

What does a laboratory technician do?

Medical laboratory technicians work in hospital and private laboratories (clinical or research) or physician office labs. At career entry, the MLT will be able to perform routine clinical laboratory tests done in hematology, chemistry, immunohematology, microbiology, immunology and coagulation. He/she will have gained basic laboratory skills required for entry-level positions in these and other emerging laboratory fields, such as molecular diagnostics. The responsibilities of the MLT include:

- ❖ Decisions concerning sample collection and handling
- ❖ Daily instrument maintenance and quality control
- ❖ Sample testing
- ❖ Collection and interpretation of data

Salary

Trainee medical laboratory technicians usually earn \$37,000 to \$46,000 per year. Qualified medical laboratory technicians usually earn \$43,000 to \$55,000 per year.

What subjects do I need to take at school?

- | | |
|-------------|-----------|
| ❖ Biology | ❖ Health |
| ❖ Chemistry | ❖ Physics |
| ❖ English | ❖ Maths |

How do I get into it?

There are no specific requirements to become a trainee medical laboratory technician as you train on the job. To become a registered medical laboratory technician you need to:

- ✓ work as a trainee medical laboratory technician in an approved laboratory for two years
- ✓ gain the Qualified Medical Laboratory Technician certificate **or** hold a degree approved by the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand
- ✓ hold a full driver's license.

Many universities offer these certificates, such as AUT, ARA, University of Otago, etc.

Interpersonal skills

Medical laboratory technicians need to be:

- ❖ accurate, with an eye for detail
- ❖ able to work alone or in a team
- ❖ competent at record-keeping
- ❖ sensitive when dealing with patients

Techs should not be squeamish, as their work involves dealing with body samples.

Useful experience for this role includes work in labs, particularly in the specimen reception area, work in the health sector, and work with computers and information systems.



Will I get a job after training?

Chances of getting a job as a medical laboratory technician are good. Medical laboratory technician appears on Immigration New Zealand's immediate skill shortage list, meaning the government is actively encouraging skilled workers from overseas to work in New Zealand. About two-thirds of medical laboratory technicians work in large private laboratories. The remainder mostly work in hospitals for district health boards or for the New Zealand Blood Service. Experienced medical laboratory technicians may move into managerial positions. With further training they may progress to become medical laboratory scientists.

Where can I find out more?

- **Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand**
(04) 801 6250 <https://www.msncouncil.org.nz/>