56,430 per year for medical laboratory scientists and \$77,113 per year at the supervisory level. Salaries are higher for those who become managers or lab directors.

Educational Requirements

Medical laboratory scientists complete a baccalaureate degree program that includes in depth courses for each major discipline as well as management and education courses. Such courses are offered through a hospital-based program that provides the senior year for students from affiliated universities. College graduates who meet a program's prerequisites are also eligible to apply to a medical laboratory science program.

How to become a Medical Laboratory Scientist

- 1) Medical laboratory scientists (also known as medical technologists or clinical laboratory scientists) must have a B.S. degree in medical laboratory science/ medical technology or one of the life sciences.
- 2) To work as a medical laboratory scientist (MLS), you need to be certified by the Board of Certification (BOC) of the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) once you have a degree.
- 3) To be eligible to take the MLS Board of Certification examination, you must complete a clinical internship accredited by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS). These programs prepare students with a combination of lectures and clinical rotations in hematology, clinical chemistry, microbiology, mycology, parasitology, immunology, immunohematology (blood bank), and sometimes genetics. Accreditation of medical laboratory science programs by NAACLS ensures that the programs maintain high educational standards.

Contact an OCCLSA member for more information

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