



## OAML PROGRAM FOR THE CLINICAL PLACEMENT OF MEDICAL LABORATORY ASSISTANTS

### Purpose

One element of the OAML's mission is to *promote the excellence of laboratory service. To encourage the highest level of professionalism, accountability and technical excellence in the provision of laboratory services for the benefit of patients in Ontario* is one specific goal of the OAML.

One way in which OAML members, through their laboratory operations, contribute to achieving this goal is to support students in laboratory sciences and their training institutions by providing clinical placements. OAML member laboratories provide placements for close to 400 students from Medical Laboratory Assistant training programs throughout the calendar year.

The OAML has made changes to its Medical Laboratory Assistant Clinical Placement Program. The changes are designed to:

- Provide the student with a high quality academic and clinical training experience
- Clarify the role of the student, training school and laboratory as partners in the development of high quality medical laboratory personnel
- Clarify the responsibilities and accountabilities of each partner
- Ensure the public's continuing access to high quality laboratory services

The changes, being implemented in the OAML Medical Laboratory Assistant Clinical Placement Program, are described below.

### Community Clinical Placement

The OAML believes placement of students in a clinical setting provides them an opportunity to gain valuable experience in many aspects of the Medical Laboratory Assistant role and to build on the theory, knowledge and skills learned during the academic program. The clinical placement provides the student with exposure to the requirements and expectations of employees in a community specimen collection centre and first hand exposure to the culture in a specific work environment. The specific job skills students will have an opportunity to practice and the areas in which they will be evaluated are specified in Appendix A.

The placement also provides an opportunity for staff to assess the student as a potential employee.

During the clinical placement, students will be permitted to perform blood collection only in those locations where direct MLT observation can be provided, until a decision about the required level of supervision is made. Agreements related to blood collection are specifically negotiated among the student, school, and a representative of the medical laboratory offering the clinical placement.

## Certificate of Competence

The OAML supports the notion that upon completion of their academic program and prior to placement, students should be trained and fully competent in performing blood collection. To reinforce that position, the OAML, in consultation with the training institutions, has designed and will implement the requirement that all students seeking a clinical placement in a community setting present, as part of the application process, a “Certificate of Competence” issued by the educational institution, attesting to the competency of the student in performing blood collection.

The Certificate of Competence will

- provide the student with evidence of his or her competency in blood collection
- reinforce the role and accountability of educational institutions with respect to placing students who are fully competent in blood collection procedures
- satisfy the medical laboratory offering the clinical placement that students from the institution have demonstrated competency in blood collection, attested to by a health professional

The certificate is a formal acknowledgement between the school and the student, recognizing that the student has the appropriate skills, knowledge and judgement to perform blood collection. The certificate is not intended to be used or interpreted as a form of delegation, or authorization to perform the ‘controlled act’ of blood collection. A *pro forma* “Certificate of Competence” is included as Appendix B.

## Summary

The above description reflects the recent changes with which OAML member laboratories have agreed. This will help to ensure a consistent approach and clarify the expectations of the three parties involved in the academic and clinical training of medical laboratory assistants.

The job skills areas identified in Appendix A and the “Certificate of Competence” (Appendix B) are in addition to and are not meant to replace the formal detailed agreements currently in use between the medical laboratory offering the clinical placement and the educational facility and between the medical laboratory and the student which specify:

- Placement training goals and learning expectations
- Role and responsibilities of the medical laboratory offering the clinical placement, the educational institution and the student with respect to participation in the placement and its evaluation
- Legal and insurance liability obligations

It is these individual agreements that allow for placement experiences to be tailored to fit the unique needs of students and the organization providing the placements.

The OAML believes the cooperative effort between the laboratory corporations and the health faculties of the educational facilities, that has resulted in the above changes, will enhance the overall training experience of students in clinical laboratory assistant programs and ensure the availability of a pool of qualified human resources so critical to the health of our health care system.

## Appendix A: Job Skills

Clinical placements will provide the student with opportunities to practice and to be evaluated in the job responsibilities listed below. The elements within each listed area will be specified in writing at the time of placement by the laboratory corporation and may differ among laboratory corporations. Students will be evaluated in all of the specified areas.

- Professional Conduct
- Privacy Requirements
- Patient Relations
- Workplace Safety
- First Aid
- Specimen collection and handling
- Specimen labelling and processing
- Quality assurance
- Equipment use

All participating OAML members will provide learning experiences in the areas listed above. Some organizations may provide additional learning opportunities which will be specified at the time placement is negotiated.

Appendix B

The "School"  
(School Letterhead)

EXAMPLE

Certificate of Competence in Specimen Collection

Background:

The academic portion of the "School's" program for Medical Laboratory Assistant Program includes a minimum of \_\_\_\_ hours of training in blood collection comprising \_\_\_\_ hours of lecture and \_\_\_\_ hours of blood collection practice. Students will have performed \_\_\_\_ phlebotomies and \_\_\_\_ capillary blood collections and passed a written test on specimen collection and patient care before beginning a clinical placement.

Statement of Competence:

The student \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Student

has completed the blood collection portion of the Medical Laboratory Assistant Program. The student has performed a minimum of \_\_\_\_ phlebotomies and \_\_\_\_ capillary blood collections and has passed a written and practical examination dealing with blood collection and patient care.

I declare that the above student has demonstrated appropriate skill, knowledge and judgement in taking and collecting specimens from the human body, has shown the ability to manage and care for patients and has maintained the high standard of personal hygiene appropriate to a medical facility.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of instructor or program coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Designation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Registration in Professional College

\_\_\_\_\_  
Registration Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Notes:

1. The person signing this document must be registered with the relevant College as a Medical Laboratory Technologist or as a Physician.
2. This certificate is not intended to be used or interpreted as a form of delegation, or authorization to perform the 'controlled act' of blood collection.