

Standards of Practice for Medical Laboratory Assistants

A standard of practice is defined as the desired and achievable performance level against which actual performance can be judged; it provides a benchmark for evaluating acceptable performance levels.

CSMLS Standards of Practice are designed to measure the accuracy and quality of individual performance and to provide the expectations associated with professionalism for medical laboratory assistants (MLAs); they represent the minimum national standards for CSMLS-certified MLAs across Canada. Employers utilize this framework to establish specific workplace responsibilities and to develop job descriptions, policies and procedures.

The CSMLS Medical Laboratory Assistants Competency Profile establishes the scope of practice for CSMLS-certified MLAs; it restricts CSMLS-certified MLAs to performing only those duties specifically outlined within that competency profile. MLAs must skillfully perform laboratory procedures and must know the theory behind those laboratory analyses. They must be competent and demonstrate sound judgment. In addition, medical laboratory assistants must demonstrate appropriate professional conduct at all times.

Standard 1: Professional Responsibility and Accountability

Medical laboratory assistants are responsible for their individual professional practice and conduct.

MLAs:

1. Follow the CSMLS Code of Professional Conduct.
2. Are responsible and accountable for continued individual competence.
3. Practice within the legal and ethical framework of their profession.
4. Adhere to accepted standards within their profession.
5. Place patient welfare above all other considerations.

Standard 2: Competent Application of Knowledge

Medical laboratory assistants possess scientific knowledge relating to the theories and techniques associated with their role in medical laboratory testing. They apply these skills and knowledge to current practice.

MLAs:

1. Demonstrate competence as outlined in the current CSMLS Medical Laboratory Assistant Competency Profile.
2. Apply relevant knowledge, technical skills and professional judgment to improve and maximize patient outcomes.
3. Apply institutional policies and procedures to day-to-day practice.

4. Adapt to changing practice requirements within the clinical environment.

Standard 3: Competence and Proficiency in Laboratory Practice

Medical laboratory assistants must be skilled in pre and post analytical techniques regarding the procurement and handling of specimens and must demonstrate sound professional judgment when applying those techniques.

MLAs:

1. Practice according to established protocols, safety guidelines, and existing legislation and regulations.
2. Verify relevant data and ensure that appropriate specimens are properly procured and handled.
3. Perform preanalytical procedures on specimens from a variety of sources.
4. Prepare reagents for medical laboratory testing using approved methods according to laboratory standards.
5. Participate in quality management initiatives.
6. Demonstrate effective interpersonal skills to successfully address workplace challenges.
7. Apply critical thinking skills to day-to-day professional practice.

Standard 4: Communication and Collaboration

Medical laboratory assistants utilize effective communication skills and demonstrate strong teamwork abilities when interacting with patients and other health care providers.

MLAs:

1. Respect and support the role of patients and other health care providers.
2. Articulate the role of medical laboratory professionals in planning, developing, delivering and evaluating patient care.
3. Share relevant medical laboratory knowledge with patients, health care providers and the public.
4. Document, protect and maintain confidential information.

References

Definition of Clinical Practice Guidelines, Standards...and other definitions pertaining to medicine/nursing. November 6, 2011 (cited 2014 June). <http://www.findafootnurse.com/?p=1204>

Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science; Competency Profile Medical Laboratory Assistants, February 2007 (cited 2014 June). http://www.csmls.org/csmls/media/documents/comp_profile/Competency-Profile---MLA-2007.pdf

Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science; Code of Professional Conduct, March 2007 (cited 2014 June). <http://www.csmls.org/About-Us/Who-We-Serve/Code-of-Conduct.aspx>