

Important Decision on Exam and PLA Provider

This email is to inform you of an important decision made by the College of Medical Laboratory Technologists (CMLTA) Council on March 22, 2025. The Council has voted to keep the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS) as its examination and Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) provider for registering Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs) in Alberta.

As you may be aware, the Canadian Alliance of Medical Laboratory Professionals Regulators (CAMLPR) has introduced new competency profiles and exams that would permit individuals to test and register in only specific fields of practice while still being considered MLTs. It has also been communicated that under this pathway, individuals who have not completed an MLT program but have related education may be eligible for assessment, examination, and registration as MLTs. The College feels strongly that field of practice registration would limit the depth of education and training required to become an MLT, potentially leading to an increased risk of inaccurate or incomplete diagnostic testing from individuals who have not completed a fulsome MLT program.

Under Alberta's current legislation, MLTs must demonstrate comprehensive competency across all fields of practice required in each of the MLT programs; General, Clinical Genetics, and Diagnostic Cytology. These competencies are currently evaluated through a national examination administered by the CSMLS.

Unlike other health professionals, Albertans do not have a choice in selecting their MLT. As such, they rely on the College to ensure that individuals using the MLT designation are fully qualified professionals and have the education required by the legislation.

While CAMLPR has said that applicants seeking to register and practice as an MLT in Canada would be required to demonstrate competencies and pass an assessment for each field of practice, the details of these evaluations are not available at this time. Additionally, it is also unclear what level and type of education would be required to enter the profession under CAMLPR's pathway.

The College understands the critical need for labour mobility across provinces and is dedicated to continued collaboration and cooperation with other colleges while maintaining our standards of entry to the profession in Alberta. MLTs educated in other provinces through the CAMLPR framework can still come to Alberta through the labour mobility pathway as long as they have completed a medical laboratory science program and have been examined in all fields of practice required for the register they are applying to.

With this decision, the College intends to continue operating under the status quo as it continues to monitor and evaluate the institution of CAMLPR competency profiles and exams in other provinces. During this time, the CSMLS will remain the exam provider for MLTs in Alberta, and no changes will be made to existing registration requirements for MLTs. This will ensure that existing students can complete their diplomas and degrees with no mid-program changes.

This decision will give the College more time to understand CAMPLR's competency profiles and approach to assessment and examination. It will also give educators and students the time required to adapt to new curricula, competency changes, and exam changes should the CMLTA move to a different exam provider in the future.

At this time, the CMLTA Council has no plans to recommend legislative changes allowing for field of practice registration for MLTs in Alberta. Maintaining the current rigorous professional and educational standards is essential to ensuring public safety and preserving trust in the profession.

Should the provincial government decide to pursue legislative changes in the future that would allow field of practice registration for MLTs, the College will work closely with the province and other partners to develop a transition plan that prioritizes public safety, upholds professional standards, and supports educators and students in adopting the new framework.

This decision is in keeping with Alberta's legislative framework and reaffirms the College's dedication to upholding its mission to protect the public.

Later this week, we will be sending out webinar invitations. We will explore what it means to be a regulated professional, understand your rights and obligations, and navigate the intricacies of registration requirements. With upcoming changes proposed by CAMLPR, discover how these developments could impact MLTs in Alberta and what they mean for your career.

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We acknowledge that the land on which the CMLTA office is located is Treaty 6 territory and a traditional meeting ground for many Indigenous people. This is home to the Cree, Blackfoot, and Metis, as it is for the Nakoda, Tsuu T'ina, Chipewyan, and other Indigenous people. Their spiritual and practical relationships to the land create a rich heritage for our life as a community.

