



CYTOTECHNOLOGIST (CYTOLOGIST)

What is a Cytotechnologist?

A cytotechnologist, also known as a cytologist, is a medical laboratory specialist who examines cells under the microscope to look for abnormalities or clues that indicate a cell is malignant, premalignant or diseased. These cells come from pap smears, sputums, urine, cerebrospinal fluid, other body fluids, fine needle aspirates and other sources.

Job Responsibilities for cytotechnologists generally include:

- Understanding and performing analytical techniques on specimens that originate from a variety of sources. This includes understanding the principles of light microscopy, the operation and maintenance of standard laboratory equipment, and computer skills;
- Specimen preparation;
- Specimen assessment and interpretation;
- Assisting physicians in obtaining/preparing specimens;
- Interpersonal communications and collaboration with technologists and other health care professionals; and
- Making the final diagnosis on most of specimens examined

A career in cytotechnology requires:

- An interest in cell biology and tumour formation;
- An ability to work independently;
- Strong decision-making and problem-solving skills;
- A high degree of responsibility;
- An aptitude for detail;
- Ability to use a compound microscope for long periods of time;
- Concentration for long periods of time; and
- Good eye sight (correctable vision)

How do you become a Cytotechnologist?

In Saskatchewan, employment as a cytotechnologist requires the following:

- Completion of an approved Canadian Medical Association (CMA) accredited cytotechnology program
- Eligibility to be licensed by the Saskatchewan Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists (SSMLT) www.ssmlt.sk.ca; and
- Eligibility to write the certification examination set by the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS)

Where can you be trained as a Cytotechnologist?

Saskatchewan

SIAST Kelsey Campus

<http://www.siastr.sk.ca/kelsey/educationtraining/oncampusprograms/5888/7422/5850/index.shtml>

Alberta

Northern Alberta Institute of Technology

<http://www.nait.ab.ca/programs/CYT/>

British Columbia

BC Cancer Agency

School of Cytotechnology

<http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/HPI/Education/Cytotechnology/TrainingProgram.htm>

What do you need to get into the SIAST Cytotechnology program?

Entrance into a cytotechnology program at SIAST requires:

- High School diploma or equivalent with Math B30, Physics 20, Chemistry 30 and Biology 30
- Minimum of 70% in Math B30 and each science
- Standard First Aid
- CPR Level "C"
- English Language Arts A30 and English Language Arts B30

Please note: Other educational institutes may have different requirements – please check their respective websites.

What do Cytotechnologists Study?

A cytotechnology program typically includes courses in:

- Anatomy and physiology;
- Biology;
- Basic computer skills;
- Histology;
- Cytology;
- Haematology;
- Laboratory procedures;
- Body fluid analysis;
- Medical terminology;
- Immunology;
- Infection control; and
- Management and professional practices.

Programs include a clinical component, generally in the form of practicums in the second year.

Where do Cytotechnologists Work?

- Regional Health Authorities
 - Cancer Detection Centres
 - Private Laboratories
 - Scientific Companies (sales and marketing)
 - Research Laboratories
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What is the salary of a Cytotechnologist?

Cytotechnologist pay rates are according to the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)/SAHO Collective Agreement <http://www.cupesaskhcc.ca/index.html>

Related Links

Saskatchewan Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists

<http://www.ssmlt.sk.ca>

International Society for Analytical Cytology

<http://www.isac-net.org/>

Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science

<http://www.csmls.org/english/english.htm>

Please check the Saskatchewan Health Bursary webpage for information about bursaries for health science students: http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/hhrp_bursaries.html