



# Medical Laboratory Assistant

SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY

## Overview

The fast-track Medical Laboratory Assistant program is designed to equip you with the skills, applied knowledge and professional behaviour required to become a proficient lab assistant.

You'll be prepared to work in various medical laboratories which are evolving rapidly to accommodate growing advancements in medical technology and healthcare.

In this program, you will:

- learn to accurately collect, label and process blood, tissue and other specimens in a biosafety laboratory for analysis
- develop the technical skills to enter patient data into laboratory information systems
- gain experience in handling front-desk operations and office administration, including patient interaction and administrative tasks
- train to perform procedures such as electrocardiograms (ECGs) and urinalyses or point-of-care tests as part of a laboratory team of professionals
- gain professional responsibility, including scope of practice, ethics, communication, critical thinking, accountability and how to collaborate professionally.

Engage in real-world scenarios to integrate clinical knowledge with practical skills. You'll participate in a SAIT-arranged practicum in a medical laboratory and patient service center to refine and apply your skills in a real-world setting.

As a graduate, you can pursue employment opportunities in various settings, including community health centres, hospitals, medical laboratories, mobile clinics, insurance companies, or private home care.

You'll also be eligible to challenge the [Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science \(CSMLS\)](#) exam to obtain national certification as a medical laboratory assistant in Canada. Visit CSMLS to learn more about their licensing requirements, mandatory registration, and declaration of conduct.

## Traits, skills and aptitudes

Those in the medical laboratory assistant field need:

- fine motor skills
- critical thinking and adaptability
- effective communication skills
- the ability to work independently
- the ability to work well under stress, maintain professional behaviour and emotionally self-regulate
- the ability to use technology
- attention to detail
- to tolerate the sight of human blood and tissue samples
- the ability to assist in transporting, lifting and positioning patients and equipment and meet the physical demands of the job (for example, using your hand, wrist and arm for prolonged periods)
- normal colour vision
- the ability to sit for long periods (three to four hours)
- the ability to type at 30 wpm with high accuracy.

Medical laboratory assistants need to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) for extended periods, which includes exposure to latex and disinfection chemicals. You must also be comfortable performing patient care procedures that may be sensitive or conducted in very close proximity to the patient.

You may also work extended hours and shift work, including evenings and weekends.

You are strongly encouraged to refer to the [ALIS website for career, learning, and employment information for medical laboratory](#)

[assistants](#) to ensure you can successfully meet the occupational requirements for the program and profession.

## Professional designations and certifications

This program is accredited by Accreditation Canada. It is designed to ensure graduates achieve clinical competence as defined by the [Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science \(CSMLS\)](#).

As an accredited institute, SAIT Medical Laboratory Assistant graduates are eligible to challenge the CSMLS certification exam. Obtaining national certification as a medical laboratory assistant will allow you to work across Canada.

## Credentials

After successfully completing this program, you'll receive a SAIT Medical Laboratory Assistant certificate.

## Practicum, Co-op and Work Integrated Learning

You will participate in a practicum at a medical laboratory and patient service centre as part of this program.

You will be assigned practicum placements with consideration given to your preference of location. However, due to limited availability in Calgary, it might be necessary for you to travel or relocate outside the city. Special considerations will not be accommodated.

If you are beginning this program as part of the Rural Health Zone (RHZ) intake, all practicum placements will occur in rural Alberta, and will not include sites in Calgary or Edmonton.

In compliance with the practica agreements with our clinical partners, you will be required to provide specific documentation before you can participate in your practicum. [Find out what requirements you need for this program.](#)

## Specialized Intakes

This program offers a Rural Health Zone (RHZ) intake, which takes place from May through October each year.

This intake has a predetermined schedule and uses a blended delivery model. You'll acquire theoretical foundations through online classes in May and June and be provided hands-on simulated laboratory experience on-campus at SAIT in July and August, followed by a practicum rotation in a clinical setting. Practicum sites are solely located in rural areas of the province.

Please be advised that all courses must be completed within this timeframe.

To apply for student loans, students in this intake are considered part-time.

## Admission requirements

### Applicants educated in Canada

Applicants must demonstrate [English language proficiency](#) and meet the following requirements or equivalents:

- at least 60% in Math 20-2 or Math 10C, and
- at least 60% in English Language Arts 30-1 or English Language Arts 30-2, and
- at least 60% in Chemistry 20, and
- at least 60% in Biology 20.

You must also achieve a mark of at least 50% in the [School of Health and Public Safety's entrance testing process](#).

SAIT accepts [high school course equivalents](#) for admission for applicants educated outside Alberta.

### Applicants educated outside of Canada

All applicants who were educated outside of Canada must demonstrate [English language proficiency](#) and provide proof they meet the program admission requirements with an international document assessment. [Find accepted educational documents and assessment options.](#)

SAIT may also accept courses completed at certain [international post-secondary institutions](#).

# Costs

## 2024/25 tuition and fees

The following estimated costs are effective as of July 1, 2024.

### Domestic Students

Year	Number of semesters	Tuition fees	Additional fees	Total per year
1	1.5	\$4,699.50	\$1,211	\$5,910.50
<b>Total cost:</b>				<b>\$5,910.50</b>

The estimated total cost of tuition and fees for domestic students is based on the recommended course load per year.

\*.5 indicates a combination of full-time semester(s) and part-time semester(s) in the same academic year. In many cases, students are completing a practicum during their part-time semester. Part-time students are those taking less than nine (9) course credits in a semester.

### Books and Supplies

Books and supplies are approximately \$700 per full-time year.

This is a bring-your-own-device program with a standard computer hardware and software requirement. See the specific requirements on our [computers and laptops page](#).

Find your booklist on the [SAIT Bookstore's](#) website. The booklist will be available closer to the program start date. Can't find your program or course? The bookstore didn't receive a textbook list. Contact your program directly to determine if they're still refining course details or if you're in luck; no textbook purchase is required this term.

You are responsible for additional expenses related to your practicum, including pre-practicum requirements and relocation costs to practicum sites outside of Calgary.

### Required personal protective equipment (PPE)

The industry-approved PPE you'll need will be discussed during your first few days of classes.

Your required uniform can be purchased before orientation from any place that sells medical uniforms. Your uniform should consist of:

- a scrub top and bottom
- safety glasses
- comfortable closed-toe and heel shoes. They should also be water-impervious and slip-resistant.

### Tech requirements

You will be evaluated on your competency performance level using a tracking system called [CompTracker](#). You will require a wifi-enabled Apple tablet that can run the most up-to-date operating system to support the CompTracker system.

- Any size tablet is acceptable.
- Keyboards are advisable but not mandatory.
- Smartphones are not acceptable devices for CompTracker.

There is a required user license fee of \$55. More information will be shared at orientation.

### Additional fees

- The Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS) national exam fee is approximately \$250. CSMLS National Association dues for students are approximately \$85. Refer to [CSMLS.org](#) for more details.
- A fee is associated with obtaining a police information check, including a vulnerable sector check, payable to the police or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).
- You must have your immunizations reviewed by the SAIT Health Clinic. There is a \$75 charge to review your vaccine and medical history. Any vaccines you need to be administered will result in additional charges.

