

Position Statement

Accreditation of Medical Laboratory Science Education Programs

It is the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science's (CSMLS) position that independent, third-party education program accreditation and the subsequent public disclosure of accreditation results demonstrate a commitment to a portion of the quality continuum required on the journey from student to competent practitioner.

Third-party accreditation is a “procedure by which an authoritative body gives formal recognition that an organization is competent to carry out specific tasks (modified from ISO/TEC 17000).”¹ Accreditation ensures that these particular tasks (detailed in the scope of the accreditation) are carried out “in a reliable, credible, and accurate manner.”² It “is the evaluation of processes to ensure quality and competence”³ and provides educational programs/institutions with independent, third-party assessments, using standards built upon validated best practices. Accreditation is “the longest established and most widely known process for the external evaluation of health-care services . . . and also provides recognition that the service is meeting provincial standards of quality.”³

“Health Education Accreditation is a quality improvement process that supports health education programs, preparing graduates to deliver safe and effective care at entry to practice.”⁴

Key benefits of accreditation include:

- Providing a process for continuous quality improvements

¹ Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute [CLSI]. GP26-A4 Quality Management System: A Model for Laboratory Services; Approved Guideline; 2015.

² Accreditation Process [Internet]. Institute for Quality Management in Healthcare [IQMH]; 2019. Available from: <https://iqmh.org/Services/Centre-For-Accreditation/Accreditation-Process#accreditationprocess>

³ Accreditation Overview [Internet]. IQMH; 2019. Available from: <https://iqmh.org/Services/Centre-For-Accreditation/Accreditation-Overview>

⁴Health Education Accreditation [Internet]. Accreditation Canada; 2019. Available from: <https://accreditation.ca/health-education-accreditation/>

- Improving credibility and visibility of the organization holding accreditation⁵
- Ensuring graduates receive a quality education that appropriately prepares them for the workplace
- Providing education programs with opportunities for self-reflection and feedback on program content and direction⁶
- Granting a credential to publicly signify that the academic program or institution has satisfied a set of quality criteria established by the accrediting body
- Supplying a framework for the thorough review of the academic program or institution's faculty, facilities, budgets, recruiting practices, course curricula, degree completion requirements and other pertinent considerations

At the national level, education program accreditation is available through Accreditation Canada – via the EQal Program. It is the only accepted accreditation program for eligibility to the CSMLS national certification exams at this time.

Quality Continuum from Student to Practitioner

Validated competency profile (CSMLS) --- Completion of Accredited program --- Successful certification --- Licensure (if available through provincial regulatory college) --- Practitioner complies with continuous professional development requirements

References

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⁵ Value of Accreditation [Internet]. Accreditation Canada; 2019. Available from: <https://accreditation.ca/accreditation/value/>