



College of Medical
Laboratory Technologists
of Ontario

CMLTO Quality Assurance Program

Competence Evaluation Assessor's handbook

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Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide Assessors involved in the College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Ontario (CMLTO) Competence Evaluation (CE) with:

- details about the CE process
- clear expectations of an Assessor
- guidelines to ensure a transparent, fair, objective, and impartial assessment of a Registrant's professional practice.

All CE handbooks are publicly available on the CMLTO website in English and French formats under the CE section.

Competence Evaluation

Under the *Medical Laboratory Technology Act, 1991*, the CMLTO Quality Assurance Program (QAP) is composed of three components, one of which is the CE (Appendix A). The purpose of the CE is to assess a Registrant's knowledge, skill, and judgment in relation to the CMLTO Standards of Practice. The Standards of Practice outline the ethical, legal, and professional expectations for CMLTO Registrants. The Standards of Practice apply to all dimensions of practice, including technical and non-technical areas such as education, administration, quality assurance, and research.

The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) may require a Registrant to participate in a CE if the QAC is of the opinion that the Registrant's knowledge, skill, and judgment are unsatisfactory. This decision is based on a review of the Registrant's Professional Portfolio, their Practice Review audit, or any other written information provided to the QAC.

CMLTO's guiding principle for the CE assessment is:

The CE process is not meant to be punitive; it will focus on identifying areas where the Registrant has opportunities to improve their knowledge, skill, and judgment relative to the CMLTO Standards of Practice, in the best interest of patient care and public safety.



The CE consists of 15 behavioural and/or situational-based questions based on the Standards of Practice. An assessment blueprint (Appendix B) determines the number of questions selected from each Standard of Practice category.

Competence Evaluation process details

Please note that all information and materials accessed or produced by an Assessor throughout the CE are confidential. Every Assessor is bound by the requirements and responsibilities outlined in the CMLTO Confidentiality Form, which is signed and returned to QAP staff prior to the distribution of any CE materials.

Registrant selected for CE assessment

- The QAC may require a Registrant to participate in a CE if the QAC is of the opinion, based on a review of the Registrant's Professional Portfolio, their Practice Review results or any other relevant written information, that the Registrant's knowledge, skill, and judgment are unsatisfactory.
- The Registrant is contacted by letter and email notice, followed by a phone call from QAP staff to discuss the overall process of the CE and to arrange a suitable date and time to conduct the assessment.
- One month prior to the assessment, an information package is sent to the Registrant and includes the CE Registrant Handbook, the CMLTO Standards of Practice, and any additional assessment details.

Competence Evaluation Assessors

- Each year, every Assessor participates in the CE Assessor training program. Assessors must also sign and return the Annual Assessor Declarations and CMLTO Confidentiality forms to QAP staff.
- The QAC selects two Assessors to conduct each CE. Assessors are required immediately to declare any direct or perceived conflict of interest to QAP staff. If QAP staff reasonably believe that a conflict of interest, either real or perceived, exists or that a reasonable apprehension of bias exists, a new Assessor may be selected to conduct the CE.
- The CE is a 90-minute verbal assessment, the Assessors read the situational and/or behavioral-based questions, and the Registrant provides a



response. The Assessors record and evaluate their responses against a rubric. See Appendix C for a sample question and rubric template.

- An in-person assessment is conducted at the CMLTO office in Toronto, Ontario, while a virtual assessment is conducted using an online platform such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom. For virtual assessments, Assessors and the Registrant are required to be on camera. In both cases, the assessment is recorded. Under certain circumstances, Assessors may be required to travel to the Registrant's workplace, or other location to conduct the CE assessment.
- If Assessors experience any technical difficulties during a virtual assessment (e.g., disconnection), they should attempt to re-enter the assessment. If the issue persists, they should notify QAP staff immediately by email (qualityassurance@cmlto.com) or telephone (416-861-9605 ext. 2).
- Assessors are compensated for their time and travel. Expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with CMLTO policies.

Post-assessment evaluation and reporting process

- Evaluating the overall process is a fundamental component of the CE. At the end of the CE, the Registrant and Assessors will both be sent an applicable survey within two (2) days, and they will have seven (7) days to complete this survey.
- Assessors submit a written report to the QAC for review and deliberation. This report contains the Assessor's individual and consensus scores. Additionally, the report includes:
 - records/worksheets including any Assessor notes and comments
 - observations made during the CE including areas/opportunities for improvement in the Registrant's knowledge, skill, and judgment
 - CMLTO expense form detailing the travel expenses, per diem for Assessor participation, and the date/time of the CE.
- For in-person assessments, the Assessors must collect any notes the Registrant may have written down during the assessment. For virtual



assessments, the Registrant is instructed that they must discard their notes appropriately.

Competence Evaluation outcomes

- Assessors will provide their report to QAP staff for submission to the QAC. QAP staff will review the report and may ask the Assessor(s) for clarification or additional details. An Assessor's role is finished once the report is completed and submitted.
- The QAC shall provide the Registrant with a copy of the CE Assessor report and any other relevant Quality Assurance information. The Registrant has the right to submit a written response to the QAC within 30 days of receiving the report.
- After considering the Assessor's report and any submissions made by the Registrant, the QAC may take no further action, or it may exercise one or more of the powers provided to the QAC under section 80.2 of the Health Professions Procedural Code. The final CE report will include:
 - a summary of the CE including areas/opportunities for improvement in the Registrant's knowledge, skill, and judgment
 - the QAC's decision
 - any resources to assist the Registrant in remediating any deficiencies
 - the required next steps and timelines.

Assessor expectations

The primary role of the CE Assessor is to evaluate a medical laboratory technologist's (MLT) knowledge, skill, and judgment in relation to the Standards of Practice.

Assessors must meet the following requirements:

- is a CMLTO Practising Registrant in good standing;
- has a minimum of five years of current MLT experience;
- cannot be a current member of the CMLTO Board or a Non-Board Committee member;



- cannot be a current or former Board member of a medical laboratory science association;
- recognizes and declares any potential conflict of interest;
- understands and complies with the requirements and responsibilities outlined in the CMLTO Confidentiality Form.

In order to maintain eligibility, an Assessor must:

- maintain the aforementioned qualification requirements;
- annually review and sign forms to acknowledge their understanding and agreement to the terms of Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest obligations;
- actively participate and successfully complete the annual Assessor training program;
- declare any conflict of interest to QAP staff in an expedient manner;
- collect the information and prepare the CE report offsite. **No specific feedback is given at the time of the assessment;**
- provide the QAC with an accurate and timely written report of the CE.

CE Assessors are expected to:

- act in an ethical manner with integrity in their relationship with the Registrant;
- be diplomatic and tactful in interacting with Registrants;
- be free from bias or conflict of interest;
- ask each CE question clearly, and provide the Registrant with time to respond within the allotted 90 minutes;
- provide a clear, accurate, objective and fair presentation of the CE to the QAC;
- maintain confidentiality prior to, during, and after the CE.

If an Assessor demonstrates unprofessional behaviour including, but not limited to incomplete reports and/or inaccurate reports, being consistently late, or exhibiting rude/judgmental behaviour, they will no longer be able to participate as an



Assessor. QAP staff will work with the Assessor to address these issues. However, if the issue(s) persists, the Assessor will no longer be eligible to conduct CE assessments.

Tips for a successful Competence Evaluation

The CE can be a stressful experience for Registrants, particularly due to the use of two Assessors for the assessment. While Registrants may feel overwhelmed, QAP staff can mitigate this by engaging in supportive discussions with the Registrant. However, it is important that two Assessors conduct the CE to achieve the following benefits:

- cross-validation of Registrant impressions and response analysis
- reduction of potential Assessor bias
- learning facilitation between Assessors.

To assist Assessors in facilitating a positive, and fair assessment of a Registrant's knowledge, skills, and judgment, some helpful tips include:

1. Be sensitive to the cultural and social environment of the Registrant, and conduct yourself in an appropriate manner.
2. Be aware of the surroundings and the demeanor of the Registrant. Constantly evaluate the effects of the CE and any personal interactions during the CE.
3. Maintain objectivity and fairness in the CE. This process may be very stressful for the Registrant. Defuse situations that may be frustrating to the Registrant by repeating the question or proceeding to another one.
4. Manage your time appropriately as the CE has 15 questions that must be completed in 90 minutes. It is the Assessor's responsibility to use proper time management to ensure there is a response for every question.
5. Do not provide the Registrant with any feedback before, during, or after the CE. This is the role of the QAC.
6. Be professional at all times as CE Assessors are CMLTO representatives.



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CMLTO contacts

If you have any questions prior to, or after the CE, please contact the QAP staff by email qualityassurance@cmlto.com.



Appendix A – The College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Ontario

The College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Ontario (CMLTO) is the regulatory body for Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs) in Ontario. It exists to ensure the public receives quality laboratory services from competent and ethical professionals. The CMLTO protects the public's right to safe, competent, ethical healthcare by regulating these professionals across the province. The CMLTO sets the requirements for entry to practice to the profession, the standards of practice for the profession, and investigates complaints and reports regarding MLTs' conduct in Ontario. Its role, programs, and governance all contribute to making the profession of medical laboratory technology accountable through transparent, objective, impartial, and fair practices.

MLTs are one of 29 health professions granted self-regulation under the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* (RHPA). Other regulated health professions include doctors, nurses, and pharmacists. MLTs must be registered with the CMLTO to work as MLTs in Ontario. As regulated health professionals, MLTs are held accountable for their conduct and practice.

While the RHPA sets out the common requirements for all health regulatory Colleges, each College has a profession-specific Act. For CMLTO, it is the *Medical Laboratory Technology Act, 1991* (MLT Act). The MLT Act sets out the scope of practice for MLTs, composition of Council and conditions for using the restricted "medical laboratory technologist" title. Only persons registered with the CMLTO are permitted to use the restricted title, abbreviation, or variation thereof. In addition, there are regulations made under both the RHPA and the MLT Act.

The Board is the College's governing body or Board of Directors that establishes CMLTO's strategic direction and outcomes leading to the self-regulation of MLTs for the interest of public safety, in accordance with the legislation. The Board conducts its various responsibilities through the statutory committees, consisting of Board members (professional and public) and professional Non-Board Committee members (NBCMs) that deal with the various functions of the College.



The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) develops and maintains a Quality Assurance Program (QAP) to ensure the quality of practice for MLTs and to promote continuing competence among Registrants. In fulfilling its responsibilities, the QAC:

- develops policies related to the QAP
- monitors and reviews quality assurance processes as described by legislation
- deals with cases emerging from QAP processes
- assists the Board with the development of appropriate practice guidelines.

Pursuant to section 80.1 of the RHPA, the quality assurance program shall include:

- (a) Continuing education or professional development designed to,
 - (i) Promote continuing competence and continuing quality improvement among the members,
 - (ii) Address changes in practice environments, and
 - (iii) Incorporate standards of practice, advances in technology, changes made to entry to practice competencies and other relevant issues in the discretion of the Council;
- (b) Self, peer and practice assessments; and
- (c) A mechanism for the College to monitor members' participation in, and compliance with, the quality assurance program.

Ontario Regulation 207/94 defines the specific CMLTO QAP components:

1. **Professional Portfolio** – helps Registrants maintain excellence in the profession by promoting ongoing self-reflection and development.
2. **Practice Review** – an objective assessment of a Registrant's professional practice in relation to the Standards of Practice of the profession.
3. **Competence Evaluation** – an evaluation of a Registrant's knowledge, skill and judgment in one or more of the specialities in which the Registrant is registered to practice.

All Practising CMLTO Registrants are required to participate in the QAP.



Appendix B – Competence Evaluation blueprint

CMLTO Competence Evaluation Blueprint

The College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Ontario (CMLTO) Competence Evaluation (CE) Blueprint defines the assessment's question composition. The CE question categories align to the CMLTO Standards of Practice for Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs) which can be found [here](#). The CMLTO Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) reviews the CE Blueprint every three years.

Intended use:

The CE is the third component of CMLTO's Quality Assurance Program. Its purpose is to evaluate the registrant's knowledge, skill, and judgment in relation to the standards of practice of the profession.

CE Blueprint:

CMLTO Standards of Practice	Number of Questions	Evaluation Tool Weighting
Professional Conduct and Accountability	5 - 6	35-40%
Knowledge and Skill	2 - 3	15-20%
Application of Knowledge and Skill	6 - 7	40-45%
Quality Management	1 - 2	10-15%
Total number of questions	15	100%

Assessment conditions:

- A 90 minute, in-person or virtual assessment
- Facilitated by two (2) CE Assessors appointed by the QAC
- Assessors ask the registrant one question at a time and a response is provided
- Questions are read verbatim by the Assessors
- Registrants may request the Assessors to repeat a question, or they may skip and return to a question at the end of the assessment
- The Registrant must respond to all questions

Question format:



- 15 behavioural and/or situational-based questions based on the CMLTO Standards of Practice for MLTs
- Situational questions focus on a Registrant's ability to apply their knowledge, skill, and judgment within a particular situation
- Behavior-based questions represent realistic and commonly encountered MLT situations

Outcomes:

After the CE assessment is completed, the QAC reviews the CE Assessor's reports, the Registrant's written submission (if submitted), and any other pertinent information (i.e., Professional Portfolio submission). The QAC will provide the registrant with their decision which may include:

- A summary of the CE including areas/opportunities for improvement of the Registrant's knowledge, skill, and judgment
- Resources to assist the Registrant in remediating any deficiencies
- Required next steps and timelines

The QAC's decision may be to take no further action, or they may exercise one or more of their powers under the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* section 80.2.

If you have any questions, please contact qualityassurance@cmlto.com

Approved by the CMLTO QAC: November 23, 2018

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July 20, 2023



Appendix C - Sample Competence Evaluation question & rubric

Unique identifier:	CE-000	Version:	3.0	
CMLTO Standards of Practice competency assessed: 3.2 Use a patient-centered approach to facilitate and deliver safe and comprehensive medical laboratory services to patients and clients.				
You obtain a critical value on an outpatient sample on a Saturday night, and the patient's physician is unavailable. Describe the steps you would take to provide the patient with safe, high-quality care.				
Scoring scale and criteria				
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Registrant provides no response, and/or describes behaviour that jeopardizes the safety of themselves or others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Registrant describes their next steps in minimal detail. The Registrant references the use of Standard Operating Procedures. Registrant is unsure who to notify regarding critical result. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Registrant gives a clear response of their next steps. Registrant references the use of Standard Operating Procedures. Identifies at least 1 stakeholder who requires notification of the critical result. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registrant provides a clear response for their next steps. Registrant references Standard Operating Procedures. Identifies 1 stakeholder who requires notification of critical result. Registrant demonstrates effective communication and problem-solving skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registrant provides a clear response for their next steps. Registrant references Standard Operating Procedures. Identifies 2 or more stakeholders who require notification of critical result. Registrant clearly demonstrates effective communication and problem-solving skills, and understands the importance of patient safety.