

FAQ for MLA/T Programs in Ontario – Revised Competency Guidelines and Accreditation

MLPAO MLA/T COMPETENCY GUIDELINES

What is the advantage of having our students challenge the MLPAO Certification Exam?

The [MLPAO MLA/T Competency Guidelines](#) have been developed through collaborative consultations and information sharing with stakeholders across various laboratory sectors in Ontario. The competencies identified in the MLPAO Competency Guidelines have been identified by Ontario employers as essential elements for successful MLA/T practice in Ontario. More than 90% of employers in Ontario require MLPAO certification as a minimum qualification for hire. MLPAO certification provides MLA/Ts with increased opportunities for employment and maximum portability throughout Ontario and beyond.

What has changed in the new version of the MLPAO Competency Guidelines?

In our thorough review of the MLPAO Competency Guidelines we made changes to align with the changing role of the MLA/T in the workplace, and also to improve the ease of use of the document for educators, employers and MLA/T students. Below is a list of the major changes to the document and the rationale for the change.

Change	Rationale
New and/or updated competency statements	New competency statements and/or additions to competency statements have been added in blue font
New format with numbered competencies	Facilitates mapping of competencies to curriculum
Utilization of measurable verbs in competency statements	Facilitates curriculum development and clearly defines required knowledge, skill, attitude or behaviour.
New Standards of Practice Document	MLA/T Standards of Practice were embedded into the previous version of the Competency Guidelines. Separation of the Standards of Practice from the Competency Guidelines clarifies the requirements for entry to practice (Competency Guidelines) from the expectations for working MLA/Ts (Standards of Practice).
Use of Simulation	Through simulation, educators can replicate laboratory situations which allow students to develop and practice their laboratory skills in a safe environment. Increased use of simulation can help to ensure that students are competent in the required skills while addressing the limitations of some clinical placement settings to cover all competencies. All competencies have been reviewed to determine whether they can be assessed using simulation.
Recommendations for Phlebotomy and ECG	MLA/T programs are advised to verify students as competent to perform phlebotomy and ECG during the didactic portion of the MLA/T program, prior to attending clinical placement.

Change	Rationale
	<p>Phlebotomy: It is recommended that students complete a minimum of 30 successful patient phlebotomies, with a minimum of 15 being completed during the didactic phase of the program. The remainder can be completed during clinical placement.</p> <p>ECG: It is recommended that students complete a minimum of 5 successful ECG tracings during the didactic phase</p>

Are there minimum requirements for phlebotomy and ECG for students to be eligible to take the MLPAO Certification Exam?

We have received feedback from some of our stakeholders that the requirements for phlebotomy and ECG were difficult to meet in some situations. In response to that feedback, **we have changed the requirements to recommendations for both phlebotomy and ECG**. MLA/T programs are advised to verify student competence in ECG and phlebotomy prior to the conclusion of the didactic phase of the program and the previous minimum requirements have been changed to recommendations. We are confident that this change will be beneficial to the MLA/T programs as it takes into consideration students who enter the program with experience and varying class sizes that may create challenges for meeting the minimum requirements.

What are the differences between the MLPAO Competency Guidelines and the CSMLS Competency Profile?

CSMLS updated their Pan-Canadian MLA/T Competency Profile in 2024. The new MLPAO Competency Guidelines have been mapped to the updated CSMLS Competency Profile and there are **2 distinct differences – knowledge of Ontario legislation and CPR**. In the mapping, we also identified **several areas of clarification where the MLPAO knowledge requirements are more specific**, and these have been clearly identified for you to assist with curriculum development. Click [here](#) for the MLPAO MLA/T Differences and Clarifications document.

When will the 2024 Competency Guidelines come into effect?

The new MLPAO Competency Guidelines will be effective with the **March 2027** certification exam. EQual accreditation will require programs to align their curriculum to the new competency profile approximately one year in advance of the exam effective date. We encourage you to reach out to your EQual Accreditation Specialist for more details.

When do we have to start teaching to the curriculum in the new Competency Guidelines?

EQual Canada will provide guidance and timelines for the implementation of the new curriculum. Please reach out to your EQual Accreditation Specialist for more information.

ACCREDITATION

Our MLA/T program is MLPAO approved; how does this change with EQual?

The MLPAO is no longer conducting its MLA/T program approval process. All existing MLA/T MLPAO approved programs must register with EQual Canada for accreditation. As of July 1, 2026, all MLPAO approved MLA/T programs will be required to have “accredited” or “accredited with condition” status with EQual Canada for their students to be able to challenge the MLPAO Certification Exam.

Can students from our MLA/T program challenge the MLPAO Certification Exam?

Students must graduate from MLA/T programs with an EQual Canada status of “registered/admitted”, “accredited” or “accredited with condition” to be eligible for the MLPAO Certification Exam. The list of eligible education programs is available on the [Accreditation Canada](#) website.

How do we ensure that our students can continue to challenge the MLPAO Certification Exam?

Early in the accreditation process, your EQual Accreditation Specialist will require that you declare your intention to have students challenge the MLPAO MLA/T Certification Exam. Through this declaration, programs will need to ensure that their curriculum includes the [MLPAO MLA/T Competency Guidelines Differences and Clarifications](#), as these have been identified by employers as essential elements for successful MLA/T practice in Ontario.

Where can I find the accreditation status of MLA/T programs?

The accreditation status of MAL/T programs is available on the [Accreditation Canada website](#).

Do the requirements for MLPAO approval like minimum student to teacher ratio, minimum equipment requirements, etc. still apply?

The requirements previously used for the MLPAO approval process have been replaced by EQual accreditation standards. Programs are encouraged to reach out to their EQual Specialist for more information on specific requirements.

Who can we reach out to for questions about accreditation?

MLA/T programs should reach out to their Accreditation Specialist for questions related to accreditation requirements.

We would like to start a new MLA/T program. How do we do that?

Career colleges in Ontario interested in starting an MLA/T program must submit applications for program approval through the [career college program review and approval process](#). New MLA/T programs must have a “registered/admitted”

What competency guidelines do we follow so our students can challenge the MLPAO exam?

The existing MLPAO Competency Guidelines will remain in effect until the end of 2026. The new MLPAO Competency Guidelines will be effective with the March 2027 certification exam. Equal accreditation will require programs to align their curriculum to the new competency profile approximately one year in advance of the exam effective date. We encourage you to reach out to your Equal Specialist for more details.