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Survival Program

Licensure Process for Medical Laboratory Technology Practitioners in Liberia



This licensure process is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of the Cooperative Agreement AID-OAA-A-14-00028. The contents are the responsibility of the Maternal and Child Survival Program and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

MCSP is a global USAID initiative to introduce and support high-impact health interventions in 25 priority countries to help prevent child and maternal deaths. MCSP supports programming in maternal, newborn, and child health, immunization, family planning and reproductive health, nutrition, health systems strengthening, water/sanitation/hygiene, malaria, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and pediatric HIV care and treatment. MCSP will tackle these issues through approaches that also focus on household and community mobilization, gender integration, and digital health, among others.

April 2018

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Abbreviations

BALMLT	Board of Accreditation and Licensure of Medical Laboratory Technologists
LAMLT	Liberia Association of Medical Laboratory Technology
LBNM	Liberian Board for Nursing and Midwifery
MCSP	Maternal and Child Survival Program
MOH	Ministry of Health
NDU	National Diagnostics Unit
TNIMA	Tubman National Institute of Medical Arts
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Acknowledgements

We give our special thanks and appreciation to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for its financial and technical support through the Maternal and Child Survival Program (MCSP). This funding helped create standards for medical laboratory pre-service education institutions and their clinical sites.

We express our gratitude to the Liberia Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education for strengthening regulations that govern pre-service education, which enabled the creation of qualified health medical laboratory technicians. We thank Assistant Minister of Education Seku Dukuly, who led this process and provided the resources and space to ensure its success through Africabio, MCSP's partner in Liberia's Human Resources for Health project to strengthen the cadre of medical laboratory technicians.

We extend special recognition to the Liberia Association of Medical Laboratory Technology (LAMLT), Liberian Board for Nursing and Midwifery (LBNM), Liberia Medical and Dental Council, National Diagnostics Unit (NDU) of Ministry of Health (MOH), and Ministry of Education Science Department for giving their valuable time to participate in the Technical Working Group. Without their technical expertise and institutional knowledge, the development of this licensure process would not have been possible.

We give many thanks to all who participated in creating this document, including the following:

- Abel Jalarjue, Tubman National Institute of Medial Arts (TNIMA)
- Alieu Swaray, Ministry of Education
- Arthur Brown, LAMLT
- Candace B. Eastman and team, Africabio
- Catherine Johnson, MCSP
- Cecelia Morris, LBNM
- David B. Vessellee, MCSP
- Emmanuel Akansugwina, MCSP
- Emmanuel T Cooper, LAMLT
- Euphemia K. Blamo, MCSP
- Eva Mae Caulker, Africabio
- Humphrey Mudi, MCSP
- J. Victor Carngbe, Liberian Medical and Dental Council
- Jerry Daboi, NDU
- Marion Subah, MCSP
- Michael Mukiibi, MCSP
- Raiva Simbi, Academic Consortium Combating Ebola in Liberia
- Randall Diggs, LAMLT
- Sarah G.B. Kollie, TNIMA
- T. Henry Kohar Sr., MOH
- Victoria K. Nyanzi, World Health Organization

Licensure Process for Medical Laboratory Technology Practitioners in Liberia

To assure the safety of our health care customers and the promotion of qualified and competent medical laboratory technology practitioners in the Republic of Liberia, there is a need for both effective professionals and a regulatory organization to guide these practitioners through the professional registration and licensure processes. This regulatory organization is the Board of Accreditation and Licensure of Medical Laboratory Technologists (BALMLT) of the Liberia Association of Medical Laboratory Technologists. BALMLT assures that medical laboratory technicians have the license to practice and are registered in the Republic of Liberia. It is important that this registration and licensure process allow for two things:

- Validation that the practitioner meets the required standards to practice
- Validation that practitioners bearing the title of medical laboratory technician are proficient

BALMLT does not use the terms “registration” and “licensure” synonymously. For example, a newly graduated medical laboratory technology professional will be required to first register with the BALMLT and then sit for and pass the national board examination to become licensed. The license is the permit that allows an individual to practice medical laboratory technology in Liberia.

In many professional jurisdictions, a license is a key requirement to practice legally in a given locale. Moreover, license renewal is mandatory, along with continuing professional development. In Liberia, a license provides an independent measure of confidence in a medical laboratory technician’s competency to join the medical laboratory technology workforce in Liberia.

As the regulatory body, BALMLT aims to be a part of a rebuilt, resilient health system in which the practitioners are professionals and are qualified to work independently—i.e., without major supervision. To establish their ability to work independently, BALMLT offers a national examination every year to new medical laboratory technology graduates to evaluate their competence. Passing the exam is a criterion for licensure and subsequent inclusion into the workforce.

Previously, BALMLT examined new graduates through questions from qualified training institutions, which the BALMLT then manipulated. Now, BALMLT develops a question bank to avoid such interferences. This question bank has been accepted and adapted by BALMLT for licensure purposes.

The process for Liberians and non-Liberians to obtain a licence in medical laboratory technology is described in the next few pages. Figures 1–3 also illustrate this process.

Licensure Process for Liberians

- Every year in December, BALMLT offers an examination to new medical laboratory technology graduates.
- BALMLT regularly informs qualified training institutions in the country of these examinations before they occur.
- Each training institution submits a list of trained and qualified medical laboratory technology graduates who can sit for the examination.
- Graduates must sit and pass the national board examination that consists of six competency domains. To pass the examination, the graduate must receive at least 70% in each of the six competency domains.

- Failing one or two of the competency domains requires the individual to repeat the two domains, while failing more than two competency domains requires the individual to sit for the entire exam again.
- Passing the examination qualifies the individual to obtain a license and, subsequently, renew that license.
- An individual who fails the examination three times—i.e., receives less than 70% in three or more competency domains at each sitting— will have to return to a pre-service education institution for further training. After completing this additional training, the individual can sit again for the examination but will need a recommendation from the training institution before doing so.

Licensure Process for Non-Liberian West Africans

- A West African without a licence must submit documents (e.g., certificate of graduation or diploma, certificate to indicate passing of the qualifying examination, and, in some cases, a transcript) to BALMLT prior to registering for the national board examination.
 - The individual will be required to notarize all documents as a testimony of truth, and anything to the contrary will render the documents invalid—even after he or she has been issued a license.
- BALMLT will conduct a screening interview with the individual and a background check of the credentials submitted.
 - An individual who qualifies for obtaining the license can register for the national board examination.
- A West African medical laboratory technology practitioner with a license will have to submit relevant credentials (e.g., license and diploma, and certificate to indicate having completed the examination) to BALMLT and register an interest to work in Liberia.
 - The individual will have to sit for and pass the interview with BALMLT.
- If the individual has an expired license but becomes qualified for renewing the licence after the interview with BALMLT, then the individual is eligible to renew the license as specified.
 - BALMLT will revoke a license if it discovers that the individual submitted fraudulent documents.

Licensure Process for Non–West Africans and Foreign Nationals

- The individual should submit credentials to BALMLT.
 - The individual will be required to notarize all documents as a testimony of truth, and anything to the contrary will render the documents invalid—even after he or she has been issued a license.
 - The BALMLT will conduct an investigation, which includes an interview with the individual.
- Unlicensed candidates will have to sit for a screening interview with BALMLT and take the national board examination. If the individual passes the interview and the national board examination with BALMLT, then that person will be given the license and, subsequently, informed of renewal periods.
- Licensed candidates will undergo a screening interview and when they pass, they will receive a temporary licence. This temporary licence will remain valid only for less than 2 years; during this time, the individual will need to sit for the national board examination in order to receive a permanent licence.

Licensure Process for Non–West African Trainees or Foreigners with a License in Medical Laboratory Technology

- The individual sits for an interview with BALMLT.
 - The individual will be required to notarize all documents provided to BALMLT as a testimony of truth, and anything to the contrary will render the documents invalid—even after he or she has been issued a license.
 - If the individual passes the screening interview with BALMLT, then that person can obtain or renew the license to work in Liberia.
 - If the licensed individual fails the screening interview, he or she will not be able to sit for the national board examination and, therefore, cannot be licensed to practice medical laboratory technology in Liberia.
- An individual who fails the national board examination three times—i.e., receives less than 70% in three or more competency domains in each of the three attempts—will need to return to a pre-service education institution for further training.

Renewing the Medical Laboratory Technology License in Liberia

- Practicing medical laboratory technologists will have to present evidence of having accrued 10 continuing professional development points in the past 2 years in order to have their licence renewed.
- An individual seeking to renew her or his license will pay for the license renewal application fee.

Figure 1. Medical Laboratory Technology Licensure Process for Liberians

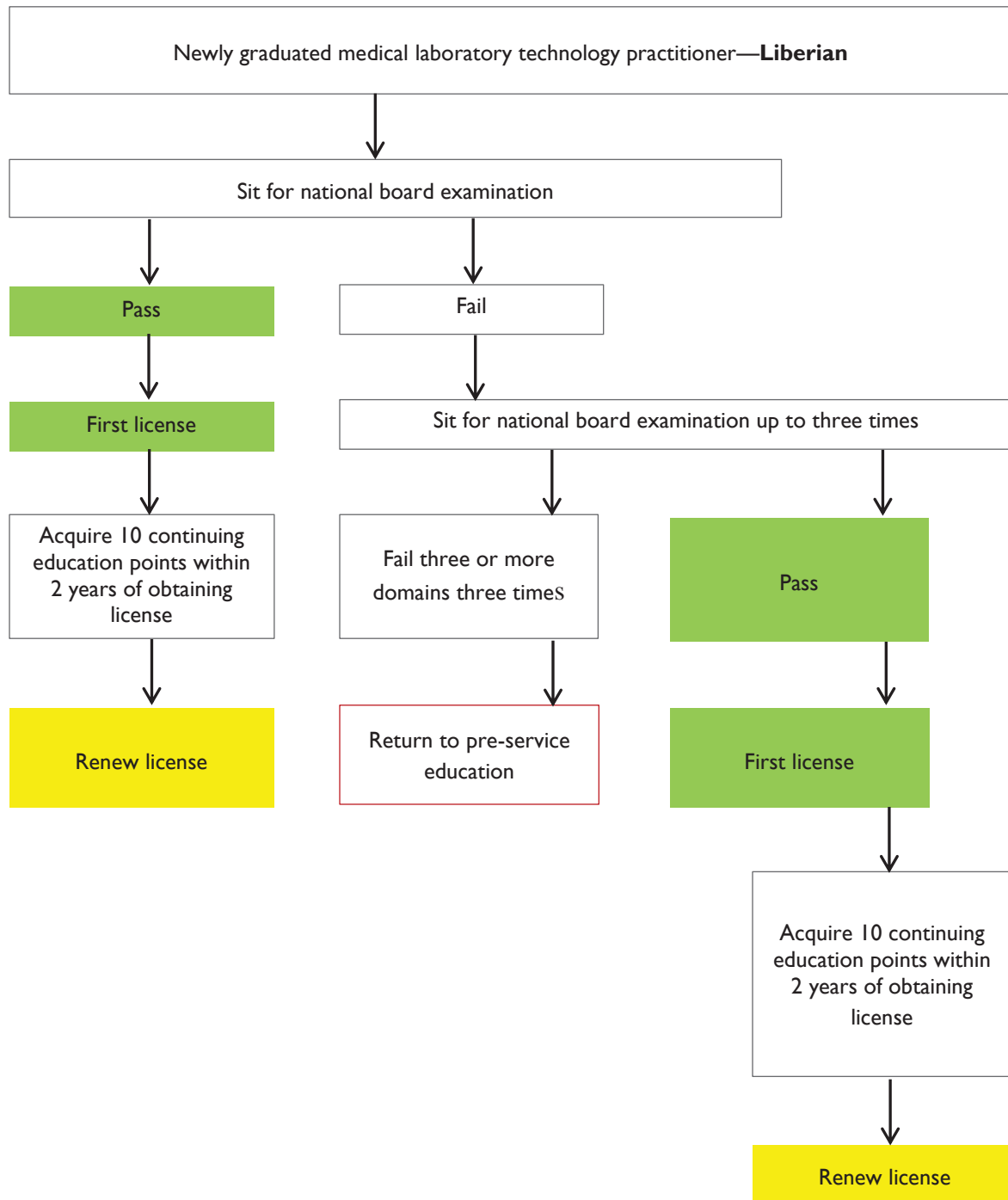


Figure 2. Medical Laboratory Technology Licensure Process for Non-Liberian West Africans

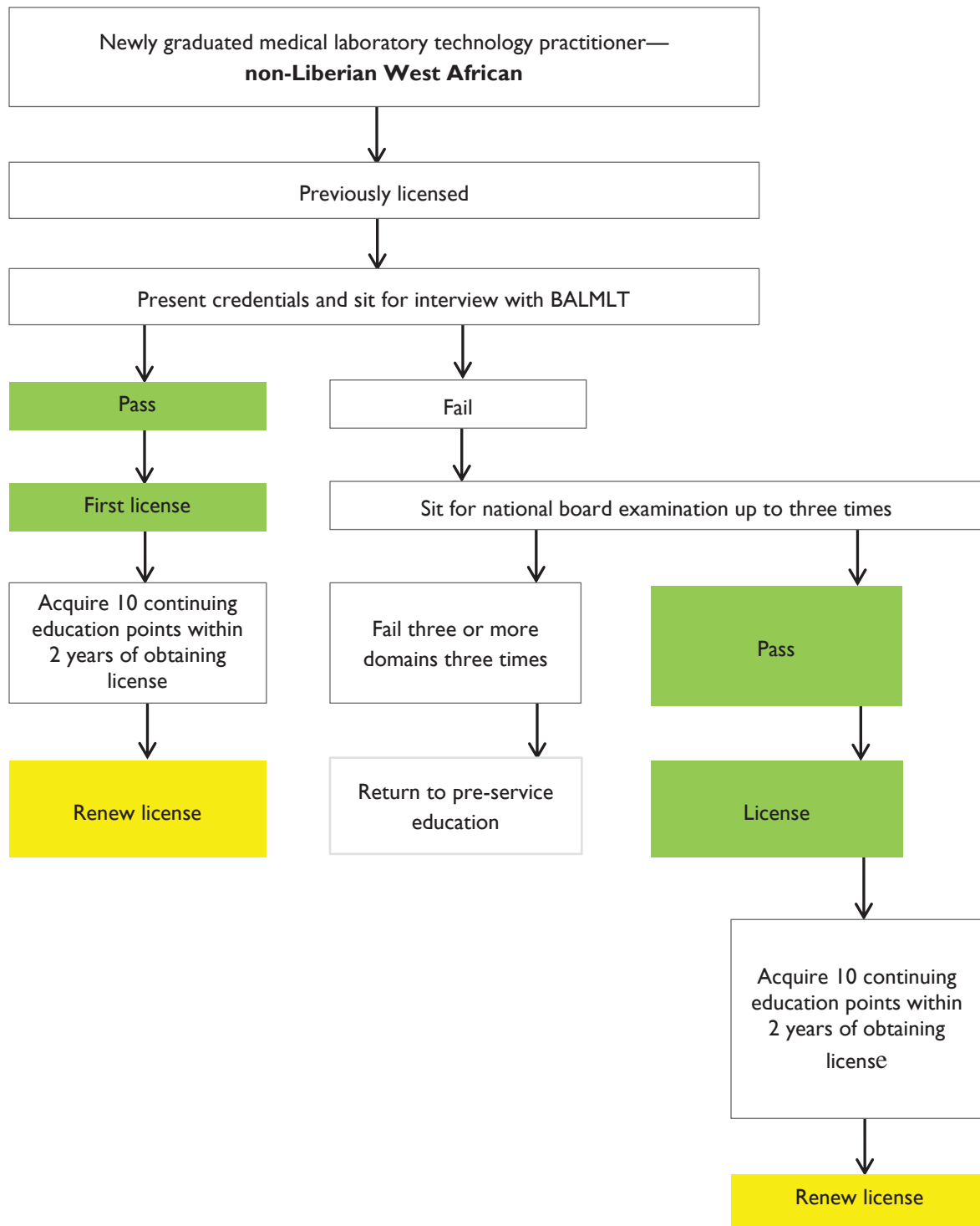


Figure 3. Medical Laboratory Technology Licensure Process for Non–West Africans or Other Foreign Nationals

