

# Standard of Practice: What Constitutes a Passing Grade for MLT Courses?

PAMELA PRIMROSE

## ABSTRACT

Institutional policy for what constitutes a passing grade for medical laboratory technology (MLT) programs varies across the nation. Some institutions allow programs to set the lowest passing grade at a C and others mandate a D. These programs are required to accept D as passing since there is no National Accreditation Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) standard for a grade of C. This puts MLT programs at risk of not meeting metrics for certification pass rates and employment rates and may lead to loss of clinical sites. A Survey Monkey with eight questions was sent September 27, 2018, to 123 NAACLS MLT programs with the goal of identifying a standard of practice and potential development of an NAACLS standard. Survey has a current completion rate of 74 out of 123 (60.2%) programs. The results were as follows: 71.62% of programs require students to pass laboratory, 74.19% require students to pass with a grade of C, and 54.29% of programs can issue a grade of F. Programs

(37.10%) not requiring a C in laboratory required a combined lecture/laboratory grade of C to pass. The lowest C was considered 70%, and the highest C+ was considered 75% at 36.49% and 31.08% of programs, respectively. A grade of D (70%) was reported as passing by 62.50% (15 out of 24) of programs. 64.7% (44 out of 68) of programs commented that D was a failing grade. A recommendation to NAACLS for a standard stating students must pass laboratory to pass course was supported by 75.68% of programs. It appears that the majority of programs are in favor of NAACLS setting a standard for passing laboratory with a grade of C. At the very least, a standard of practice is being defined. National discussion is needed.

**ABBREVIATIONS:** MLT - medical laboratory technology, NAACLS - National Accreditation Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences.

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**Pamela Primrose**, Ivy Tech Community College

**Address for Correspondence:** Pamela Primrose, Ivy Tech Community College, [pprimros@ivytech.edu](mailto:pprimros@ivytech.edu)