



Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science
Société canadienne de science de laboratoire médical

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Medical Laboratory Technologist

Information Handbook

CPLA-041-H1

December 2024

Note: The CSMLS does not offer subject certification

Policy changes may occur, please check our website for the current version of the Handbook.

www.csmls.org

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Disclaimer

Before applying for a Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), please read all the policies and regulations outlined in this handbook.

By signing the application form, PLA Clients agree to all of these policies and regulations.

Failure to do so may result in the cancellation of a PLA application and the loss of PLA fees.

Contact Information

Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science

Address

33 Wellington St N
Hamilton, ON
L8R 1M7

Telephone

(905) 528-8642 or
(800) 263-8277
Ext. 8507

Fax

(905) 528-4968

Email

pla@csmls.org

Website

csmls.org

The Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS) is the national certifying body for medical laboratory technologists and medical laboratory assistants.

It is also the national professional society for Canada's medical laboratory professionals. As such, to maintain fairness to all our Clients and members, we do not allow visitors at the CSMLS nor do we accept documents at our door.

The CSMLS revised this document according to plain language principles with funding from the Government of Canada's Foreign Credential Recognition Program.

The logo for Canada, featuring the word "Canada" in a serif font with a small Canadian flag above the letter "a".

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Introduction

The Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS) is the national certifying body for medical laboratory technologists and medical laboratory assistants, and the national society for Canada's medical laboratory professionals. We are a not-for-profit organization that is funded entirely by membership dues and revenues from goods and services. We do not receive operational funding from governments or other organizations.

Our members practice in hospital laboratories, private medical laboratories, public health laboratories, government laboratories, research and educational institutions.

Our purpose

- To promote and maintain a nationally accepted standard of medical laboratory technology by which other health professionals and the public are assured of effective and economical laboratory services, and
- To promote, maintain and protect the professional identity and interests of the medical laboratory professional and of the profession.

The CSMLS sets qualification standards in medical laboratory science and is the service provider of both the CSMLS National Certification Examinations (Exam) and the CSMLS Prior Learning Assessment (PLA).

We conduct Exams across Canada only. Certificates may be issued to Exam candidates who pass the Exam **and** are members of the CSMLS.

The PLA is for both Internationally Educated Medical Laboratory Technologists (IEMLTs) and those educated at a non-EQual™ accredited Canadian Medical Laboratory program who seek Canadian Certification.

For graduates of a Canadian EQual™ accredited program who did not register for an exam within 12-months of graduation and would like to apply for a PLA to become eligible for three (3) exam attempts, please contact pla@csmls.org. The requirements for this type of PLA are slightly different than for an IEMLT.

To be eligible to write the Exam an applicant's level of competency as a Medical Laboratory Technologist (MLT) is assessed using their theoretical and clinical (practicum/internship) education, clinical work experience, academic credentials, and English or French language proficiency. **Acceptable education and work experience must be at the technologist level for clinical/diagnostic human testing not for research, plants, or animals.**

Assumptions about Medical Laboratory Science in Canada

MLTs perform sophisticated diagnostic medical laboratory investigations on specimens taken from the **human** body. They also evaluate the technical sufficiency of the investigations and their results. The results of these tests provide important information that doctors, or other health care professionals need to make decisions about their patients' health.

THE CSMLS CERTIFIED MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNOLOGIST

- Has developed a broad knowledge base and practical skills that enable the MLT to analyze specimens and assess and report laboratory results, at the technologist level, according to institutional policies and professional standards.
- Applies critical thinking and problem-solving strategies to ensure best practices.
- Practices and promotes the principles of quality management.
- Practices to ensure the safety of patients, colleagues, self, and the environment.
- Contributes to the health care and education of the public, promotes patient welfare and respects patient diversity, dignity, and confidentiality.
- Is an integral member of the health care team who shares knowledge that is essential to the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of disease, promotes learning, and collaborates with other health care professionals in providing effective patient care.
- Is responsible and accountable for professional acts, follows standards of practice, as well as laws and regulations governing the profession, and abides by the CSMLS Code of Professional Conduct.
- Uses effective interpersonal skills to maintain a professional relationship with colleagues, patients/clients, and other health care professionals.
- Is prepared to work in a variety of settings.

THE PATIENT/CLIENT

- Is any individual who interacts with the medical laboratory technologist (e.g., patient, patient representative, health care professionals, other laboratory professionals).

The CSMLS and the Canadian Provincial Medical Laboratory Technologist Regulatory Authorities

The CSMLS provides pan-Canadian competency-based Exams and the PLA for the medical laboratory profession on behalf of eight (8) Canadian provincial MLT regulatory authorities and in those regions of the country that are not currently regulated or not requiring entry-to-practice MLT certification.

If the provincial government has delegated an MLT regulatory authority to regulate the practice of the profession they must do so by registering applicants who meet their provincial requirements and ensuring their registrants comply with safe practice.

The CSMLS has Certification (Exam and PLA) service agreements (contracts) with most MLT regulatory authorities. These regulators recognize the Exam as an entry-to-practice requirement into the Canadian medical laboratory profession.

Most Canadian provincial MLT regulatory authorities are members of [the voluntary Canadian Alliance of Medical Laboratory Professionals Regulators \(CAMLPR\)](#).

As of November 1, 2025, provincial MLT regulatory members of CAMLPR plan to deliver Certification services within their respective jurisdictions. CAMLPR has not indicated what their processes will be at the time this handbook was revised.

CSMLS will continue to provide MLT certification services in Alberta, for CMLTA, Quebec,

British Columbia, and the Territories. However, the CSMLS MLT certification services and where they will be offered may change.

When there is more information pertaining to changes in the MLT certification process, and CAMLPR involvement, this handbook will be revised.

Reciprocity

CSMLS does not offer reciprocity with any domestic non-EQual™ accredited or foreign university or college providing medical laboratory education, or with any other country. PLA Clients' (Client) education and experience in another country or in a Canadian non-EQual™ accredited or a Canadian non-medical laboratory program does not grant automatic eligibility to the Exams.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

CSMLS does NOT get involved in immigration issues for Clients. Clients are provided with two (2) copies of their Technical Report and, if successful in their PLA, two (2) copies of their Statement of Eligibility to the CSMLS National Certification Examination (Eligibility Statement,) should they need to submit this documentation to immigration authorities or to a Canadian provincial MLT Regulatory Authority.

Non-Discrimination

CSMLS does not discriminate for any reason, including age, gender, race, ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, or marital status.

CSMLS Membership

A CSMLS membership has many benefits, including reduced PLA application fees.

Members are connected to a comprehensive network of peers, news and updates, almost 1000 hours of free continuing education, employment opportunities and much more.

For questions about membership, please contact Member Services at 1-905-528-8642 or 1-800-263-8277 or memserv@csmls.org.

ASSOCIATE NON-CERTIFIED MEMBERSHIP

Clients can apply for an annual Associate Non-Certified Membership. Information about memberships can be found on the CSMLS website under "[Member Categories & Fees](#)".

CSMLS annual membership expires on December 31st of each year, dues are prorated throughout the year.

Initial Exam Eligibility

There are two (2) ways to become eligible to write the Exam for the first time:

1. Successful completion (graduate) of a Canadian EQual™ accredited MLT Educational Program.

These candidates are eligible to write the Exam if:

- All program requirements must be completed two weeks before the Exam date or
- Program completion occurred within twelve (12) months prior to the scheduled

Exam date

2. Successful completion of the CSMLS PLA Process

This process is available to:

- IEMLTs
- graduates of a non-EQual™ accredited Canadian MLT Educational Program

These candidates must hold a valid (non-expired) Eligibility Statement.

Graduates of Canadian EQual™ accredited programs who did not register for an Exam within 12-months of graduation and would like to pursue a PLA for three (3) exam attempts, please contact pla@csmls.org as the requirements for this type of PLA will be slightly different than what is listed in this Handbook.

MLT Prior Learning Assessment Considerations

The CSMLS PLA reviews MLT education, training, and clinical work experience to determine if Clients are equivalent to the relevant [Competency Profile](#).

The PLA process has **three (3) stages**:

1. Pre-assessment

This begins when a Client's PLA application and fee is received and processed. It is complete when all required documents have been received.

2. Assessment

This begins when the assessor receives a Client file. It is complete when the Technical Report is sent to a Client.

3. Post-assessment

This begins once the Technical Report is sent to a Client. It is complete when the Client receives an Eligibility Statement or if they are told they must complete a full EQual™ accredited Canadian MLT Educational Program.

The CSMLS PLA provides a single point of access for IEMLTs who are seeking Canadian certification.

The PLA process evaluates academic credentials, language proficiency, detailed educational course descriptions (theory and clinical), clinical training, and clinical work experience.

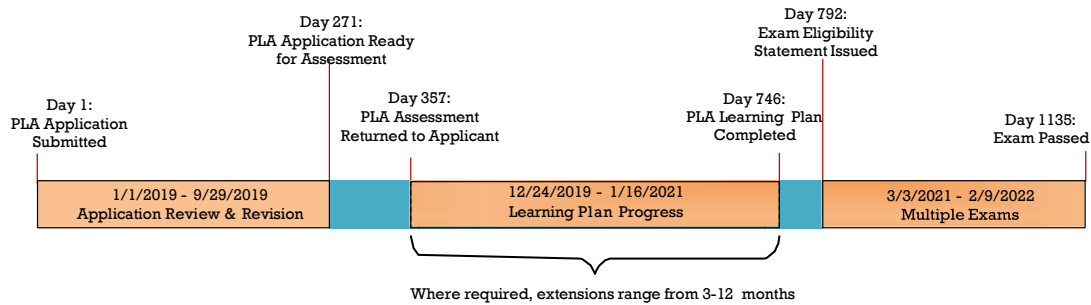
Many individuals find the PLA process to be a long and challenging journey. It requires a time commitment between one to three (1-3) years before successfully writing the Exam with significant expense (see Figure 1).

The CSMLS recognizes only EQual™ accredited Canadian MLT Educational Programs.

Any individual applying from a non-EQual™ accredited educational program is required to undergo a PLA process to determine equivalence of their education to the CSMLS competency profiles, whether this person was educated in Canada or not.

The PLA program reviews theory and clinical (practicum/internship) education, and clinical work experience, if applicable, to determine if a Client is equivalent to the CSMLS National Competency Profile for a given MLT designation.

Figure 1. PLA Process Timeline example



Over 80% of all Clients have gaps in their education that must be filled. For some Clients, this process can take several years to complete.

Therefore, it is very important to clearly understand the PLA process prior to applying as this can be a costly and time-consuming process to complete.

The CSMLS offers several resources that allows interested applicants to reflect on their previous professional education and clinical experience to determine if a career as a certified MLT is right for them.

These resources will also help an interested applicant determine how much upgrading may be required before they will be eligible to write the Exam.

The CSMLS PLA process is available for the following MLT designations:

GENERAL MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNOLOGY

Technologists must be competent in the following disciplines, as they relate to humans:

- Clinical Chemistry;
- Hematology;
- Clinical Microbiology;
- Transfusion Science; and
- Histotechnology

If a Client has little or no experience and education in more than one of the above disciplines, they will not qualify for the Exam through PLA.

DIAGNOSTIC CYTOLOGY MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNOLOGY

Technologists must be competent in the following disciplines, as they relate to humans:

- Gynecological analysis,
- Non-Gynecological analysis and
- Histotechnology

If a Client has little or no experience and education in any discipline outside of Histotechnology, they will not qualify for the Exam through PLA.

CLINICAL GENETICS MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNOLOGY

Technologists must be competent in the following disciplines, as they relate to humans:

- Cytogenetics; and
- Molecular Genetics

If a Client has little or no experience and education **in one of the above disciplines, they will not qualify for the Exam through PLA.**

When educational gaps are significant, it may be worthwhile to consider investigating an alternate career.

Alternate Careers

CSMLS statistics show that approximately 40% of Clients pass the Exam on their first attempt compared with approximately 85% of candidates from EQual™ accredited Canadian MLT programs. As well, the practice of laboratory medicine in Canada may be quite different for some who have practiced in other parts of the world. Becoming a CSMLS certified and provincially registered MLT may not be the most practical or fulfilling choice for these individuals.

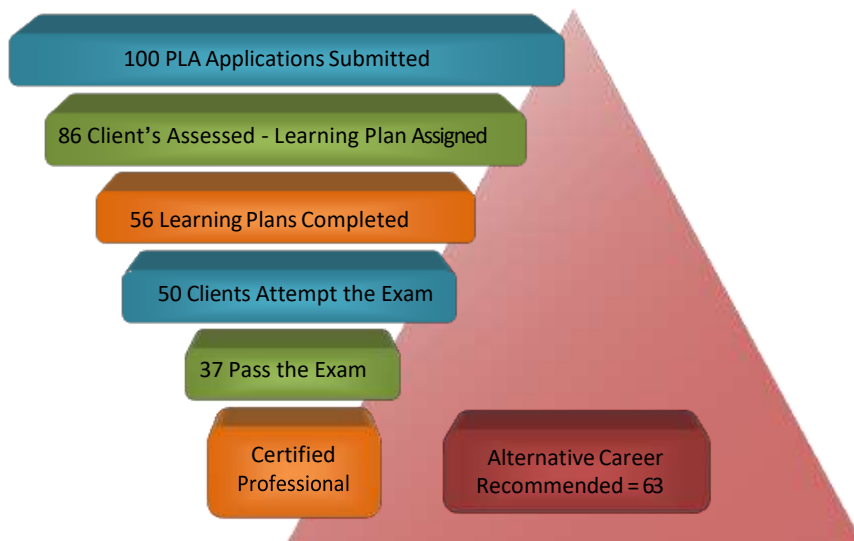
Some Clients have chosen an alternate career as a medical laboratory assistant (MLA) while they complete their learning plans.

NOTE: All Clients who are assigned an MLT General learning plan, without comprehensive course work, and live in Canada will be issued an Eligibility Statement to attempt the MLA Exam.

WHY CONSIDER AN ALTERNATE CAREER?

Since over 80% of IEMLT applicants need to complete some form of upgrading of skills or education before they can write the Exam, the process of becoming a CSMLS certified MLT can be long and difficult (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. PLA Success Rates



Reference: Johnson, K. (2014). *Development of Alternate Career Inform on for CSMLS Internationally Educated MLT Applicants: When the Fit is Not Quite Right,*

As a result, some individuals might consider pursuing an alternative to medical laboratory technology in which they could transfer their current skills, knowledge, education and work experience. For these individuals, alternate or related careers may be pursued while

in the process of becoming a licensed MLT or as a permanent career option.

An alternate career often requires many of the same skills and abilities as the intended career but may involve fewer processes and /or qualifications to begin working. These careers may also be called related careers, alternate career options, or alternative careers.

While the CSMLS does not have anything to do with granting or applying for alternate careers, a website was created to help IEMLTs navigate this path. Please visit the Alternate Careers website at <http://altcareers.csmls.org> as it contains information on several potential alternate careers. These are professions related to medical laboratory technology but do not require a license to practice.

General information related to eleven (11) alternate careers have been gathered, including:

- The type of work environment
- Required qualifications expected from Canadian employers
- Employers' expectation of communication skills
- Average wages
- Opportunities for advancement
- Resources for more information

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AN ALTERNATE CAREER?

There are several potential benefits associated with pursuing one of the listed alternate careers.

- Certification is not required so these individuals may begin working right away.
- Very little additional training or upgrading is required for most of the careers listed.
- The employers in these fields value the skills, knowledge, and abilities that these individuals possess.



CSMLS PLA PROCESS

The PLA process evaluates a Client's education (theory and clinical), clinical work experience and other relevant training to determine if they are equivalent to the relevant [CSMLS National MLT Competency Profile](#). CSMLS trained assessors are responsible for evaluating a Client's file.

The MLT Competency Profiles outlines the entry-level MLT expectations in the Canadian context.

The CSMLS has an online PLA Portal where all PLA applicants are to open a PLA account and complete the PLA application process. Once the application is submitted the office will review for correct completion and will let applicants know when they can submit the payment they indicated on their application.

The PLA Portal allows Clients have their supporting documents submitted directly by uploading them to their PLA account. Official documents must be uploaded directly into a PLA Client's file by the submitting institution. Unofficial documents can be uploaded in their PLA account by the Client.

Once all required supporting documents have been processed by the office, the Client will be notified by the office of their next steps.

PLA fees are non-refundable.

Three PLA Stages

There are three (3) stages in the PLA process:

1. **Pre-assessment.**
This begins when the PLA application and fee have been processed and ends after all required documents have been received and processed (including document scanning) into a client's file.
This stage has a twelve (12) month expiry.
2. **Assessment.**
This begins after all documents have been received and the PLA file is sent to an assessor.
This stage can take four (4) to six (6) weeks to complete.
3. **Post-assessment.**
This begins when a Client's documents have been assessed and their Technical Report is sent to them.
This stage may have a two (2) year expiry, depending on the outcome.

Initial Steps to Take Before Applying

READ ABOUT THE PLA PROCESS AND THE EXAM

Read this PLA Handbook completely, read it more than once, as it contains a large amount of information (at least three (3) times). Review of the Exam Handbook is also recommended. The [Exam Handbook found on our website](#).

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY POLICY

This section is strictly a language policy for determining equivalency to the CSMLS Exam only. **The language proficiency policies required by an MLT regulator or employer may be different.**

Clients must prove language proficiency at the Canadian Language Benchmark level 6 (CLB6) to begin the PLA process and must prove Canadian Language Benchmark level 8 (CLB8) to complete the process before becoming eligible to take the CSMLS Exam.

Client who can prove, through a [credential evaluation](#), their language of instruction for their full MLT educational program (didactic and clinical) was only in English or French will have the language proficiency requirements waived.

If a Client's language of instruction was not only in English or French they must prove their language proficiency through an approved Language Proficiency test.

Language Proficiency Test – Minimum Requirements

The CSMLS has a two (2)-level language proficiency requirement for Clients whose language of education was not English or French.

If Clients are unsuccessful in language proficiency testing by the expiry of their PLA Technical Report, an extension may be requested. This request must be made before the Technical Report expires and has additional costs associated with it. Please contact pla@csmls.org.

Level One (1): Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 6

These minimum requirements in Tables 1a and 1b for each test section, must be met to have documents assessed for a Technical Report.

Table 1a. English Level One (1) Equivalencies

| Test Section | IELTS – GT ^{1,3} | MELA ² | IELTS-AC ³ | TOEFL iBT ⁴ |
|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Listening (CLB6) | 5.5 | 6 | 5.5 | 7 |
| Reading (CLB6) | 5.0 | 6 | 6.0 | 13 |
| Writing (CLB6) | 5.5 | 6 | 5.5 | 18 |
| Speaking (CLB6) | 5.5 | 6 | 5.5 | 16 |

Table 1b. French Level One (1) Equivalencies

| Test Section | TCF ¹ | TEF ¹ |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Listening (CLB6) | 398-457 | 393-433 |
| Reading (CLB6) | 406-452 | 393-433 |
| Writing (CLB6) | 7-9 | 379-427 |
| Speaking (CLB6) | 7-9 | 422-455 |

Level Two (2): Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 7 and 8

These minimum requirements in Tables 2a and 2b for each test section, must be met to be eligible to write the Exam.

Table 2a. English Level Two (2) Equivalencies

| Test Section | IELTS – GT ^{1,3} | MELA ² | IELTS – AC ³ | TOEFL iBT ⁴ |
|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Listening (CLB8) | 7.5 | 8 | 7.5 | 27 |
| Reading (CLB8) | 6.5 | 8 | 7.5 | 27 |
| Writing (CLB7) | 6.0 | 7 | 6.0 | 21 |
| Speaking (CLB8) | 6.5 | 8 | 6.5 | 20 |

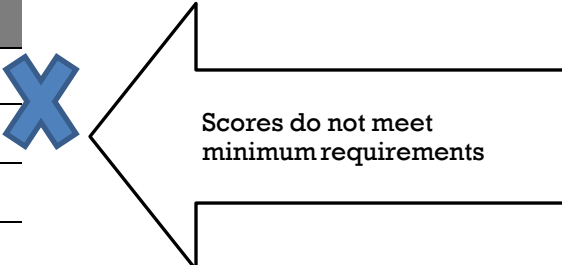
Table 2b. French Level Two (2) Equivalencies

| Test Section | TCF ¹ | TEF ¹ |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Listening (CLB8) | 503-522 | 462-502 |
| Reading (CLB8) | 499-523 | 462-502 |
| Writing (CLB7) | 102-131 | 428-471 |
| Speaking (CLB8) | 122-133 | 456-493 |

1. Government of Canada website. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/standard-requirements/language-requirements/test-equivalency-charts.html>
2. MELA - Michener English Language Assessment <https://michener.ca/continuing-education/ce-courses/mela/>
3. Comparison of IELTS-AC to IELTS-GT <https://www.manhattanreview.com/ielts-academic-vs-general-training/#:~:text=IELTS%20scoring%20concordance%20tables%20show,terms%20of%20vocabulary%20and%20style>
4. Comparison tables TOEFL with IELTS-AC <https://www.ets.org/toefl/institutions/ibt/compare-scores.html#accordion-3a9d6db32b-item-f7e1e1c9f1>

Example of not meeting language requirements:

| Test Section | TEF |
|--------------|-----|
| Listening | 275 |
| Reading | 230 |
| Writing | 380 |
| Speaking | 425 |



Scores do not meet minimum requirements

Stage 1: Pre-Assessment

Pre-Assessment includes:

- PLA Application and [Fee\(s\)](#)
- [Submitting Supporting Documents](#)

PLA APPLICATION AND FEE(S)

Clients are encouraged to review the organizations in Canada that may have funding opportunities (micro loans) available for those seeking help with the costs associated with the PLA process ([see Appendix 4](#)).

Read this handbook carefully before using the PLA Portal to open a PLA account and complete the online PLA Application. See [Appendix 2](#) for instructions on how to use the online PLA Portal.

When a PLA Application has been reviewed and processed by the office, the applicant will be told to pay the PLA Stage 1 fee ([see Table 3](#)).

Once the PLA Stage 1 fee is processed, the Client file is opened and the Client can have their PLA supporting documents submitted into their file. If documents have been submitted prior to opening an account or paying for PLA Stage 1, they will be saved at the office for no more than 12-months ([see Document Receipt and Retention Policy](#))

As supporting documents are submitted into a Client's file, a list of supporting documents, received and still required according to their application, will be emailed to the Client.

NOTE: Receipt of PLA supporting documents is not acknowledged by the office when they are delivered (by mail or email).

Receipt of PLA supporting documents is acknowledged by the office only when the office processes them into an **active*** PLA Client file. This is due to the large volume of documents submitted to the office.

*Active PLA Client files are those that have had their PLA application fees processed and have been notified by PLA that their file is open.

Applicants **must** read and understand all PLA policies and processes in this handbook because:

- a) PLA Application fees are **non-refundable and non-transferable**
- b) PLA Stage 1 Applications have a **twelve (12) month expiry** for receipt of required documents to the CSMLS office
 - o A document extension may be requested, before a PLA Application expires, for up to an additional twelve (12) months, if there is difficulty in obtaining the required documents
 - o A document extension application form and fee payments must be requested from the office and before the PLA Application expires
- c) Clients must **reapply and pay for PLA Stage 1 again**, if all required documents are not received by a Client's application expiry (12-months)

Table 3. PLA Fee Schedule

| PLA Fee Schedule <i>Payments must be in Canadian Funds.</i> | Member | Non-Member |
|--|--------|------------|
| PLA Stage 1 Fee: The PLA Application Fee. This must be paid at the time of application. | \$820 | \$975 |
| PLA Stage 2: The PLA Assessment and Technical Report Fee. This must be received before a file is sent for assessment. Clients will be contacted when it is due. | \$720 | \$875 |

If Clients are outside of Canada, they can only make PLA payments by credit card (Visa, MasterCard or American Express). Foreign bank drafts or money orders will not be accepted if mailed to the office. They will be returned or destroyed, and the application will not be processed.

Due to PayPal security restrictions we are unable to accept credit card payments from some countries.

Canadian cheques or Canadian money orders, payable to the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science or CSMLS, are also accepted. If payment is refused for insufficient funds, applicants will be charged a \$25.00 NSF fee.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Clients must contact their educational institutions and employers to have them submit the required official documents **directly** to CSMLS on their behalf. All official documents received at the office become the property of the CSMLS, original documents will not be given back to Clients. They may apply and pay for a document copy, depending on the document, by contacting the office at pla@csmls.org.

If documents arrive without a Client's name or CSMLS ID number, they **will be discarded**

after twelve (12) months (see [Document Retention Policy](#)).

Clients are responsible for all costs associated with delivering supporting documentation to the CSMLS.

Personally-submitted or -faxed official supporting PLA documents will not be accepted.

[Table 4](#) gives a list of Supporting Documents and their requirements and a checklist to assist Client document submissions can be found in [Appendix 3](#).

Table 4. Supporting Documents

| DOCUMENT | REQUIREMENT |
|---|---|
| Personal Competency Rating Booklet (PCRB) | Document Required |
| Online Self-Assessment | Document Required for General MLT Applicants Only |
| Credential Evaluation | Document Required |
| Language Proficiency | Not Required if MLT Education is in English or French |
| MLT Education | Didactic Education Documentation Required Clinical Education Document not required if Client has extensive clinical experience in all disciplines, and can prove this. In this case clinical experience documents must be submitted |
| Work Experience | Document Required Not required if new graduate that has not yet worked in the MLT field |
| Professional Certification | Not Required These documents may provide a better PLA outcome |
| Continuing Education | Not Required These documents may provide a better PLA outcome |

Mailed/Couriered Official Supporting Documents

When submitting official supporting documents by mail or courier, the documents must be packaged in an untampered, institutional sealed and stamped (may just be officer's initial/signature) envelope. Official supporting documents may not be placed loose inside a courier package/envelope.

If an official document is received without appropriate packaging, the document will not be accepted and the Client must have it resubmitted correctly, delaying the process.

Emailed official documents are accepted if sent directly by the issuing institution with an institutional email address to pla@csmls.org. Documents will not be accepted if they are emailed from public domain email addresses, such as gmail, yahoo, outlook, etc., regardless if this is all the issuing institution uses. In this case, the documents must be mailed/couriered to the CSMLS office.

Clients must make sure the issuing institutions include their full name and/or CSMLS ID number on the official documents when they are sent to CSMLS.

Receipt of Supporting Documents (File Updates)

File updates are only given when a submitted document is processed to an active PLA file, not when it is delivered to the CSMLS office, regardless of submission method.

While CSMLS does not confirm receipt of documents at the time of delivery, due to submitted document volume, we strive to process them as soon as possible.

File updates may include:

- Processing mailed and emailed Client applications
- Processing submitted supporting documents
- Scanning Client files in preparation for assessment
- Assigning a Client file to an assessor

Clients are to wait a minimum of four (4) weeks from the last communication received from the CSMLS office regarding any aspect of the PLA process before asking for a file update. Repeated requests of this nature delay file update turnaround times due to additional work responding to these inquiries. Additionally, depending on PLA volume, estimated follow-up times may not be available, but the office will send a file update when one is available.

If a document has been at our office for four (4) weeks or more, please share the tracking number or the email address it was sent from to pla@csmls.org.

Online Self-Assessment (OSA) – General MLTs only, self-submitted

Read this section carefully before purchasing the OSA.

For General MLT Applicants Only:

The OSA score and diagnostic report are for PLA applicant information only. The OSA is not used by the CSMLS to assess a Client.

Taking the OSA multiple times will not improve the PLA outcome, it only increases PLA costs.

The OSA is intended to give insight into the medical laboratory practice in Canada, to help an applicant decide whether to pursue Canadian MLT certification through the expensive and possibly long PLA process.

The OSA is based on the General MLT Competency Profile, which is the national entry-to-practice standard in Canada.

The 100-question OSA must be completed before applying for the General MLT PLA.

[Access the PLA OSA from our website](#). Please note that this must be completed within thirty (30) days of purchasing.

The OSA score and diagnostic report is not used to decide a PLA result. This test will help PLA applicants identify knowledge gaps and to help decide whether to pursue Canadian certification.

The OSA is intended to help a PLA applicant decide whether to pursue Canadian General MLT certification. It provides feedback identifying areas where applicants do not have the required General MLT education and/or General MLT clinical work experience. This can mean that an applicant will not qualify to attend the Exam and must successfully complete a full EQual™ accredited Canadian MLT educational program ([see Appendix 1: Outcomes Chart](#)).

General MLT PLA applicants are required to complete the OSA **before** applying for PLA.

- Cost is approximately \$60 CDN plus applicable taxes
- [Access the OSA website.](#)
- Once in the OSA website, create a username and password

NOTE: A CSMLS ID number does not give access to this website.

From the OSA Main webpage select “**Learn More**” to review more information about this assessment.

How to Submit Proof of OSA Completion to CSMLS:

- Record the OSA username on the PLA application so that CSMLS can confirm OSA completion
- If the OSA username is not included on the PLA application, please send an email to pla@csmls.org and with the following information:
 - “OSA Complete” in the subject line of the email
 - Applicant’s full name and CSMLS ID number, if applicable
 - The OSA username

Credential Evaluation, official document only

A credential evaluation is required for all foreign MLT education. The purpose of the credential evaluation is to confirm authenticity of foreign education and to determine the language of instruction.

Only credential evaluations that are sent to the CSMLS directly from World Education Services-Canada (WES) or International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES), will be accepted.

CSMLS ID numbers do not need to be provided to WES or ICES as they do not include these on their reports.

World Education Services, Canada (WES)

- Request the language(s) of instruction be included on the report.
- Request the report to be sent to the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science. **Do not use CSMLS.**
- Only the **WES Course-by-course** (detailed) or the **WES ICAP** evaluation is accepted
- If verified copies of course transcripts are received with the WES ICAP report, a second set of transcripts does not need to be requested from the educational institution.

World Education Services, Canada (WES)
 2 Carlton Street, Suite 1400
 Toronto, ON M5B1J3
 Website: www.wes.org/ca
 Telephone: 1-800-361-6106
 Fax: (416) 972-9004

International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES)

- Request the ICES “**comprehensive**” evaluation, which includes the **language(s) of instruction**.

International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES)
3700 Willingdon Ave
Burnaby, BC, Canada, V5G3H2
Website: www.bcit.ca/ices
Telephone: (604) 432-8800; Toll Free: (866)-434-9197
Fax: (604) 435 7033; Email: icesinfo@bcit.ca

Language Proficiency, official document only

To have language of instruction included in a credential evaluation, Clients must ask the educational institutions to send a separate letter confirming the language of MLT educational instruction when official transcripts and course outlines are sent to the credential evaluation service.

Clients must make sure the credential evaluation service adds this information to the credential report.

Was the applicable MLT education only in English or French?

YES If the credential evaluation states the language of Laboratory Medicine instruction was only in English or French, a language test will not be required for the CSMLS Exam (but it may be required for a regulatory agency or employer).

NO If language of instruction was **not** in English or French only, Clients must take a language test to prove they meet the required language proficiency level.

If a language proficiency test is required, the testing institution or facility must issue the test results directly to the CSMLS. Faxed or emailed results are not accepted.

Language Proficiency Evaluations:

- Will not be accepted if any test section has not been evaluated
- Must meet the minimum requirements in each stage of listening, reading, writing and speaking (see [Language Proficiency Policy section](#))
- Will not have any exceptions made
- Two or more test results cannot be combined to pass the requirements

Approved Language Proficiency Tests

Only the following English language proficiency tests are accepted:

- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) GT
- Michener English Language Assessment (MELA)
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) AC
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) iBT

Only the following French language proficiency tests are accepted:

- Test de connaissance du français pour le Canada (TCF Canada)
- Test d'évaluation de français pour le Canada (TEF Canada)

Medical Laboratory Technology Education, official documents only

Clients must contact their educational institutions to ask that official transcripts and detailed course outlines are submitted to CSMLS by uploading online, emailed, or mailed in their original envelopes/sent directly.

Official MLT Educational Transcripts

These documents list all the MLT courses taken at a college or university and shows the final grade received for each course.

These must be printed on official letterhead.

If verified transcript copies are received with the WES ICAP report, a second set of transcripts does not have to be requested from the educational institution.

Course Outlines/Syllabus of Studies

This is used to thoroughly evaluate MLT education, the PLA assessor needs to see course outlines for the MLT courses listed in the official transcripts.

Course outlines must include a detailed description of the content of each course relating to MLT education.

These must be printed on official letterhead.

Clinical MLT Education

An official representative from the educational institution or laboratory must send a letter describing the structured clinical education. This must be printed on official letterhead.

Official letters must include:

- a detailed outline of the topics covered, and tests completed in training
- the amount of time spent in training
- the methods used to monitor clinical progress
- an explanation of how clinical progress was evaluated (graded)
- a complete list of all tests performed

Additionally, they must:

- be printed on official letterhead
- be signed by the official representative of the laboratory/or educational institution

Clinical MLT Work Experience, official documents only

An official laboratory representative must send a letter in a sealed envelope directly to CSMLS describing the Client's clinical work experience as an MLT. The last five years of work experience are the most important for the PLA.

Official letters must include:

- dates of MLT employment
- MLT department rotation if Client worked in more than one department
- the list of laboratory tests performed directly by the Client
- the equipment/methods the Client used to perform these tests

- the frequency of testing (for example, daily or weekly) performed by the Client
- the number of samples the Client processed on a weekly basis

Additionally, they must:

- be printed on official letterhead
- be signed by the official representative of the laboratory

Professional Certification, official documents only

If a Client has professional MLT certification/licensure from another country, ask them to send proof of this directly to CSMLS.

Continuing Education, official documents only

If a Client has taken continuing MLT education within the **past five years**, ask the educational institution to send **official** transcripts directly to CSMLS.

If currently enrolled, send proof of enrolment and the expected date of completion.

Professional Development, self-submitted

Submit copies of certificates for MLT seminars and workshops taken within the **past five years**.

DOCUMENT TRANSLATION POLICY

MLT General: Documents received in a language other than English or French must be translated into one of these two languages. If the MLT General documents received by CSMLS are not in either French or English, a copy of the documents will be emailed to the Client to be translated.

MLT Clinical Genetics or Diagnostic Cytology: Documents received in a language other than English must be translated into English. If the MLT Clinical Genetics or Diagnostic Cytology documents received by CSMLS are not in English, a copy of the documents will be emailed to the Client to be translated.

The CSMLS only accepts official translations that are:

- Performed by a Canadian-certified translator

The translated documents must be submitted directly to the CSMLS by the Canadian-certified translator (the full document copy that was sent for translation must be included with the official translation submission). This translation must be:

- Stamped with the Canadian-certified translator’s seal

All costs associated with official translation are the Client’s responsibility.

ALTERNATE DOCUMENTS POLICY

In the event the Client is unable to provide official documents as required by the PLA policy, the CSMLS may allow the submission of alternate documents. These situations will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The following alternate documents may be considered for the PLA:

- Client submitted original documents (these will not be returned)
- Canadian notarized copies of original documents sent directly from a registered Public Notary to the CSMLS office, stamped with their official seal

- Sworn affidavit for cases where there are no, or insufficient, documents to proceed with an evaluation or verification, sent directly from the law official signing the affidavit to the CSMLS office, stamped with their official seal

The CSMLS must balance the duty to provide a fair and transparent process with its obligation to ensure that the integrity of the Exam is protected.

DOCUMENT RECEIPT AND RETENTION POLICY

Only those who have applied and paid for a PLA will be updated on their file.

Clients will be notified by email when:

- their application and payment have been processed
- their documents have been processed, **NOT** when documents are received

Documents received at the CSMLS for individuals who have not applied for a PLA will be destroyed after twelve (12) months.

Documents received at the CSMLS without identifiers (applicant name or CSMLS identification number) are destroyed after six (6) months.

Information about receipt or destruction of these documents is not provided. The CSMLS is not responsible for any costs associated with the receipt or destruction of documents.

PREPARING FOR ASSESSMENT

When CSMLS has received all required documentation, a Client's PLA file is prepared for assessment through scanning and sorting all documents, the Client will be updated that they are in queue for assessment. Client PLA files are assigned in chronological order as our assessors complete already assigned files. This process, may take up to three (3) months, depending of the volume of Clients files received.

Stage 2: Assessment

The [PLA Stage 2 fee](#) must be paid before a Client's file is sent for assessment. Clients who have not paid this fee will be contacted when this payment is due.

When the CSMLS office has received full payment and all supporting documents are processed, the Client's file will be sent for assessment. This process, may take up to three (3) months, depending of the volume of Clients files received.

The Client's documents are thoroughly reviewed to compare didactic (theory and practical labs) education, and clinical (practicum/internship) education and/or clinical, and work experience, to the applicable MLT Competency Profile.

Eligibility to the MLT Exam will be determined on equivalence to the applicable CSMLS Competency Profile©.

Assessments usually take four to six (4-6) weeks to complete.

Stage 3: Post-Assessment

TECHNICAL REPORT

Technical Reports are not to be shared digitally, by any means, unencrypted email, online platforms, social media, etc., as these are sensitive documents and are subject to fraudulent activity.

The PLA technical report lists a Client's experience found in their submitted documentation and will result in one of three outcomes ([see Outcomes Chart, Appendix 1](#)):

1. **Recognition as equivalent** to the MLT Competency Profile.

Eligible to write both the MLT and MLA Exams.

2. **Partial recognition as not equivalent** to the MLT Competency Profile, **with an assigned Technical Report Learning Plan (TRLP).**

A Technical Report Learning Plan (TRLP) must be successfully completed within two (2) years to be eligible to write the MLT Exam.

An MLT General Client may be granted eligibility to the MLA Exam if they are assigned a TRLP with Refresher or Subject Specific course requirements and if they live in Canada. MLA Exam eligibility will not be granted to individuals who have Comprehensive course requirements or who live outside of Canada.

A TRLP is only valid for two (2) years.

3. **No recognition and is not equivalent** to the MLT Competency Profile.

A full EQual™ accredited Canadian MLT educational program must be successfully completed to be eligible to write the Exam (see the descriptions of [General MLT](#), [Diagnostic Cytology MLT](#), and [Clinical Genetics MLT](#)).

A Bridging Program is NOT a full Equal™ accredited Canadian MLT educational program.

Clients who fall into this outcome may appeal or apply to submit supplemental documents for further review (see the [Supplemental Documentation Review, Appeal, and PLA Stage 2 Reassessment Policies section](#)).

All MLT PLA Clients will receive two (2) copies of their Technical Report, allowing them to submit a copy to a Canadian provincial regulator or for immigration purposes, if required. To request and pay for additional copies, or copies of other Client file documents, where allowed, contact pla@csmls.org for more information.

LEARNING PLAN POLICY

A Technical Report Learning Plan (TRLP) addresses the gaps in MLT knowledge/experience as identified in the PLA Technical Report.

If a TRLP is assigned, it must be **successfully completed within two (2) years** to qualify for the Exam.

If the TRLP cannot be completed in this timeframe, the Client may be able to ask for a **ONE TIME Learning Plan Extension**, for an additional fee. Clients must submit this application **BEFORE** their TRLP expires.

Clients who have an expired TRLP will be required to apply and pay for a [PLA Stage 2 Reassessment](#). The outcome of this reassessment may result in additional course work requirements.

Courses or Medical Laboratory Technologist programs taken **prior to receiving a TRLP, CANNOT be counted** towards fulfilling any requirement identified in a TRLP.

Clients **are not allowed to re-register for or retake course(s) or program(s)**, to complete a current TRLP, or to reassess an expired TRLP or expired Eligibility Statement. A different course/program, from a different educational institution must be taken. This includes courses failed during the TRLP completion time. If a client fails a course while trying to complete their TRLP, they must choose a different course option from the pre-approved list.

The list of CSMLS approved courses are for the completion of a TRLP only, they may not be accepted as professional development requirements by Canadian provincial MLT regulatory agencies.

Learning Plan Breakdown

A TRLP must be successfully completed to fulfill the gaps identified in the Technical Report before a Client is deemed eligible to write the Exam. A TRLP can consist of any of the following course work.

Refresher: A TRLP with assigned Refresher course work is required when a discipline (i.e., clinical chemistry, clinical microbiology, hematology, histotechnology or transfusion science) has not been practiced (education or work) within the last five years.

Subject Specific: A TRLP with assigned Subject Specific course work is required when part of a discipline (example, Toxicology) has not practiced (education or work) within the last five years.

Comprehensive: A TRLP with assigned Comprehensive course work is required when there is one discipline with little or no theoretical and clinical education/clinical work experience.

- General MLT: if there is **more than one** comprehensive gap, the Client cannot qualify for the Exam through PLA.
- Diagnostic Cytology MLT: if there is a comprehensive gap in any discipline **outside of Histology**, the Client cannot qualify for the Exam through PLA.
- Clinical Genetics MLT: if there is **one** comprehensive gap, the Client cannot qualify for the Exam through PLA.

These Clients will be directed to complete a full EQual™ accredited Canadian MLT educational program.

Note: MLA Exam eligibility is available for Canadian based, General MLT Clients with an assigned TRLP for refresher or subject specific course requirements only.

MLA Exam eligibility will not be granted to General MLT Clients with comprehensive course requirements until they have successfully completed their TRLP and are eligible for the General MLT Exam.

Learning Plan Course Work

All activities for the disciplines identified in a TRLP must be successfully completed before any Client will become eligible to write the Exam.

Refresher Courses

If a PLA Technical Report indicates that refresher course work in a discipline must be

taken, acceptable course option(s) for all General disciplines and for the Histology discipline in Diagnostic Cytology can be found on the CSMLS [website](#).

The CSMLS does not maintain a list of acceptable courses or options to complete most Diagnostic Cytology or any Clinical Genetic Learning Plans ([see “Courses not on the Approved Lists” section](#)).

Subject Specific Courses

If a PLA Technical Report indicates that subject specific courses must be completed, course options will be included with the PLA Technical Report. These course options can also be found on the [CSMLS website](#).

General and Diagnostic Cytology Comprehensive Courses

If a PLA Technical Report indicates that comprehensive course work must be completed, course options will be included with the PLA Technical Report, some of these can be found on the [CSMLS website](#).

General IEMLT Bridging Programs

A bridging program allows IEMLTs to complete assigned refresher course work in all five (5) disciplines, for a General MLT TRLP.

Bridging programs also provide support for IEMLTs assisting with integration into the Canadian health care system. These programs are not mandatory for IEMLTs but have been shown to improve success with the Exam.

Participation in a bridging program may also help reduce feelings of isolation and anxiety, providing participants with an enhanced sense of community while developing increased professional networking opportunities.

Self-Directed Bridging

Before starting this option, Clients must receive approval from the CSMLS office, please contact pla@csmls.org.

Clients can choose to complete one or more supervised Canadian clinical placement(s) **in addition to refresher course work** to complete TRLP requirements.

A Clinical Placement Blueprint (CPB) is available on the CSMLS website under [Learning Plans](#). It describes the specific activities that are required which must be supervised by a CSMLS certified and/or provincially registered MLT for any of the disciplines listed.

It is a Client's responsibility to find and secure a clinical placement at an accredited Canadian clinical medical laboratory.

It is possible that not all activities can be completed in a single location. Therefore, Clients may need to secure one or more sites to complete the requirements a learning plan. Please complete one CPB for each site used as part of a learning plan.

CSMLS is not responsible for securing placement sites for Clients.

NOTE: Before starting this option, Clients must receive approval from the CSMLS office.

Learning Plan Courses not on the Approved Lists

If a Client has found a course that is not on the pre-approved list, they must ask the CSMLS to approve it before it can be taken. The course must be at the MLT level.

The assessment team will review the course and decide whether it is approved to fulfill

TRLP requirements. The following information must be provided to the CSMLS:

- Course name, course number and name of school
- Course description or course outline

Courses recently taken off the approved refresher course list cannot be approved to fulfill learning plan requirements unless they have been recently revised.

After Successful Completion of a Learning Plan

After each course is successfully completed, an official transcript from the educational institution must be submitted directly to the CSMLS from the issuing institution.

Clients with assigned course work cannot retake the same courses they may have taken before, whether successful or not.

All TRLP requirements must be successfully completed before Clients can become eligible to write the Exam.

After the CSMLS receives proof of successful completion of the TRLP, an Eligibility Statement will be sent to the Client (see [Eligibility Statement section](#)).

Do not apply for an Exam until an Eligibility Statement has been mailed.

Supplemental Documentation Review, Appeal, and PLA Stage 2 Reassessment Policies

If a Client disagrees with the outcome of their PLA Technical Report, they have the option to apply for a Supplemental Documentation Review, an Appeal of their PLA, or a PLA Stage 2 Reassessment.

SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTATION POLICY

If a Client believes additional documents from their employer or educational institution(s) may change their PLA outcome, they must apply and pay for Supplemental Documentation Review **within ninety (90) days** of the date on the PLA Technical Report (non-refundable fee).

Only documents from employers or institutions that are included in the original PLA application will be accepted for Supplemental Documentation Review. Once all required documents are received, a revised assessment report will be sent to the requesting Client within forty-five (45) days of their receipt.

The application form for Supplemental Documentation Review is found on the [CSMLS website](#), please send completed forms with payment to pla@csmls.org.

APPEAL POLICY

If a Client disagrees with their PLA Technical Report and feels having their file reviewed by another assessor may change their PLA outcome, they must apply and pay for an Appeal **within forty-five (45) days** of the date on their PLA Technical Report (non-refundable fee).

Clients who are seeking an appeal cannot submit additional documentation.

Another PLA assessor will perform the PLA (blinded from the first report) and an updated PLA Technical Report will be sent to the requesting Client within forty-five (45) days of the request receipt.

Application forms for Supplemental Documentation or Appeals are found on the [CSMLS website](#), please send completed forms with payment to pla@csmls.org.

PLA STAGE 2 REASSESSMENT POLICY

If a Client disagrees with their PLA Technical Report and believes additional documentation from employer(s) or educational institution(s) not listed on their original application may change their PLA outcome, they may apply and pay for a PLA Stage 2 Reassessment (non-refundable fee). Contact pla@csmls.org for more information.

If a Client does not complete an assigned Technical Report Learning Plan (TRLP) within the timeframe of their assigned TRLP, they must apply and pay for a PLA Stage 2 Reassessment, if they wish to continue with the PLA process. Contact pla@csmls.org for more information.

If a Client as received an Eligibility Statement, but has let it expire before attending an Exam session, they must apply and pay for a PLA Stage 2 Reassessment, if they wish to become eligible to the Exam again. Contact pla@csmls.org for more information.

Eligibility Statements

Eligibility Statements are not to be shared digitally, by any means, unencrypted email, online platforms, social media, etc., as these are sensitive documents and are subject to fraudulent activity.

An Eligibility Statement will be issued once a Client has been found “Equivalent” to the CSMLS Competency Profile and the PLA language proficiency requirement (either from their initial PLA or after a TRLP has been successfully completed).

Eligibility Statements will indicate initial eligibility Exam status and are valid for twelve (12) months after the date of issue. This allows two (2) attempts at the Exam within twelve (12) months to pass the Exam, if required.

For more information on the Exam, see the [Exam Handbook](#) or the [CSMLS website](#).

Clients ARE NOT TO apply for an Exam session until they have received an Eligibility Statement from the CSMLS office.

Appendix 1: General MLT PLA Outcomes

This chart is to be used as a **guideline** for determining equivalency to a Canadian trained General Medical Laboratory Technologist.

Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) theoretical education, clinical education, and clinical work experience includes the following five (5) disciplines (see the CSMLS Competency Profile), as they relate to humans: **Clinical Chemistry, Clinical Microbiology, Hematology, Histology, and Immunohematology (Transfusion Science/Blood Bank)**.

Canadian MLS Regulatory bodies recognize recency as being 0-5 years and require proficiency in English, Canadian Language Benchmark 8, for admittance to the CSMLS National Certification Examination.

| Canadian Equivalence in Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Theoretical Education Recency | Clinical Education Recency | Clinical Work Experience Recency | Outcome | Learning Plan |
| CSMLS RECOGNIZED (five (5) MLS disciplines) | | | | |
| ≤ 5 years MLS | ≤ 5 years | ≤ 5 years | Equivalent | N/A |
| ≤ 5 years MLS | ≤ 5 years | None | | |
| ≤ 5 years MLS | None | ≤ 5 years | | |
| > 5 years MLS | > 5 years | ≤ 5 years | | |
| > 5 years MLS | None | ≤ 5 years | | |
| CSMLS PARTIALLY RECOGNIZED* | | | | |
| Five (5) disciplines: | | | | |
| > 5 years MLS | > 5 years | > 5 years | Not Equivalent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresher or Subject specific Course required |
| > 5 years MLS | > 5 years | None | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresher or Subject Specific Course required |
| > 5 years MLS | None | > 5 years | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresher required • Clinical training recommended |
| Four (4) disciplines: | | | | |
| Recency: any of the above | | | Not Equivalent 1 comprehensive gap | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 theory courses required (one from 2 different institutions) • Clinical training recommended |
| CSMLS NOT RECOGNIZED | | | | |
| ≤ 5 years MLS | None | None | Not Equivalent – more than 1 comprehensive gap | Full EQUAL™ accredited Canadian program (bridging programs are NOT acceptable for this requirement) |
| Other: No MLS or 1-3 disciplines | Other: No MLS or 1-3 disciplines | None | | |
| Other: No MLS or 1-3 Disciplines | Other: No MLS or 1-3 disciplines | ≥ 5 years | | |

*Certification obtained by AMT or ASCP (within the last 5 years) will be considered.

“≤” means less than or equal to; “>” means greater than

Appendix 2: Using the CSMLS PLA Portal

CSMLS has a PLA Portal for where potential Clients can open a PLA account and submit their application online. Instructions for accessing the PLA Portal are below.

Please contact pla@csmls.org if problems are encountered when following these instructions.

The PLA Portal allows Clients have their supporting documents submitted directly by uploading them to their PLA account. Official documents must be uploaded directly into a PLA Client's file by the submitting institution. Unofficial documents can be uploaded in their PLA account by the Client.

CSMLS will continue to accept PLA documents that are emailed/mailed to the office, but the processing time for these submission methods may be longer than the online method.

Go to the [Supporting Documents section](#) for more information on submitting supporting documents.

Step 1 – Create a CSMLS Account

PLA Clients must have an active CSMLS account in order to apply for the PLA process.

Go to www.csmls.org and select “Login” at the top of the page.

The screenshot shows the CSMLS website interface. At the top, there is a dark navigation bar with a search box, a 'Search' button, a 'Login' button (circled in red), and a 'Language' dropdown menu. Below this is the CSMLS logo and the text 'Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science / Société canadienne de science de laboratoire médical'. A blue navigation bar contains links for 'About Us', 'Medical Laboratory Professionals', 'Membership', 'Certification', 'Professional Development', 'Advocacy', 'Research', and 'Career Centre'. The main content area is titled 'CSMLS Login' and contains a form with 'Username' and 'Password' input fields, a 'Remember me on this computer' checkbox, and a 'Log On' button. There are also links for 'Forgot my username or password' and 'Forgot my password'. A red box highlights the 'Create a new account' link at the bottom of the form.

If you already have a CSMLS account, log in.

If you do not have a CSMLS account yet, select “Create a new account”

Step 2 – Find your CSMLS ID number

Everyone who has a CSMLS account is assigned a CSMLS ID.

PLA Applicants must take note of their CSMLS ID as they will need it to apply for PLA, CSMLS membership, and for any other CSMLS inquiries.

Clients may decide if they wish to purchase membership to take advantage of PLA fee discounts, among other benefits of [CSMLS membership](#). See the CSMLS Membership section in the PLA Handbook for more information.

Step 3 – Set up an Online PLA Account

Go to the login page at <https://csmls.secure-platform.com/site/>.

For an initial online application submission, click on Start Application, fill out the fields as prompted, and select Register.

| Program | Status | Deadline | Action |
|---------------------------|----------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Prior Learning Assessment | Now Open | 11/1/2025 11:59 PM | Start Application |

Step 4 – Begin the Online PLA application

Verify the applicant information and select Save and Next.

Clients may now select the PLA designation they would like to apply for. If a Client wishes to apply for more than one (1) designation, they may submit an additional application once they have completed the first one. Fees are paid by PLA application type, that is, MLT General, MLA, MLT Clinical Genetics, or MLT Diagnostic Cytology.

Complete the application based on the following details and actions.

Table 5. Application form details and actions

| Details | Actions |
|-------------------|--|
| Application Type | Select the designation being applying to PLA for |
| Digital Signature | Sign with a mouse or touchscreen |
| Date | Select the date the application is being submitted |
| MLT Fee Selection | Choose whether fees are being paid by credit card online (a link will be emailed within 4 weeks of application being submitted) or by mailing a cheque or money order. |

| Details | Actions |
|---|---|
| PCRB Upload | Complete the PCRB and upload the completed file as a PDF |
| Online Self-Assessment (MLT General only) | Indicate the OSA username where provided |
| Credential Evaluation | Select the credential evaluation organization and include the client number so CSMLS can upload the report to the file once received. |
| Medical Laboratory Technology (MLT) Education | Select the Add MLT Education button to add experience to this section of the application. Clients may add more than 1. |
| Clinical MLT Education (Practicum/Internship) | Select the Add MLT Internship button to add experience to this section of the application. Clients may add more than 1. |
| Other Relevant Education, MLT related | Select the Add Other MLT Education button to add experience to this section of the application. Clients may add more than 1. Experiences listed under MLT Education do not need to be repeated here. MLT files also do not require any MLA level education. |
| Continuing Education, MLT Related | Select the Add Continuing Education button to add experience to this section of the application. Clients may add more than 1. |
| Professional Development, MLT Related | Download, fill out and upload the continuing professional development list. |
| Clinical Work Experience, MLT ONLY | Select the Add MLT Work Experience button to add experience to this section of the application. Clients may add more than 1. |

Only sections that will have documentation being sent for PLA are required to be reported on this part of the application.

Select **Save** if the application is not yet completed and being finalized at a later time or **Save and Finalize** if the application is ready for submission to CSMLS.

Step 5 – Updating or Complete the PLA Application

If a PLA applicant already has an online PLA account with an application started, and they want to update something or continue with the application submission, they may log into their account using the credentials created in Step 3.



Follow the instructions in Step 4 for continuing and completing the application submission.

Step 6 – CSMLS Office Review of a Completed PLA Application

The office will review all completed PLA application submissions and within 3 weeks will send an email asking applicants to either edit their details or submit their PLA fee.

Step 7 – PLA Fee Payment

PLA applicants who have indicated they would like to pay online will be sent a link to this payment method for PLA Stage 1. DO NOT SHARE this link as it has been generated for your specific file.

PLA applicants/Clients paying fees online will need their application number from their online PLA account to complete payment.

PLA Application fees being paid by Canadian money order or Canadian cheque will receive an update by email once this payment has been manually processed by the office.

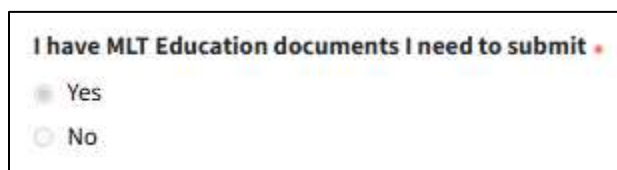
Once PLA payments have been completely processed, the PLA file will be moved to the document submission stage, and a confirmation email will be sent to the applicant/Client.

Step 8 – Continuing the PLA Application – Document Submission

PLA applicants who have had their payment processed and confirmed will have a confirmation email sent with a link to log in and continue with their application for the document submission section.

In this section, PLA clients are required to indicate if they have documentation to submit for each section from the Application.

If the client has indicated experience in the application form previously submitted for a section, then “Yes” must be selected. If there was nothing added to a section in the application form, then “No” is to be selected.



I have MLT Education documents I need to submit

Yes

No

The PLA Platform will then need to know how these documents are being sent to CSMLS. There are three options for document submission.

Upload: If selected, this allows the PLA Client to input the name and email of the person who will upload the official supporting documents directly to the PLA Platform. Submissions must be from an institutional email address (public use addresses such as gmail and yahoo are not accepted for any official supporting document submission for PLA). The email entered will receive a direct request and link to upload the documents. This is the quickest form of submission.

Email: If selected, this indicates that an official representative from the institution will email the official supporting documents to pla@csmls.org according to the policies outlined in this handbook.

Mail: If selected, this indicates the documents will be sent directly to CSMLS according to the policies outlined in this handbook.

MLT Education 1

- Mail in
- Email
- Upload

Document Upload

Use the submission request below to have the institution submitting your official documents emailed a link where they can upload your documents directly to CSMLS.

Ensure you include the correct name and email of the staff or department submitting your documents on your behalf.

If you select this option, do not have these documents emailed or mailed to our office, we will not process or expect them.

Please note we do not accept emailed documents from non-institutional email addresses (gmail, yahoo, outlook, etc.).

Full Name

Email

If a PLA client listed more than 1 experience for any section, they can repeat the steps from above up to 5 times per section.

Step 9 – File and Document Status Updates

PLA Clients who have documents being mailed or emailed will receive an email alert when a document has been added to their PLA Platform by CSMLS. The email will have a link to log in and clients may scroll to the appropriate section to see what the CSMLS office has processed:

| CSMLS Office Use: Documents Received |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> MLT Education 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MLT Education 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MLT Education 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MLT Education 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MLT Education 5 |

Documents directly uploaded by the institution will have red front showing the document was uploaded by the institution.

MLT Education 1

Mail in

Email

Upload

Document Upload

(Received)

Step 10 – Stage 2 Fee Payment

Once all documentation has been uploaded to the PLA Platform, another email will be sent with the payment link for the Stage 2 Payment. If a PLA Client selected to pay by money order or cheque, then they will be notified by the CSMLS office via email to mail the second payment.

Step 11 – Assessment and Unofficial Report Decision

PLA Clients will be sent an email confirming their assessment has been completed and their unofficial report is ready to be reviewed. Clients are asked to log in, review their unofficial copy and choose one of 3 options:

Assessment Decision Options

Based on your results outlined in the document above, how would you like to proceed?

- I accept my technical report outcome
- I would like to appeal the assessment decision
- I would like to request a supplemental document review
- I would like to request a full re-assessment

If a PLA client selects they accept the outcome, CSMLS will assume they are proceeding with the instructions provided in their report and will prepare the official copy for mailing.

Please refer to the sections in this handbook for information on appeal, supplemental or stage 2 assessments.

Appendix 3: CSMLS Required PLA Documentation Checklist

- Personal Competency Rating Booklet:** Fill this as accurately and honestly as possible and add. Add information that corresponds to clinical MLT work experience or MLT education, including instrument/equipment experience.
- Online Self-Assessment (OSA) – General MLT Only:** Create an OSA account online and complete the OSA. Once it is complete, forward the account username to the CSMLS.
- Credential Evaluation:** The issuing credential evaluation service must send the evaluation directly to the CSMLS (WES or ICES).
- Language Proficiency (if required):** The issuing institution must send the test results directly to the CSMLS. CLB 6 to begin the PLA process, CLB 8 to complete.
- MLT Didactic Education:** Educational institution(s) must send these documents directly to the CSMLS.
 - Official Educational Transcripts
 - Course Outlines/Syllabus of Studies
- MLT Clinical Education (practicum/internship):** An official representative from the educational institution or laboratory must send documentation directly to the CSMLS.
- MLT Clinical Work Experience:** Each employing institution must send a detailed letter describing the Client's clinical work experience directly to the CSMLS.
- Other Academic Education, MLT related only (if applicable):** Educational institutions must send official transcripts and course outlines directly to the CSMLS.
- Continuing Education, MLT related only (if applicable):** Educational institutions must send official transcripts and course outlines directly to the CSMLS.
- Professional Development, MLT related only (if applicable):** For seminars and workshops, Clients may submit copies of their certificates.
- Professional MLT Certification only (if applicable):** The professional certification association must send proof of professional certification and status, directly to the CSMLS.

Appendix 4: Micro Loans for Internationally Educated Applicants

Various provincial governments offer bursaries and grants to internationally educated health professionals living in their province. An internet search for the various provinces will come up with a list of provincially funded programs; alternatively, you can contact any of the [Canadian provincial regulatory bodies](#) to ask if there is a grant or bursary program that you can take advantage of in their province.

Immigrants to Canada may be eligible to get a loan to help pay for the costs of Canadian certification or required training/education to be able to work in an individual's pre-immigration career. Please contact one of the programs listed for more information.

NATIONAL

Windmill Microlending

Do you want to continue your career in Canada?

We offer microloans to help you pay for the Canadian credentials you need.

Phone: 1-855-423-2262

Visit: <https://windmillmicrolending.org/>

BRITISH COLUMBIA



Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) Loan Project

Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) Loan Project offers a competitive low-interest rate loan to residents of B.C. who are internationally trained to help them pursue FCR and obtain employment in their field in Canada.

Phone: (778) 819-0728 (ext. 1001)

Email: FCRloaninfo@success.bc.ca

MANITOBA



SEED Winnipeg

“Recognition Counts!” is a program that provides accessible, low interest loans to assist skilled immigrants to Manitoba with qualification recognition, upgrading and/or training needed for employment in the fields for which they have education and experience obtained outside of Canada.

Email: info@seedwinnipeg.ca

Phone: 204-927-9935

Website: <http://seedwinnipeg.ca/programs/detail/recognition-counts>

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR



Acquiring eXperience; Integrating Skills (AXIS) Employment Services

Axis Career Services, the employment division of the Association for New Canadians, has established a targeted Small Loans Program to support and expedite the integration of Internationally Educated Professionals into the Newfoundland and Labrador workforce.

To determine if you are eligible for assistance, visit www.AXIScareers.net

NOVA SCOTIA

Immigrant Settlement and Immigration Services (IS2NS)

Phone: 902-406-8686

Visit: www.isins.ca

ONTARIO, South Western (excluding the GTA)



WIL Employment Connections

The Internationally Trained Worker Loan Program provides ITWs (residing in southwestern Ontario) access to the funds necessary to achieve foreign credential recognition and employment outcomes commensurate with their international education, skills and experience. Loans operate as a flexible line of credit to assist ITWs in covering the direct and indirect costs related to foreign credential recognition.

Email: info@accesscentre.ca Phone: 519-858-2348

Visit: www.wil.ca/immigrants-newcomers/skilled-immigrant-loan-program

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND



Canada Microcredit Educators Group (CMEG)

Canada Microcredit Educators Group invites inquiries and applications from internationally trained people of all occupations living in Prince Edward Island. CMEG is committed to your prosperity.

Email: info@microloanscanada.ca Phone: 902-626-8667

Visit: www.microloanscanada.ca

QUEBEC, GREATER MONTRÉAL

Association communautaire d'emprunt de Montréal (ACEM)

Email: info@acemcreditcommunautaire.qc.ca Phone: 514-843-7296

Visit: <https://microcreditmontreal.ca/>