



College of Medical  
Laboratory Technologists  
of Ontario

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# CMLTO Quality Assurance Program

## Competence Evaluation Registrant's handbook

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## Introduction

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

- a detailed understanding of the CE process
- clarity on the expectations prior to, during, and after the CE
- information on how to prepare for the CE.

**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.**

## Competence Evaluation

Under the *Medical Laboratory Technology Act, 1991*, the CMLTO Quality Assurance Program (QAP) consists 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.

The CE consists of 15 behavioral and/or situational-based questions in a 90 minute, in-person or virtual assessment. Each question aligns to and assesses a Registrant's performance on one of the Standards of Practice. Situational questions focus on a Registrant's ability to apply their knowledge, skill, and



judgment within a particular situation. Behaviour-based questions represent realistic and commonly encountered MLT situations that allow Registrants to apply their past experiences in their responses.

Once a Registrant has completed the CE, the QAC reviews all pertinent information to determine the appropriate next steps to support the Registrant. The CE is designed as a valid, reliable, and fair method for evaluating a Registrant's knowledge, skill, and judgment in relation to the profession's practice standards.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The following information outlines the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the CE process.

#### **Registrant's role and responsibilities**

If requested by the QAC, a Registrant is required to participate in the CE as it is a mandatory component of the QAP. The Registrant must work with QAP staff to arrange a suitable date and time for the CE. One month prior to the CE, the Registrant will receive an information package that includes this CE Registrant Handbook, the CMLTO Standards of Practice for Medical Laboratory Technologists, the Declaration of Understanding form, and any other assessment details. It is the Registrant's responsibility to review all pertinent materials, sign any applicable forms, and to prepare for the CE. After the assessment, both the Registrant and Assessors will complete a CE assessment survey to provide further details of the assessment.

#### **Assessor's role and responsibilities**

The CE Assessors evaluate the Registrant's knowledge, skill, and judgment in relation to the Standards of Practice and report their findings to the QAC. Two Assessors are selected by the QAC, and they are CMLTO Practising Registrants that have received training. 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 conflicts of interest;



- ask each CE question clearly, and provide the Registrant with time to respond within the allotted 90 minutes;
- provide a clear, accurate, and fair presentation of the CE to the QAC;
- **No specific feedback is given at the time of the assessment.** The CE reports are prepared offsite.
- maintain confidentiality prior to, during, and after the CE.

### QAC's role and responsibilities

The QAC:

- develops and administers the QAP, including the CE
- may require a Registrant to participate in a CE if the Committee is of the opinion, based on the review of a Registrant's Professional Portfolio, the results of a Practice Review or any other relevant written information, that the Registrant's knowledge, skill and judgment are unsatisfactory
- reviews the CE Assessor reports and any other relevant case material,
- considers the Assessors' reports and any submissions made by the Registrant and exercises one or more of the powers provided to the Committee under section 80.2 of the Health Professions Procedural Code, or takes no further action.

### Competence Evaluation process details

Two Assessors evaluate the Registrant's responses to 15 situational and/or behavioral-based questions in a 90 minute, in-person or virtual assessment. Each question assesses one Standard of Practice.

### Registrant notification process

1. Email and letter notification of requirement to participate in a CE.
2. QAP staff contact the Registrant by telephone to discuss the overall CE process and to arrange a suitable date and time for the CE.
3. The in-person assessment will be held at the CMLTO office in Toronto, Ontario, while a virtual assessment will be conducted using an online platform such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Accommodation requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with CMLTO policies.



4. One month prior to the CE, an information package is sent to the Registrant and includes the CE Registrant Handbook, the CMLTO Standards of Practice, the Declaration of Understanding form, and any additional assessment details. It is the Registrant's responsibility to review all pertinent materials, sign any applicable forms, and to prepare for the CE.

### Competence Evaluation assessment process

1. Two CE Assessors administer and evaluate the CE assessment. Each Assessor has completed the CMLTO Assessor orientation and annual training program and explicitly declared no conflict of interest with the CE.
2. Assessors will alternate asking questions until all 15 questions are completed. Assessors cannot provide the Registrant with any additional information not included in the question. A Registrant may ask the Assessor to repeat the question, if required. The Assessors record the responses verbatim to evaluate the Registrant's responses against a rubric. Additionally, Assessors may ask the Registrant to repeat their responses to ensure their records are complete. The CE is recorded, either in-person or virtually, to ensure an accurate representation of the assessment is obtained. If conducted virtually, Registrants and Assessors are required to be on camera.
3. The situational and behavioural-based questions are linked to the Standards of Practice but do not cover every sub-standard listed. The CE blueprint (Appendix B) depicts the CE question composition.
4. The Registrant may use a note pad or paper to write down any information that may help them in formulating a response.
5. If the Registrant experiences 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](mailto:qualityassurance@cmlto.com)) or telephone (416-861-9605 ext. 2).

### Post-assessment evaluation and reporting process

1. Evaluating the overall process is a fundamental component to the CE. At the end of the CE, the Registrant and Assessors will be sent a survey



within two (2) days, and they will have seven (7) days to complete this survey.

2. 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
3. For in-person assessments, the Registrant must submit all notes taken during the assessment to the CE Assessors. For virtual assessments, the Registrant must discard their notes appropriately.

### **Competence Evaluation outcomes**

The QAC will provide the Registrant with a copy of the Assessors' reports with any information that is relevant to the CE, along with notice of a Registrant's right to submit a written response to the QAC within 30 days after receiving the report. Any written submission may be sent to QAP staff.

The QAC reviews the Assessors' reports with the Registrant's written submission, if submitted, and any other pertinent information (i.e. Professional Portfolio submission, Practice Review results) to determine the outcome of the CE. The QAC will provide the Registrant with:

- 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.

The QAC's decision may be to take no further action, or it may exercise one or more of the powers provided to it under section 80.2 of the Health Professions Procedural Code which include:

- Require individual members whose knowledge, skill and judgment have been assessed under section 82 and found to be unsatisfactory to participate in specified continuing education or remediation programs.



- Subject to the requirement to provide 14 days' notice of its intention, direct the Registrar to impose terms, conditions or limitations for a specified period to be determined by the Committee on the certificate of registration of a member,
  - i. whose knowledge, skill and judgment have been assessed or reassessed under section 82 and have been found to be unsatisfactory, or
  - ii. who has been directed to participate in specified continuing education or remediation programs as required by the Committee under paragraph 1 and has not completed those programs successfully.
- Direct the Registrar to remove terms, conditions or limitations before the end of the specified period, if the Committee is satisfied that the member's knowledge, skill and judgment are now satisfactory.
- Disclose the name of the member and allegations against the member to the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee if the Quality Assurance Committee is of the opinion that the member may have committed an act of professional misconduct, or may be incompetent or incapacitated.

Please note that all information that an Assessor accesses or produces during the CE is strictly confidential. QAC members, CMLTO staff, and Assessors are bound by the requirements and responsibilities outlined in the CMLTO Confidentiality Form.

### **Preparing for the Competence Evaluation**

Useful tips to prepare for the CE:

1. Prior to the CE, review the CMLTO Standards of Practice, read every standard category and all the sub-standards, then perform a self-assessment. This helps Registrants to determine their level of knowledge, skill, and judgment in relation to the Standards of the profession. Address any gaps by accessing resources on the CMLTO website (i.e., Professional Practice Learning Program).
2. For virtual assessments, the Registrant should ensure they have a private, distraction-free space, access to a computer, the online platform, and a



stable internet connection. It is recommended that the Registrant test their setup prior to the assessment to avoid connectivity issues.

3. Registrants have 90 minutes to respond to the 15 questions. If a Registrant has trouble with any of the questions, they may ask the Assessors to repeat the question. Registrants may consider writing key words from the question to assist them in their understanding of what is being asked and to allow them to form a thoughtful response. Any written materials must be given to the Assessors at the end of the assessment, if conducted in person. If conducted virtually, they must be discarded appropriately.
4. For each question, attempt to describe one or more specific examples by describing:
  - a situation or circumstances related to the question
  - the actions you have taken or would take to address the situation, along with the rationale for any action(s)
  - the actual or predicted results or outcome of your actions.
5. Each CE question uses a 5-point scoring scale to evaluate a Registrant's response. A sample CE question and scoring scale is included as Appendix C. This is a mock question provided for practice purposes only and will not be used in any CE. Assessors will first individually assess a Registrant's performance on each question. Then the Assessors will discuss together each question's response to determine a consensus score that best reflects the Registrant's performance.

**Remember that the CE is not meant to be punitive; it will focus on supporting the Registrant to remediate any deficiencies noted in their knowledge, skill, and judgment relative to the Standards of Practice, in the best interest of patient care.**

#### **CMLTO contacts**

If you have any questions prior to, or after the CE, please contact the CMLTO QAP staff by email [qualityassurance@cmlto.com](mailto: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 the 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](mailto:qualityassurance@cmlto.com)



### Appendix C – Sample Competence Evaluation question & rubric

<b>Unique identifier:</b>	CE-000	<b>Version:</b>	3.0	
<b>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.</b>				
<p>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.</p>				
<b>Scoring scale and criteria</b>				
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Registrant provides no response, and/or describes behaviour that jeopardizes the safety of themselves or others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Registrant describes their next steps in minimal detail.</li> <li>The Registrant references the use of Standard Operating Procedures.</li> <li>Registrant is unsure who to notify regarding critical result.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Registrant gives a clear response of their next steps.</li> <li>Registrant references the use of Standard Operating Procedures.</li> <li>Identifies at least 1 stakeholder who requires notification of the critical result.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registrant provides a clear response for their next steps.</li> <li>Registrant references Standard Operating Procedures.</li> <li>Identifies 1 stakeholder who require notification of critical result.</li> <li>Registrant demonstrates effective communication and problem-solving skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registrant provides a clear response for their next steps.</li> <li>Registrant references Standard Operating Procedures.</li> <li>Identifies 2 or more stakeholders who require notification of critical result.</li> <li>Registrant clearly demonstrates effective communication and problem-solving skills, and understands the importance of patient safety.</li> </ul>