



Candidate Guide to Successful CLC (AMT) Certification

Introduction

The Certified Laboratory Consultant (American Medical Technologists) CLC (AMT) credential was the first, and continues to be, the most prestigious certification available to laboratorians to demonstrate mastery of the laboratory disciplines at the highest level of expertise. Thank you for your inquiry and/or for submitting your credentials to confirm your eligibility to join a very elite group of laboratory consultant practitioners. CLC (AMT) certification is a highly honored credential and is a paramount recognition conferred through peer review; professionals who are excited about the prospect of adding a new certificant to their growing numbers. We are sincere when we say that you have earned our admiration and respect for venturing into this important credentialing process.

Background

The proliferation of consultant practitioners since the advent of CLIA '88, the explosion in decentralized testing sites and changes in reimbursement policies brought about the emergence of a new mode of practice; the technical consultant. With the growing field of consultant practitioners came the need for consulting practice standards, so that continued competency among professional consultants could be established and demonstrated for the benefit of the clients they serve.

Clinical laboratory professionals apply to be a certified consultant practitioner for a number of different reasons, with their sights set on a number of different goals. The most compelling reason for some applicants is to enhance their prestige and self esteem. For others, the objective is for advancement, and possibly to increase income potential. Some candidates wish to update and maintain their professional skills and knowledge. Finally, there are some who seek to add new insight and perspective while simultaneously achieving a more innovative, challenging and fulfilling professional practice.

Whatever your intention for becoming a CLC professional, we want you to have a better idea of what it will take to attain your objectives and goals. Therefore, we have taken most of the guesswork out of the process. If properly followed, this informative guide on the process and the documentation you will need to provide will make it easier for you to prepare your submission in a manner that satisfies the requirements for each section of the application.

Let's Get Acquainted

At this point, we would like for you to consider whether you are really serious about wanting to become a Certified Laboratory Consultant. If you are serious, do you feel you are qualified and/or eligible? Unfortunately, we at AMT know very few applicants on a personal basis, even among those who may hold other certification offered by AMT, and to lend credibility and integrity to the process, we must treat all applicants as if we are meeting you for the first time. Just as if you were going to a job interview, your purpose must be to make a good impression. How you accomplish this is entirely up to you.

Our professional reviewers may not be able to reach consensus on your application if you have not

done your part to help them get to know you better. Our Review Committee members (all CLCs) are physically located all across the U.S. The committee meets periodically to discuss program initiatives and to reconcile applications for which consensus was not reached during separate review and evaluation. This is what makes the CLC credential unique; in some aspects, it is akin to the process which physicians go through when taking their specialty boards.

With this explanation, we hope you understand why we want to make sure that you are really serious. AMT does not pass this credential out in cursory fashion; if you want to join the best, we will be honored to have you; if you are not ready, we recommend you wait a little longer, until you feel confident you can pass. Then come join us!

Let's Get Started

We suggest you read through this entire guide, which will give you an overview of the CLC (AMT) evaluation criteria and standards, and clarify the requirements found in the CLC application. In preparing your application materials, please consider the following:

- ✓ **Legibility**- is my application neat in appearance and legible enough to be easily read?
- ✓ **Organization**- is my submission presented in an organized manner? Have I followed the same format as the application to organize my submission packet?
- ✓ **Relevance**- are my responses clearly relevant to what was required? There is no point in submitting for example, a history of continuing education which is outdated (i.e., older than the previous two calendar years).
- ✓ **Epigrammatic**- is my submission concise and to the point, but with sufficient pertinent details to convince a reviewer that I have the "right stuff"? If in doubt, consider the following rule-of-thumb: More documentation (if you have it) is better than scant documentation which is better than no documentation. (It is perfectly acceptable and preferable, to over-whelm, rather than "under-whelm" the reviewers, as long as the material is applicable).

Although your submission should follow the format of the application materials, in some cases you may wish to continue your responses on (an) additional page(s). Please indicate on your attachment(s) to which section on the application it refers.

The CLC (AMT) application form consists of **Eight (8) categories** of requirements. The maximum allowable points are indicated for each particular section. Upon satisfactory completion of all the requirements, certification is granted to candidates who earn **125 or more total points** across the following evaluation criteria:

I. Intent to Provide Services (30 maximum points)

Mandatory requirement: Verification of at least three (3) years experience as a consultant.

DEFINITION: Three (3) years means at least 36 months prior to the date of your submission.

This section has **four** categories which verify the type of consulting practice you have established, and the length of time your practice has been in operation. Check the one major category that most accurately describes your consulting business operation.

In the indented block which follows the arrangement you have selected, check the block which applies

to your selection, and enter the number of months for each (which can be verified by your submitted documentation).

- ✓ **I am an independent consultant operating under a formalized business (business recorded on some form of public record). Attach proof of formal business establishment. 30 points.**

Documentation required is a copy of the business recorded in the state, county or municipality where the business is established. The business must have been registered with one of the above entities at least three years prior to the date of your submission. If the business permit contains an expiration date, copies of continual renewal over the three years must be provided. (You cannot for example, have a permit dated Feb. 1, 1997 which expires on Jan. 31, 1998, with no evidence of renewal for 1998-2000. If your business is “perpetual” (no expiration date; for example, most states approve corporations as “perpetual”; that is, the Articles of Incorporation state that the duration of the business is “perpetual”), be sure to send a copy of any such documentation.

- ✓ **I am an independent consultant operating without a formalized business. Attach three (3) letters of endorsement from current or past clients. At least one (1) letter must verify services provided to the client at least (3) years prior to the date of your submission. 20 points.**

If your business was never documented on some form of public record as described above or if there were breaks in business (i.e., failure to re-new your permit, and/or you ceased formal operation, etc.), then the documentation required is as follows:

If you never formally established a business, three (3) letters of endorsement from current or past clients, on their letterhead, indicating that you have consulted with them in the past, or are currently consulting with them must be provided. **At least one letter** must indicate that you worked with the client at least three years prior to your submission (to satisfy the three-year practice requirement). The other two letters may cover any time between three years prior and the present.

If you established a formal business at least three (3) years prior to your submission, but let the formal business lapse, or you discontinued formal business operation, then documentation required is as follows:

A copy of your initial formal business establishment, dated at least three (3) years prior to your submission, and three (3) letters from clients which cover **any** time period since your original business establishment.

- ✓ **I am an internal consultant with a consulting firm, reference laboratory, or medical laboratory in which I am under contract (or otherwise obligated) to consult as one or more of my primary duties. (Refer to the “Candidate’s Guide”.) 20 points.**

Documentation required: A copy of your employer’s **official** job description indicating **substantial** consulting duties (i.e., with home care patients; with the Pediatric Service for POCT; with affiliated physicians for their POLs, etc.), and which clearly verifies that you have done so for **at least three (3) years** prior to your application submission. An official job description is normally approved/signed by the employer (i.e., human resources officer), and/or the immediate supervisor.

If the official job description is unsigned and/or undated, then documentation required is a copy of your employee in-processing form indicating that you have received an approved copy of your job

description which is dated and signed.

Other acceptable documentation is a copy of a performance appraisal which indicates consulting duties included under the official job description, and which is signed/approved and dated and covers the three-year requirement.

AMT acknowledges that most laboratorians confer with physicians and other staff members to provide and interpret results of lab testing; **this element alone in a job description does not equate to consulting duties as intended under the internal consultant arrangement.**

NOTICE: If your submission indicates that you are, for example, an internal “CLIA Technical Consultant,” be sure to provide supporting documentation from which this duty or job element was determined, the extent of your duties and how these duties relate to your role as an internal consultant. **AMT does not routinely bestow consultant credentials to individuals who assert only CLIA qualifications as evidence of being a consultant.** Virtually all seasoned MT/CLS or equivalent, lab practitioners meet CLIA requirements, but “having qualifications” and putting them into practice, are two entirely different aspects.

✓ **My submitted documentation verifies that I have served in one (1) of the three (3) consulting arrangements checked above, for a minimum of 3 years, from:** ____/____/____ to ____/____/____ to
____/____/____; total of _____ months. Mo. Day Year

Enter the inclusive dates of your selected consulting arrangement. As long as the 3-year requirement can be verified, the 36 months need not be the 36 months immediately preceding the date of your submission.

✓ **I have experience in a combination of two or more of the above consulting arrangements. 20 points.**

Required documentation is the same as for the above three (3) consulting arrangements, in any combination (copy of the business record and/or job description and/or copy letters of verification from clients/employers), and which verifies **three years total experience** as a consultant.

✓ **My submitted documentation verifies that I have at least 3 years (36 months) total experience in two or more of the following consulting arrangements:**

External consultant (with formalized business):

From ____/____/____ to ____/____/____; total of _____ months.

External consultant (without formalized business):

From ____/____/____ to ____/____/____; total of _____ months.

Internal consultant:

From ____/____/____ to ____/____/____; total of _____ months.

TOTAL _____ MONTHS

Enter the inclusive dates of each applicable consulting arrangement. As long as the 3-year requirement can be verified, the 36 months need not be the 36 months immediately preceding the date of your submission. However, two or more consulting arrangements may NOT overlap, that is, they may not be combined for simultaneous credit (i.e., you have been an internal consultant for two years, and one year ago you started working as an external consultant. You may only claim the longer of the two arrangements, therefore, two years will be credited, not three).

II. Education (10 maximum points)

Mandatory requirement. Checks the highest degree earned and submit documentation of your selection:

- ✓ Bachelor's Degree **5 points**
- ✓ Master's Degree **8 points**
- ✓ Doctorate **10 points**

Acceptable documentation is a copy of your diploma(s), or a transcript of your academic record which indicates that the indicated degree was conferred. Note: All degrees received from educational institutions outside of the United States must be accompanied by an English translation if it is in another language, and must be evaluated by an agency approved by AMT such as the International Education Research Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 66940, Los Angeles, CA 90066. **Fees for such an evaluation must be borne by the applicant.**

III. Professional Certification (25 maximum points)

Occasionally, applicants appear to be confused over the terms "certification" and "licensure." The following is provided to help clarify the terms:*

"Certification" as used herein, refers to professional recognition achieved after satisfying requirements of a national certifying agency for use of a designated title such as MT(AMT), MT(ASCP), CLS(NCA), etc. Certification should not be confused with the certificate of completion, diploma or continuing education certificate which you received after completing a course of study, seminar, meeting, workshop or continuing education session.

"Licensure" refers to a governmental process, a proceeding in which a state or local government acknowledges an individual or institution through legislation enacted to protect the public. Licensure is the authoritative body that rules entry into the profession through examination or examination of credentials, and enforces standards of practice. Licensing is the formal authority vested to an individual or organization to engage in practice or activity that otherwise would have been illegal. States choose to regulate health occupations to protect the welfare of the public. The license issued by licensure states should not be confused with a "certification", which as explained above, is issued by a national certifying agency. State licenses are those provided by State Departments of Public Health in such states as Florida, Tennessee, and California and others, which have a licensing board for clinical laboratory professionals. U.S. Territories which license laboratory professionals are deemed equivalent to the States, for CLC certification purposes.

* Adapted after and used by permission of L.J. San Diego, 1994. *IAML: Linking CLC to the 21st Century Technologies. Chapter 8.*

- ✓ Certification by any of the following certifying agencies: AMT (American Medical Technologists), American Society of Clinical Pathologists (ASCP), American Association of Bioanalysts (AAB) (formerly the International Association of Clinical Laboratory Technologists; ISCLT), HEW (Dept. Of Health Education and Welfare), NCA (National Certifying Agency for Laboratory Professionals), in Laboratory Medicine or in any scientific discipline; Medical Technology, Clinical Laboratory Science, or specialized discipline such as Chemistry, Microbiology, Hematology, Histology, Blood Bank, Laboratory Management, etc.

For 20 points, enter one medical technologist-level (or equivalent) national certification. Certification in any of the laboratory disciplines (including management) will fulfill this requirement. For an additional 5 points, enter another laboratory-specialty certification **or** state license which you possess. A rule-of-thumb is to enter the certification in the 20-point blank which most closely fits the area(s) in which you consult, and the certification for a lesser consulting area, or your state license, in the 5-point blank.

Documentation required is a copy of your **original certificate** conferred by one or more of the above national certifying agencies, or a valid professional **certification card** (wallet-size) issued by the same, or a copy of your **state licensure certificate or card**.

IV. Laboratory-related Experience. (5 points)

Mandatory requirement.

- ✓ Verification of minimum **6 years** (72 months) of laboratory experience. Submit a detailed *curriculum vitae* (C.V.) or resume, which indicates dates and places of employment as proof of experience.

V. Continuing Education (25 maximum points)

Mandatory requirement. DEFINITION: The term: “previous two (2) calendar years” means the past two (2) full calendar years (24 months).

Check the block of completed continuing education (CE) activities in clinical laboratory science/medical technology, management, consulting, legislative sessions, etc., as applicable to you. Documentation to be submitted: official proof of participation in continuing education programs sponsored by ACCENT, PACE, AMTIE, CLMA, ASCP, etc.

In-house (employer/laboratory) CE should be approved for AMA Category I or II CE. If not AMA-approved, proper documentation includes: **title** of the session, **contact hours**, **date**, **credentials of the person presenting the CE session** (certification(s) and duty position, e.g., Jane Dough, MT(AMT), CLS(NCA), Sr. Technologist, Chemistry Section, Baptist Hospital), and **proof of applicant’s attendance** (copy of sign-in sheet, information system printout, letter from supervisor, etc.).

✓ 30 clock hours - 25 points

Acceptable proof of credit hours are those activities completed within the previous two calendar years (15 credit hours per year).

✓ 20 clock hours - 15 points

Acceptable proof of credit hours are those activities completed within the previous two calendar years (10 credit hours per year).

✓ **10 clock hours - 5 points**

Acceptable proof of credit hours are those activities completed within the previous two calendar years (5 credit hours per year).

VI. Professional/Business Affiliations (20 maximum points)

Check one of the following:

✓ Currently a member of two or more professional/business organizations: **20 points**

✓ Currently a member of one professional/business organization: **10 points**

Attach proof of membership in one or more professional societies (AMT, ASCLS, AACC, CLMA, etc.). Note: Those specified must not be duplicated with those listed in Section III above, unless that society, which certifies, also has an active society role (i.e., AMT and ASCP both certify, as well as sponsor active societies, while NCA only certifies. In this case, proper documentation would include a **current** (not expired) membership card from AMT or ASCP to count as being active in their societies. Clarification: if, for example, you are an AMT or ASCP-certified medical technologist (MT), but you are not current in your dues, you may count your certification in Section III, but not in professional societies in Section VI. Membership in business associations (i.e., National Healthcare Anti-fraud Association, Rotary Club, Better Business Bureau, etc.), that further your consulting practice, may also be included for credit.

VII. Professional Consulting Resources (20 maximum points)

This section deals with resources you use in your consulting activities. In completing this section, candidates are encouraged to present those resources which apply to their individual consulting areas of expertise. Resources can include books, professional journals, professional newsletters, audio and video tapes, internet resources and government publications, such as the C.F.R. (*Code of Federal Regulations*), and other pertinent resources appropriate for your consulting business.

✓ The list should be organized in such a manner that specialty consulting areas (i.e., "Instrumentation," "POL Practice Management," "Laboratory Reimbursement," "CLIA Compliance," etc.) are indicated, followed by the resources utilized for that area of expertise. The resources should be current (1993 or later for technical resources). Appropriate citations should include at least name of publication, author, date, publisher and type of resource (i.e., video tape, newsletter, etc.). Feel free to design and organize your own format.

Please be advised that the Reviewers will score this section with points of 0 to 20, depending on how well your portfolio is presented compared with other applicants' submissions, and depending on how well your references support your indicated consulting areas.

VIII. Professional Activities Section (25 maximum points)

This section includes candidate's publications, professional presentations, offices held in professional organizations, and professional laboratory meetings attended. **Please note again that although 50 points may be tallied in this section, the maximum allowable is 25 points.**

✓ Laboratory books and periodical articles must have been written within the past four (4) calendar years. Appropriate documentation includes copies of the title page(s), date and author(s) and co-

author(s) of each reference. Candidates are allowed credit for up to two publications, at 10 points for each article or book, for a maximum of 20 points for this area.

- ✓ Professional presentations given in laboratory-related topics must have transpired within the past 4 calendar years. Presentations are those presented to public and professional audiences such as AMT/ASCLS/AACC Conventions and International Congresses. For educators, this area should not be confused with regular teaching/lecture duties in school courses. Documentation includes copies of the program showing date and place of presentation. Up to two presentations are allowed at 5 points each, for a maximum of 10 points.
- ✓ Offices held in professional laboratory societies/associations must be within the past four (4) calendar years. Examples include President of your state association, Chair of the Scientific Assembly, Treasurer of your local women's business association, etc. Submit validation/verification of holding office. Candidates are allowed up to two offices held at 5 points each, for a maximum of ten (10) points.
- ✓ Professional laboratory meetings attended, such as AMT state or national meetings, ASCLS/AACC Meetings or Workshops, International Congress, Local CLMA meetings, etc. Verification/validation of attendance are proof of meeting attendance (place and date, verified by copy of paid registration, attendance certificate, continuing education certificate, travel or lodging receipts, or other verification, such as your volunteer work in support of the meeting, etc.) Candidates are allowed up to 5 meetings for a maximum of 10 points.

There, That Wasn't So Bad

You have essentially completed your application at this point. As a word of caution:

- ✓ ***Be careful not to omit Mandatory requirements.***
- ✓ ***It is advisable to complete all sections of the application.***

There have been a few applicants who would probably have passed, but they felt they had amassed 125 points at a certain point, so they did not complete the remainder of the application.

Now What?

- ✓ Be sure to read the agreement portion of the application and sign it before mailing.
- ✓ Include the appropriate certification fee. Please understand that the costs involved in the review and analysis of your application are substantial. Thus, the fee is not refundable; if you are not serious yet, or if you are not quite eligible for certification, we urge you to postpone your submission until you can earn a few more points.
- ✓ You should keep copies of your submission, since none of the materials you submit will be returned to you.

In evaluating the CLC application, the Evaluation Committee will make an assessment of the materials submitted. Essentially nothing goes unnoticed in your application. Your submission is scored by each individual reviewer and then the scores are averaged. Outlying scores, those producing differences in recommendations of certification pass or failure, are arbitrated via direct communication with the

reviewer(s) and/or during official committee member meetings.

Depending on the overall assessment, and assuming proper documentation and verification can be established, we will be able to certify a candidate within reasonable time limits. Remember, much of the time required for evaluation is dependent on how well your submission was put together. The process is also unavoidably delayed at times because the reviewers are busy running their own practices, and depending on their schedules, speaking engagements, client work, etc., they may not be able to complete some CLC evaluations as quickly as they would prefer. Rule-of-thumb: Do not become too concerned unless six weeks, or longer, has passed without any word on the status of your application.

If at any time you have a question or concern about your submission, or would like to know the status of the application, please contact the AMT office, by mail at: 10700 W. Higgins Road, Suite 150 Rosemont, IL 60018; Phone: (847) 823-5169 or www.amt1.com.

Thank you again for allowing AMT the privilege of reviewing your credentials. Good luck and here's hoping your goal is achieved with the award of the coveted CLC (AMT), which is recognized throughout the profession as one of unequivocal excellence.

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