



# “What is the OSMT?”

The **Ontario Society of Medical Technologists (OSMT)** represents the common interests of the **Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs)** and **Medical Laboratory Assistants/Technicians (MLA/Ts)** of the province of Ontario. As a member-driven, non-profit Society, the **OSMT** serves as the authoritative voice and advocate of its membership with government, employers, the public, regulatory bodies, educational institutions, and other health care professions. The **OSMT** is dedicated to enhancing quality standards and fostering recognition of laboratory professionals.

The **OSMT** offers many privileges and benefits to its members. These include education programs, annual conferences, certification of **MLA/Ts**, professional liability insurance coverage, and a variety of affinity programs. The **OSMT** also provides many professional and leadership opportunities, and creates venues to address issues of concern to the laboratory profession.

**They say that life is found in the small things.**

## Disciplines

### Laboratory Information Management

Using laboratory data to improve health care outcomes.

### Patient Relations

At the bedside, with patients, performing venipuncture and laboratory tests.

### Clinical Chemistry

The measurement of chemical components of blood and body fluids including hormones and drugs.

### Clinical Genetics

The study of chromosomes, DNA and RNA from cells of body fluids and tissues to diagnose genetic diseases and cancer.

### Clinical Microbiology

The study of bacteria, fungi, viruses, and parasites which invade the body.

### Diagnostic Cytology

The study of cells for the detection of cancer.

### Electron Microscopy

Highly magnified electron images of cells are prepared in order to capture details ordinary microscopes cannot detect.

### Hematology

The study of diseases in blood cells and the clotting mechanisms of the blood.

### Histotechnology

The preparation of tissue samples for microscopic analysis such as tumor samples removed during an operation for breast, lung, or prostate cancer.

### Immunology

The study of the body's defence mechanisms against disease.

### Transfusion Science

The determination of blood types and cross-matching for transfusion.



Ontario Society of  
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Phone: (416) 485-6768  
Toll-Free: 1-800-461-6768  
Fax: (416) 485-7660  
E-Mail: [osmt@osmt.org](mailto:osmt@osmt.org)  
Website: [www.osmt.org](http://www.osmt.org)

234 Eglinton Avenue East  
Suite 402  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4P 1K5

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**MICROSCOPES AND MICROBES, COMPUTERS AND CHROMOSOMES**  
these are some of the things that **Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs)** and **Assistants (MLA/Ts)** work with behind-the-scenes and on the front lines of this exciting profession.

“Could working in a medical lab be for me?”



Maybe you recognize a bit of yourself on this list:

- I like to help people
- I have empathy for others
- I enjoy the sciences
- I like working with technology
- I keep an eye on the details
- I'm into continuous learning

Did you know that a shortage of laboratory professionals is predicted within Canada over the next 5 to 10 years? It's a good time to become a Medical Lab Technologist or Assistant.

What kind of career is it?”

Put it this way – today's medicine would be impossible without the tests performed in the clinical laboratory by **MLTs** and **MLA/Ts**. You can be a vital partner in the health care of all Canadians. Working behind-the-scenes, you would carry out many advanced tests on blood, body fluids and tissues – providing data that doctors need to make clinical decisions about patient treatments. Experts say that 70% of these conclusions are based on this information from the lab.

Some days may include challenges that put you on the front lines. Remember the SARS outbreak? You could be a crucial resource in such a situation. Working at a blood bank, you could be called upon at any moment to rush a lifesaving supply to a critical patient. As a researcher, you could discover new viruses or bacteria and help us all stay healthy in this era of daily developments in science and medicine.



**MLTs** are the 3rd largest group of health care workers in the world, and the 4th largest group of health care professionals in Ontario. Turn on the television or read the newspaper and you'll hear some reference to the things **MLTs** and **MLA/Ts** deal with 24 hours a day. Whether in fictional TV shows or the evening headlines, the laboratory professional is mainstream!

“What do I get to do?”

**Medical Laboratory Technologists** are regulated health professionals who serve in hospital, private, public health, and blood transfusion labs in both urban and rural centres. While some postings require a command of all disciplines, other **MLTs** take on the role of specialists in their field. **MLTs** also work in industry research, development, sales and service. Long-term career growth may result in appointments in education, management, or specialties like molecular genetics.

**Medical Laboratory Assistants** serve in urban and rural settings in the public and private sectors. Hospitals, physician's offices, diagnostic labs, clinics, collection sites and blood centres all require the services of **MLA/Ts**. They take samples and prepare them for analysis. Data entry of patient information into a computer system is also a common activity. Sometimes **MLA/Ts** will conduct some testing of their own. In a large laboratory, some may work in a specialized discipline.

“What will I study?”

For a career as a **Medical Laboratory Technologist**, you will study full-time in an accredited, post-secondary Medical Laboratory Science program for 3 years. The curriculum will be science-focused and include chemistry, math and biology courses.

To become a **Medical Laboratory Assistant**, 6 months post-secondary education at a recognized institution is required. Graduates qualify to write the OSMT MLA/T Certification exam. Training programs will be strongly focused on blood sample collection and the processing of pre-analytical specimens.

Look for a list of approved training institutes on the **OSMT** website ([www.osmt.org](http://www.osmt.org)).