

Medical Technologist...a career for you!



"I chose to be a medical technologist because I was interested in the science of the human body. I like my job because every day I know I helped improve somebody's quality of life."

Amy Werner, MT (ASCP)

The challenges and rewards of medicine and science--the medical technologist has the best of both worlds.

The medical technologist performs a full range of laboratory tests--from simple pre-marital blood tests, to more complex tests to uncover diseases such as AIDS, diabetes, and cancer. The medical technologist is also responsible for confirming the accuracy of test results, and reporting laboratory findings to the pathologist and other doctors.

Medical technologists work quickly and carefully. They hold life and death in their hands, because the information they give to the doctor influences the medical treatment a patient receives.

In their search for data on a patient's health, medical technologists do much more than examine specimens through a microscope. They operate complex electronic equipment, computers, and precision instruments costing millions of dollars.

What it takes to become a Medical Technologist

All medical technologists have certain common characteristics. They are problem-solvers. They like challenge and responsibility. They are accurate, reliable, emotionally stable, work well under pressure and are able to finish a task once started. They communicate well, both in writing and speaking. They set high standards for themselves and expect quality in the work

they do. But, above all, they are deeply committed to their profession, and are truly fascinated by all that science has to offer. For someone who chooses a career in the medical laboratory, the exploration never ends.

Career Preparation

To prepare for a career in medical technology, you should have a solid foundation in high school sciences--biology, chemistry, math and computer science. You'll also need a combination of formal education (a Bachelors degree) plus clinical education in a medical technology (MT) program accredited by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS). There are a variety of these post-high school programs from which to choose. Many colleges and universities offer a degree in Medical Technology or Clinical Laboratory Science. Contact the colleges or universities of your choice. For more information on medical technology, also contact NAACLS. See "Learn More About Becoming a Medical Technologist", on this page, for NAACLS' address.

Because there is a significant demand for qualified medical technologists, job opportunities are unlimited. Unlike many other careers, your education in medical laboratory technology will prepare you directly for a job.

You have many choices in pursuing a career in medical technology. While you're going to school, you can work part-time in a laboratory to earn extra money. And you could start working full-time the day after your graduate.

To find rewards as a medical technologist, you'll need a baccalaureate degree.

Educational requirements/certification requirements: Write to the ASCP Board of Registry, Box 12277, Chicago, IL 60612-0277, or see "1997 BOR Procedures for Examination and Certification", or to request an application packet including certification requirements, press [here](#).

Accredited programs in Medical Technology: National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS), 8410 W Bryn Mawr, Suite 670, Chicago, IL, 60631, or see ["NAACLS and CAAHEP Accredited Programs."](#)

Where Medical Technologists Work

Medical Technologists have an unlimited choice of practice settings. Hospitals, for-profit laboratories, clinics, nursing homes, public health facilities, business and industry currently have positions open for qualified medical technologists.

Today, there are more jobs for medical technologists than educated people to fill those jobs. The future long-term employment looks bright--well into the next century.

The national average beginning salary for medical technologists is approximately \$24,000, although salaries vary by area of the country.

Opportunities to Specialize

A medical technologist who gains experience in one of the special areas of the laboratory has the opportunity to advance to a specialist level. These areas of the laboratory are chemistry, hematology, blood banking, immunology and microbiology. In today's laboratories, areas of scientific exploration are the immune system, cell marker technology, bioengineering and cancer research. In the clinical area, drug testing, therapeutic drug monitoring and biogenetics are just a few of the specialties with openings. In industry, medical technologists are needed for positions in marketing, sales, quality assurance, environmental health and insurance, among others.

Certification

To be sure that laboratory workers are competent and able to perform high quality laboratory tests, the Board of Registry of the American Society of Clinical Pathologists gives a national certification exam. Students take this exam after meeting their academic and laboratory education requirements. Those that pass the exam for medical technology may use the initials, MT(ASCP) after their name.



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