

Laboratory Interview Preparation Cheat Sheet

Suitable for MLA and AP laboratory interviews.

A quick-reference guide to help you prepare for laboratory interviews with confidence.

* Medical Laboratory Assistant: MLA

* Associate practitioner: AP

1. Key Areas to Understand

Health & Safety

- COSHH
- PPE
- Risk Assessments
- Incident Reporting

Quality

- UKAS
- IQC
- EQA
- CAPA
- Audits

Discipline-Specific Knowledge

- Understand the laboratory workflow for the discipline you're applying to.
- Review common tests, procedures, and equipment relevant to the MLA/AP role within that department.
- Understand key quality, safety and sample integrity considerations relevant to that discipline.

Examples of Discipline-Specific Tasks

- Histology → Specimen booking, Tissue Processing, Embedding, Microtomy, H&E Staining.
- Haematology → FBC analysers, preparing Blood Films, Blood Transfusion tracking.
- Microbiology → Plating samples (Agar Inoculation), Gram Staining, Blood Cultures, Urinalysis.
- Biochemistry → Centrifugation, analyser loading.

2. Essential Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
HCPC	Health and Care Professions Council
IBMS	Institute of Biomedical Science
UKAS	United Kingdom Accreditation Service
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
COSHH	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health
IQC	Internal Quality Control
EQA	External Quality Assessment
CAPA	Corrective and Preventive Action
LIMS	Laboratory Information Management System

3. What Interviewers Are Really Assessing

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Health & Safety Awareness

- Quality Awareness
- Time Management
- Prioritisation
- Professionalism

4. Answering Behavioural & Competency-Based Questions

Use the STAR Framework when answering questions that ask you to describe previous experiences or demonstrate specific skills and competencies.

Situation: What happened? Keep it short and factual.

Task: What you were responsible for in that moment.

Action: What you actually did. This is the most important part.

Result: What happened next, what you learned, and what you would do again or differently.

Next Steps

This cheat sheet highlights key areas to consider when preparing for laboratory interviews.

For guidance on structuring behavioural and technical interview answers, see [Histology Lab Interviews Made Simpler](#), a practical interview preparation book for Histology candidates.

For personalised support, you can also book a [1-to-1 Interview Preparation Session through BiomedPathway](#).

You can also connect with me on [LinkedIn](#) for interview tips, career insights, and future resources.