MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENTIST

What do I do?

I am a key member of the medical community that performs the large majority of the laboratory tests on samples collected. I interact with health care providers to recommend appropriate testing and convey critical values that may impact patient care. I may be involved in teaching, new test development and quality assurance.

My typical day includes:

- Conduct chemical analysis of body fluids, including blood, urine, or spinal fluid, to determine presence of normal or abnormal components.
- Analyze laboratory findings to check the accuracy of the results.
- Assess blood samples to determine the number and type of cells; or blood group and compatibility for transfusions.
- Perform microbiologic culture and other methods to diagnose infections.
- Record data from medical tests and enter results into a patient’s medical record.
- Discuss results and findings of laboratory tests and procedures with physicians.
- Operate, calibrate, or maintain equipment used in quantitative or qualitative analysis, such as spectrophotometers, calorimeters, flame photometers, or computer-controlled analyzers.
- Operate laboratory equipment, such as microscopes and automated cell counters.

Necessary Skill Sets

**ATTENTION TO DETAIL**
Perform routine laboratory procedures and complex analyses that require a high level of cognitive understanding with skill and efficiency, producing accurate and precise results within a specified period of time.

**ETHICAL BEHAVIOR**
Exhibit attitudes of honesty and integrity in the performance of all laboratory procedures, with an understanding of the ultimate consequences gained from a knowledge of medical ethics.

**COMMUNICATION**
Describe and relate the theoretical and practical aspects of each test performed in the laboratory. Relate normal, abnormal and critical values with their significance by demonstrating correct follow-up actions.

**PROBLEM SOLVING**
Ability to troubleshoot instrumentation and assess abnormal results.

Salary

Mean Annual Salary*: $86,900 (Median: $83,200)

Certification

[Earn certification as a Medical Laboratory Scientist (MLS) from the American Society for Clinical Pathology Board of Certification (ASCP BOC)](https://www.ascp.org/certification)

Education Requirements

Minimum bachelor's degree in Medical Laboratory Science and MLS certification

* Salaries are based on a national average and will vary by location and years of service and other factors.