

Austin State Hospital Regional Clinical Laboratory – Medical Laboratory Science Program

> Student Handbook FY2024

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### About

### Location

Austin State Hospital Laboratory, 4110 Guadalupe St., Bldg. 635, Austin, TX 78751

## **Program Accreditation**

The Austin State Hospital Medical Laboratory Science Program is accredited by:

National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS)

5600 North River Road, Suite 720

Rosemont, IL 60018-5119

Phone: 847-939-3597

Website: http://www.naacls.org

### **Non-Discrimination policy**

The State of Texas is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate against any person on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, age, disability, political affiliations or belief in employment or the provision of services

# Welcome

Welcome to the Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) Program at Austin State Hospital. The instructional staff wish you success in the pursuit of your educational goals. We are glad to have you and will treat you with courtesy and respect. We are here to assist you in gaining an education both within the classroom and in clinical activities to achieve your goal in becoming a Medical Laboratory Scientist.

### **Description of the Medical Laboratory Scientist Profession**

The Austin State Hospital MLS program provides excellent didactic and clinical experiences to provide students the ability to meet the requirements to practice as a medical laboratory scientist. The following is from our accrediting agency's publication, the "*National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) Standards for Accredited and Approved Programs" (rev 6/2022)*:

"The medical laboratory scientist is qualified by academic and applied science education to provide service and research in clinical laboratory science and related areas in rapidly changing and dynamic healthcare delivery systems. Medical laboratory scientists perform, develop, evaluate, correlate and assure accuracy and validity of laboratory information; direct and supervise clinical laboratory resources and operations; and collaborate in the diagnosis and treatment of patients. The medical laboratory scientist has diverse and multi-level functions in the principles, methodologies and performance of assays; problem-solving; troubleshooting techniques; interpretation and evaluation of clinical procedures and results; statistical approaches to data evaluation; principles and practices of quality assurance/quality improvement; and continuous assessment of laboratory services for all major areas practiced in the contemporary clinical laboratory.

Medical laboratory scientists possess the skills necessary for financial, operations, marketing, and human resource management of the clinical laboratory.

Medical laboratory scientists practice independently and collaboratively, being responsible for their own actions, as defined by the profession. They have the requisite knowledge and skills to educate laboratory professionals, other health care professionals, and others in laboratory practice as well as the public.

The ability to relate to people, a capacity for calm and reasoned judgment and a demonstration of commitment to the patient are essential qualities. Communications skills extend to consultative interactions with members of the healthcare team, external relations, customer service and patient education.

Medical laboratory scientists demonstrate ethical and moral attitudes and principles that are necessary for gaining and maintaining the confidence of patients, professional associates, and the community."

## **Program Mission**

Austin State Hospital Medical Laboratory Science Program will provide high quality, theoretical and clinical education to equip students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are essential for a professional medical laboratory scientist. The program course work and experiences will emphasize the academic, technical, and critical thinking skills necessary to achieve entry-level competency as a Medical Laboratory Scientist. This will provide the laboratory science community with well qualified graduates ready to be employed as entry-level practitioners.

### **Program Goals**

The goals of the Austin State Hospital MLS Program are as follows:

- Provide instruction and evaluation based on identified competencies and objectives relevant to the practice in all major areas of medical laboratory science.
- Provide students with opportunities to develop interpersonal attitudes needed to work independently and professionally with patients and other health care professionals.
- Assure that entry-level practitioners are adequately prepared to withstand the pressures of the job, including the ability to multitask, maintain stability under pressure, and work accurately and efficiently.
- Provide students with opportunities to meet specific course objectives and entry-level competencies, both cognitive and psychomotor, in all areas of the clinical laboratory.
- Prepare medical laboratory science graduates for entry level positions in the workforce.
- Encourage individual personal and professional growth and development to enable them to function in career-entry level positions and allow future professional development
- Provide students with adequate knowledge and clinical experience to pass a national certification examination appropriate to their level of training.

# **Essential Functions/Technical Standards**

The Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) program establishes essential functions and technical standards to ensure that students have the abilities required to participate and potentially be successful in all aspects of the respective programs. Students are required to meet technical standards and essential functions as indicated below with or without reasonable accommodations. Satisfactory completion of the MLS Program and successful employment following graduation demands your ability to meet the following requirements. If you are uncertain as to your ability with any of these essential functions, please consult with the MLS Program Director.

- 1. **Observational** Ability to participate actively in all demonstrations, laboratory activities and clinical experiences in the professional program component. Such observation and information require functional use of visual, auditory and somatic sensations.
  - a. Observe laboratory demonstrations in which biological (i.e., body fluids, culture materials, tissue sections, and cellular specimens) are tested for their biochemical, hematological, immunological, and histochemical components.
  - b. Characterize the color, odor, clarity, and viscosity of biological samples, reagents, or chemical reaction products.
  - c. Employ a clinical grade binocular microscope to discriminate among fine structural and color (hue, shading, and intensity) differences of microscopic specimens.
  - d. Read and comprehend text, numbers, and graphs displayed in print and on a video monitor.
- 2. **Movement -** Sufficient motor ability to execute the movement and skills required for safe and effective performance of duties.
  - a. Move freely and safely about a laboratory.
  - b. Reach laboratory bench tops and shelves, patients lying in hospital beds or patients seated in specimen collection furniture.
  - c. Travel to several clinical laboratory sites for practical experience.
  - d. Perform moderately taxing continuous physical work, often requiring prolonged sitting or standing, over several hours.
  - e. Maneuver phlebotomy and culture acquisition equipment to safely collect valid laboratory samples.
  - f. Possess finger and manual dexterity necessary to control laboratory equipment (i.e., pipettes, inoculating loops, test tubes) and adjust instruments to perform laboratory procedures.
  - g. Use a computer keyboard to operate laboratory instruments and to calculate, record, evaluate, and transmit laboratory information.

- 3. **Communication -** Ability to communicate effectively in English using verbal, non-verbal and written formats with faculty, fellow students, clients, families and all members of the healthcare team.
  - a. Read and comprehend technical and professional materials (i.e., textbooks, magazine and journal articles, handbooks, and instruction manuals).
  - b. Follow verbal and written instructions to perform laboratory test procedures correctly and independently.
  - c. Clearly instruct patients prior to specimen collection.
  - d. Effectively, confidentially, and sensitively converse with patients regarding laboratory tests.
  - e. Communicate with faculty members, fellow students, staff, and other health care professionals verbally and in a recorded format (writing, typing, graphics, or telecommunication).
  - f. Transmit information to clients, fellow students, faculty and staff, and members of the healthcare team.
  - g. Independently prepare papers, prepare laboratory reports, and take paper, computer, and laboratory practical and course examinations.
- 4. Intellectual Ability to collect, interpret and integrate information and make decisions.
  - a. Possess intellectual skills: comprehension, measurement, mathematical calculation, reasoning, integration, analysis, comparison, self-expression, and criticism.
  - b. Can exercise sufficient judgment to recognize and correct performance deviations.
  - c. Apply knowledge to new situations and to problem solving scenarios.
- 5. **Behavioral -** Possess the emotional health and stability required for full utilization of the student's intellectual abilities, the exercise of professional judgment, the prompt completion of all academic and patient care responsibilities and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with faculty, fellow students, clinical instructors, patients and other members of the healthcare team.
  - a. Manage heavy academic schedules and deadlines.
  - b. Manage the use of time and be able to systemize actions to complete professional and technical tasks within realistic constraints.
  - c. Possess the emotional health necessary to effectively employ intellect and exercise appropriate judgment under conditions of physical and emotional stress.
  - d. Can provide professional and technical services while experiencing the stresses of taskrelated uncertainty (i.e., ambiguous test ordering, ambivalent test interpretation), emergent demands (i.e., "STAT" test orders), and a distracting environment (i.e., high noise levels, crowding, complex visual stimuli).
  - e. Be flexible and creative, as well as adapt to professional and technical change.

- f. Recognize potentially hazardous materials, equipment, and situations and proceed safely to minimize risk of injury to patients, self, and nearby individuals.
- g. Adapt to working with unpleasant biologicals.
- h. Support and promote the activities of fellow students and of health care professionals.
  Promotion of peers helps furnish a team approach to learning, task completion, problem solving, and patient care.
- i. Be honest, compassionate, ethical and responsible.
- j. Accept responsibility and accountability for one's own actions. The student must be forthright about errors or uncertainty. The student must be able to critically evaluate his or her own performance, accept constructive criticism, and look for ways to improve performance (i.e., participate in enriched educational activities). The student must be able to evaluate the performance of fellow students and tactfully offer constructive comments.
- k. Works within environments of cultural diversity. Works well with men and women and with a variety of ethnic, social, or educational backgrounds.

# **NAACLS Entry Level Competencies**

As a program accredited by National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) the curriculum has been developed to be in compliance with the national Standards.

The following is from the "NAACLS Standards for Accredited and Approved Programs" (Rev 06/2022).

"At entry level, the medical laboratory scientist will possess the entry level competencies necessary to perform the full range of clinical laboratory tests in areas such as Clinical Chemistry, Hematology/Hemostasis, Immunology, Immunohematology/Transfusion medicine, Microbiology, Urine and Body Fluid Analysis and Laboratory Operations, and other emerging diagnostics, and will play a role in the development and evaluation of test systems and interpretive algorithms.

The medical laboratory scientist will have diverse responsibilities in areas of analysis and clinical decision-making, regulatory compliance with applicable regulations, education, and quality assurance/performance improvement wherever laboratory testing is researched, developed or performed.

At entry level, the medical laboratory scientist will have the following basic knowledge and skills in:

- 1. Application of safety and governmental regulations and standards as applied to clinical laboratory science.
- 2. Principles and practices of professional conduct and the significance of continuing professional development.
- 3. Communications sufficient to serve the needs of patients, the public and members of the health care team.
- 4. Principles and practices of administration and supervision as applied to clinical laboratory science.
- 5. Educational methodologies and terminology sufficient to train/educate users and providers of laboratory services.
- 6. Principles and practices of clinical study design, implementation and dissemination of results."

# Medical Laboratory Science Program Entry-Level Competencies

Upon graduation from the Austin State Hospital Medical Laboratory Science Program the student will:

- 1. Perform routine analyses of laboratory specimens with skill and efficiency, producing accurate and precise results within an acceptable length of time.
- 2. Operate and maintain laboratory instruments and equipment with care and conscientiousness.
- 3. Relate the theoretical and practical aspects of each routine test performed in the laboratory.
- 4. Demonstrate the ability to organize work in an efficient manner and to assign priority to the performance of tests.
- 5. Exhibit honesty and integrity in the performance of laboratory testing.
- 6. Relate normal, abnormal, and critical values with their significance to the patient and their treatment.
- 7. Demonstrate an attitude of professionalism to patients, patients' families, and other healthcare professionals.
- 8. Demonstrate safety precautions for all laboratory personnel as derived from hospital and laboratory safety policies.
- 9. Practice the principles necessary to establish and evaluate quality control procedures.
- 10.Relate laboratory results to clinical conditions by describing etiology, symptoms, and laboratory results of each condition.
- 11.Exhibit problem solving capabilities by evaluating test results, troubleshooting instrument malfunctions, and correcting quality control conditions that are out of range.
- 12.Instruct others in techniques, procedures, and principles of laboratory tests.
- 13.Demonstrate a basic understanding of management theory, principles, functions, and effective practices.
- 14.Recognize the roles and responsibilities of other health care professionals as integral members of the health care team.

### **ASCLS Code of Ethics**

#### PREAMBLE

The Code of Ethics of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science sets forth the principles and standards by which Medical Laboratory Professionals and students admitted to professional education programs practice their profession.

#### I. DUTY TO THE PATIENT

Medical Laboratory Professionals' primary duty is to the patient, placing the welfare of the patient above their own needs and desires and ensuring that each patient receives the highest quality of care according to current standards of practice. High quality laboratory services are safe, effective, efficient, timely, equitable, and patient-centered. Medical Laboratory Professionals work with all patients and all patient samples without regard to disease state, ethnicity, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Medical Laboratory Professionals prevent and avoid conflicts of interest that undermine the best interests of patients.

Medical Laboratory Professionals are accountable for the quality and integrity of the laboratory services they provide. This obligation includes maintaining the highest level of individual competence as patient needs change yet practicing within the limits of their level of practice. Medical Laboratory Professionals exercise sound judgment in all aspects of laboratory services they provide. Furthermore, Medical Laboratory Professionals safeguard patients from others' incompetent or illegal practice through identification and appropriate reporting of instances where the integrity and high quality of laboratory services have been breached.

Medical Laboratory Professionals maintain strict confidentiality of patient information and test results. They safeguard the dignity and privacy of patients and provide accurate information to patients and other health care professionals. Medical Laboratory Professionals respect patients' rights to make decisions regarding their own medical care.

#### II. DUTY TO COLLEAGUES AND THE PROFESSION

Medical Laboratory Professionals uphold the dignity and respect of the profession and maintain a reputation of honesty, integrity, competence, and reliability. Medical Laboratory Professionals contribute to the advancement of the profession by improving and disseminating the body of knowledge, adopting scientific advances that benefit the patient, maintaining high standards of practice and education, and seeking fair socioeconomic working conditions for members of the profession.

Medical Laboratory Professionals accept the responsibility to establish the qualifications for entry to the profession, to implement those qualifications through participation in licensing and certification programs, to uphold those qualifications in hiring practices, and to recruit and educate students in accredited programs to achieve those qualifications.

Medical Laboratory Professionals establish cooperative, honest, and respectful working relationships within the clinical laboratory and with all members of the healthcare team with the primary objective of ensuring a high standard of care for the patients they serve.

#### III. DUTY TO SOCIETY

As practitioners of an autonomous profession, Medical Laboratory Professionals have the responsibility to contribute from their sphere of professional competence to the general wellbeing of society. Medical Laboratory Professionals serve as patient advocates. They apply their expertise to improve patient healthcare outcomes by eliminating barriers to access to laboratory services and promoting equitable distribution of healthcare resources.

Medical Laboratory Professionals comply with relevant laws and regulations pertaining to the practice of Clinical Laboratory Science and actively seek, to change those laws and regulations that do not meet the high standards of care and practice.

Reference: <a href="https://ascls.org/code-of-ethics/">https://ascls.org/code-of-ethics/</a>

### **Pledge to the Profession**

As a Medical Laboratory Professional, I pledge to uphold my duty to Patients, the Profession and Society by:

- Placing patients' welfare above my own needs and desires.
- Ensuring that each patient receives care that is safe, effective, efficient, timely, equitable and patient-centered.
- Maintaining the dignity and respect for my profession.
- Promoting the advancement of my profession.
- Ensuring collegial relationships within the clinical laboratory and with other patient care providers.
- Improving access to laboratory services.
- Promoting equitable distribution of healthcare resources.
- Complying with laws and regulations and protecting patients from others' incompetent or illegal practice
- Changing conditions where necessary to advance the best interests of patients.

Reference: <u>https://www.ascls.org/about-us/code-of-ethics</u>

To be eligible for admissions into the ASH MLS program the student must successfully complete the application process by submitting:

- Complete all required coursework with a C- or higher by the end of the spring semester of the year they wish to be admitted.
- ASH MLS Application Form
- State of Texas Application Form
- Official transcripts from all universities attended.
- Two reference forms from qualified individuals.
- Essay of Interest
- Grade Point Average (GPA) calculator spreadsheet
- Resume

All materials are reviewed and used in a ranking process. The top twelve ranked candidates will be invited for an in person interview.

Once the interviews are completed the final ranking is performed and the top four candidates are offered a position in the program and two candidates are placed on the alternate list.

Should any applicant decline their position the highest ranked alternate will be offered a position in the class.

Accepted students must attend a mandatory orientation approximately four weeks before beginning the program. The orientation will provide the future students with the policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the program.

During the first five to seven days of the program students must attend the Austin State Hospital orientation which will cover the policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the hospital and the state.

## Schedule

### **Hours of Attendance**

The training period lasts for twelve consecutive months. Students are on duty from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Additional adjustments in duty hours may be necessary to take advantage of learning experiences as they are available.

Students are expected to be present in their assigned department in the laboratory Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Students are not allowed to be present after hours or weekends.

There are occasional outside clinical rotations that require attendance outside of these time frames.

**Daily:** 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Lunch: 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Breaks:** 15 minutes a.m. & 15 minutes p.m. (Instructor will inform student of break times)

Lecture: 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

### Holidays

Students will be off on all state holidays that fall on a weekday. On "minor" holidays which requires a "skeleton crew" the laboratory will be open, but students will be off. These holidays will have no lectures. If a student's outside clinical rotation falls on a "minor" state holiday, the student will be required to attend the outside rotation and will accrue "comp time" for the time at the outside rotation. The student will be required to take this "comp time" off within one week of accrual. On "major" state holidays, the laboratory will be closed for students and staff.

# **FY24 Holidays**

Date	Day	Holiday	Status	Students Off
9-04-23	Monday	Labor Day	All agencies closed.	YES
11-11-23	Saturday	Veteran's Day	Weekend	YES
11-23-23	Thursday	Thanksgiving Day	All agencies closed.	YES
11-24-23	Friday	Day after Thanksgiving	All agencies closed.	YES
12-24-23	Sunday	Christmas Eve Day	Weekend	YES
12-25-23	Monday	Christmas Day	All agencies closed.	YES
12-26-23	Tuesday	Day after Christmas	Weekend	YES
1-01-24	Monday	New Year's Day	Weekend	YES
1-15-24	Monday	Martin Luther King Day	All agencies closed.	YES
1-19-24	Monday	Confederate Heroes Day	Skeleton crew	YES
2-19-24	Monday	President's Day	All agencies closed.	YES
3-02-24	Saturday	Texas Independence	Weekend	YES
3/11-3/15	M-F	SPRING BREAK	Students Off	YES
3-31-24	Sunday	Cesar Chavez Day	Optional Holiday	OPTIONAL
4-07-24	Friday	Good Friday	Optional Holiday	OPTIONAL
4-21-24	Sunday	San Jacinto Day	Skeleton crew	YES
5-27-24	Monday	Memorial Day	All agencies closed.	YES
6-19-24	Wednesday	Emancipation Day	Skeleton crew	YES
7-04-24	Thursday	Independence Day	All agencies closed.	YES
8-27-24	Tuesday	LBJ's Birthday	Weekend	YES

### **Attendance Policy**

Students will be hospital employees for twelve (12) months and must abide by all Austin State Hospital policies and procedures.

Regular, punctual attendance demonstrates professionalism, both in the professional workplace setting and in the classroom; attendance is considered a key behavior to a successful learning experience. It is this commitment to learning that will enable the student to progress satisfactorily towards completion of course goals, objectives and demonstrate entry-level competency in all required skills.

The Attendance Policy is designed to set a pattern of professional behavior which mirrors the attendance expectations in the clinical environment. Regular and punctual attendance is required at all lecture and lab/clinical sessions. Tardiness (15> minutes) to class is strongly discouraged and will be carefully monitored.

The student must sign in and out each day with the time of arrival and departure. **Falsification** of attendance data may lead to dismissal from the program

Each student is responsible for making up all assignments when absent from class.

Students are to notify their departmental supervisor when they are going to be tardy, absent or leave the building for any reason. Under no circumstances are you to text a fellow student to notify your supervisor of your tardiness or absence. If the supervisor is unavailable notify a staff member.

Students will not be allowed to progress to the next rotation until all competencies from the current rotation are completed satisfactorily.

Consistent failure to notify laboratory staff of unscheduled absences or consistent tardiness will result in disciplinary action.

## **Prescheduled Leave**

An absence from work which is requested, and approved by the employee's supervisor prior to the absence, is considered prescheduled. Approved prescheduled absences are authorized and have no adverse consequences.

### **Unscheduled Absence**

The use of vacation leave, holiday leave, compensatory leave, emergency leave, or leave without pay which is not prescheduled is considered unscheduled. If an employee cannot report to work as scheduled, he/she will notify the designated department contact person immediately but at least prior to the start of the scheduled shift. Prior communication with the immediate supervisor regarding absences is essential. Unscheduled absences may result in counseling and corrective action by the supervisor and may result in termination.

### **Pattern Absenteeism**

Any repeated, identifiable sequence using unscheduled leave or sick leave is considered pattern absenteeism. A pattern can be, but is not limited to, such practices as periodically taking sick leave or taking unscheduled leave in association with:

- holidays, pay day, or weekends;
- the same days of a week
- the same date a month, or;
- days immediately preceding or following weekends or regularly scheduled days off.

Pattern absenteeism may result in counseling and corrective action by the supervisor and may result in termination.

### **Sick Leave**

## **Notification Procedures:**

Whenever an employee cannot report to work as scheduled, he/she will notify the department contact person prior to the start of the scheduled shift.

### **Physician's Statement**

Employees are required to bring a physician's statement when they are ill for more than three (3) business days.

Supervisors have the option to require a physician's statement for absences of three (3) days or less if abuse of sick leave is suspected.

The employee may return to work pending receipt of a required physician's statement; however, if the employee fails to provide the statement within three (3) business days, he or she may be subject to corrective action.

### **Leave Abuse**

Abuse of leave will result in corrective action by the supervisor. The following examples are possible indicators of leave abuse:

- the employee fails to notify departmental supervisor that they are leaving the building;
- the employee demonstrates pattern absenteeism;
- the employee consistently uses sick leave as soon as it is accrued;
- the employee has one or more unscheduled absences in each of three (3) or more consecutive weeks/months;
- the employee calls in on days for which vacation or compensatory leave requests were denied;
- the supervisor receives a report of activities or behaviors inconsistent with the sick leave (e.g., attendance at a football game during work hours), and/or;

Leave abuse will result in counseling and corrective action by the supervisor and may result in termination.

## No call/No show

Employees are expected to follow service/department procedures to notify their supervisor of an unscheduled absence. An absence is labeled as a no call/no show (NCNS) when an employee is absent from work and fails to notify their supervisor. The supervisor will attempt to contact the employee who is NCNS. If an employee is NCNS for three consecutive scheduled days, the supervisor will consider a notice of possible disciplinary action against the employee and notify him/her via certified mail. Termination may result. If the NCNS employee is probationary, a probationary termination letter will be mailed via certified mail.

### **Protocol for Unscheduled Absence or Tardy**

If you must be tardy or absent due to an illness or emergency, you must follow this protocol:

- 1. Call the clinical department that you are in and speak with the departmental supervisor no earlier than 6:30 a.m. or later than 7:15 a.m.
- If you are unable to reach someone in your clinical department by 7:15 a.m., call 512-419-2041 and speak to either Carrie Dillon or Karla Wolfmueller. Do not leave a voice message.
- 3. Do not text message another student or laboratory staff member that you are sick or tardy.
- 4. You must physically speak with either the supervisor or the other individuals listed above.

# **Vacation and Sick Time**

During the twelve (12) month training period the student will accrue eight (8) hours of sick and vacation time each month but cannot take vacation time for six (6) months.

- 1. Sick Time
  - a. Sick time can be used immediately.
  - b. Students are not to report to the laboratory if they are ill.
  - c. An illness of more than three consecutive days will be counted as one absence and will require a doctor's note that the student is cleared for attendance.
  - d. Abuse of sick time will be carefully monitored.
- 2. Vacation time NOTE: 40 hours will be used for Spring Break
  - a. The 96 hours of vacation time can be used but it must be prescheduled and approved by the departmental supervisor.
    - i. Cannot use vacation time until after 6 months (February) of employment.
    - ii. Vacation time must be preapproved by the departmental supervisor.
    - iii. The student must fill out a "Request for Leave" form and have it signed by the departmental supervisor.
    - iv. Use of vacation or "comp" time will not be approved if it falls on a scheduled exam day or a scheduled off-site rotation.
  - b. Eight hours of vacation time may be used for job interviews during the summer. Additional vacation time may be used as needed.
- 3. Comp Time Use of "comp" time must be prescheduled, approved by the supervisor and taken within one week of accrual.

### **Insurance Benefits**

Students are hired as "Medical Technologist Trainees" and are eligible for free health insurance through the State of Texas after completing sixty (60) days of service in the program. Dependents or spouses can also be added at the additional state premium rate. Other benefits such as dental insurance, life insurance and disability insurance can be added for an additional premium.

### **Program Progression**

Students must successfully complete all requirements for the two components of the education and training provided during the twelve months of the program:

- 1. Departmental Rotations students spend one-on-one time in each clinical department within the laboratory. The focus is on skills training. Students will be provided with a notebook containing a list of entry-level competencies which must be completed during this time. Assigned readings, homework, quizzes, exams and/or laboratory practicals are part of the rotation experience.
- 2. Lecture series the class will come together as a group each afternoon to attend formal course lectures. Each course will have a syllabus which will detail the course and grading requirements. Reading assignments, quizzes and a final examination will be required for each course.

Students must successfully pass all rotations and lecture series with a grade of 75% or higher to be eligible for a certificate of completion.

Students who successfully complete the one year training program will be awarded a certificate of completion. The program will submit a student transcript for 3+1 students to complete the requirement for awarding their degree.

Three +1 students must meet the academic requirements for the degree which are published in the University's academic catalog.

### **Clinical Rotations**

Departmental laboratory rotations are scheduled in the laboratory to provide one-on-one training on all procedures required for competency as well as independent study time for each student. The student must follow the same professional protocols for conduct as clinical staff. All departmental training is under the direct guidance of the Departmental Supervisor. During clinical rotations students will perform actual laboratory analyses under the direct supervision of qualified staff.

Each department has a Departmental Notebook which provides detailed instructions on the procedures performed in that department. Students are required to review and become familiar with all procedures they will perform at the bench. Students will be given a list of entry-level competencies which must be completed for each departmental rotation.

Students are required to remain in the clinical department until noon during each departmental clinical rotation. There are assigned study areas in each department when there is down time. Exceptions to this requirement will be made on an individual basis with departmental approval. Student time schedules (study time versus bench work) will vary with each department. There is also a Reading List of required outside reading assignments for each department over which the student is given written examinations. Practical examinations will be given in each clinical subject.

## **Departmental Laboratory Rotations**

Department	Weeks
MLS 580 Immunohematology	7
MLS 480 Immunology/Serology	3
MLS 980 Clinical Chemistry	13
MLS 680 Hematology/Coagulation	11
MLS 880 Clinical Microbiology	12
MLS 280 Urinalysis/Body Fluids	3

A detailed schedule will be provided to each student.

### **Off-Site Enrichment Rotations**

At the beginning of the training year all students will be taken on tours of each of the clinical sites. This will allow students to see where the facility is and be familiarized with the different training opportunities they will receive at each site.

**Dell Seton Medical Center (DSMC)** All students must complete the onboarding process required by DSMC prior to the tour. Students will be provided with step-by-step instructions on how to complete the required activities. This will allow students to obtain their badges after completion of the tour.

To supplement those areas which our laboratory does not provide practical experience and/or to give students additional experiences on different types of instruments, each student will be assigned to the following clinical sites:

#### 1. Clinical Pathology Laboratories (CPL)

Address: 9200 Wall St., Austin, TX Departments: Molecular, Chemistry, Accessioning, Microbiology, Body Fluids, Flow Cytometry

#### 2. Dell Seton Medical Center at The University of Texas (DSMC)

Address: 1500 Red River St., Austin, TX Departments: Immunohematology, Serology, Hematology, Chemistry, Microbiology

#### 3. Department of State Health Services - Laboratory Services (DSHS)

Address: 1100 W. 49th St., Austin, TX Departments: Serology, Hematology, Microbiology, Parasitology, Virology, Molecular

#### 4. Sonic Reference Lab – To Be Determined

Address: Bld. 3, Suite 101, 3800 Quick Hill Rd, Austin, TX 78728 Department: Molecular diagnostics

#### 5. We Are Blood

Address: 4300 N. Lamar, Austin, TX Department: Immunohematology

Off-site rotations are noted on the "Student Schedule". It is the student's responsibility to perform a courtesy call the week prior to the scheduled rotation. Under no circumstances are students to initiate a change to an outside rotation schedule. This type of communication will be made between the supervisor and the clinical site.

Students are not allowed to use vacation time during off-site clinical rotations.

Students must follow the policies, procedures, and conduct of the clinical site they are attending.

# **Competency Assessment, Skills Mastery and Program Progression**

**NOTE:** This is a draft policy that is subject to some small changes.

Competency assessment is used to determine that the student has successfully mastered the necessary knowledge and skills to perform all routine laboratory testing required for successful

Clinical competencies are pass/fail and must be completed successfully to pass the course and complete the program. If the student has an unsuccessful competency assessment, an action plan will be developed which will include remediation. Remediation can include demonstration of skills by the instructor, discussion of specific errors the student made and how to correct them, and additional practice opportunities.

The student may be allowed a total of three competency assessment attempts per procedure. If a student is unable to demonstrate competency after three attempts the student will receive a failing grade in the course and will be dismissed from the program.

#### **First Unsuccessful Competency Assessment**

The student meets with the instructor to review the procedure for performing the specific skill. During the meeting, remediation and an action plan for improvement will be developed. The instructor will discuss and note areas in which the student has failed to progress or show improvement. The student will provide input as to what they will do to be successful. After remediation and practice, if needed, the student will repeat the procedure for re-evaluation of competency. This will be documented as pass or fail.

#### Second Unsuccessful Competency Assessment

The student will meet with the instructor to discuss the specific issues which resulted in a second failure. The instructor will note areas in which the student has failed to progress or show improvement. During this second meeting, remediation and an action plan for improvement will be developed. The student will provide input as to what they will do to be successful. This will be documented, and the student will be allowed a third opportunity to repeat the competency assessment. The instructor will inform the MLS Program Director and Education Coordinator. The student will be placed on "Probation". NOTE: If the student is a 3+1 student from an affiliated university the university liaison must be notified.

#### Third (Final) Unsuccessful Competency Assessment

If the student is unsuccessful on the final attempt, the instructor will note the specific areas of deficiency. The instructor will inform the MLS Program Director and Education Coordinator. The student will meet with the program director for an exit interview to discuss withdrawal from the program. NOTE: If the student is a 3+1 student from an affiliated university the program director will notify the university.

### **Lecture Series**

Students will attend formal lectures over each discipline. The lectures are given by qualified staff members and provide principles and theories as they apply to each major area in the clinical laboratory. A tentative schedule will be provided. There are times that the schedule changes due to departmental challenges.

Cell phones must be turned off and kept out of sight during the lecture. Failure to turn off cell phones may result in phones being kept in the student's locker.

Lectures are typically held from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday in the student lecture room.

# **Miscellaneous Educational Opportunities**

#### **Clinical Pathology Laboratory In-Service**

TBA This is an opportunity for students to learn about the importance of continuing education.

#### **Special Seminars**

The Department of Health Services is creating videos which provide an overview about departments you will be rotating through at the state laboratory. Viewing of the videos and attendance at a question and answer session is mandatory.

#### **Supplemental Training Aids**

MediaLab on-line training modules with assessment for each area of the clinical laboratory will be assigned and students must earn a score determined by their supervisor. Sets of study slides and other enrichment resources from various subjects are available for student use. Workbooks are available in each department for self-study.

### Canvas

All lecture materials (PowerPoints, Quizzes, assignments, etc.) are present in the online course delivery system, Canvas. The program director or course instructor will add each of you to the appropriate courses as the year progresses.

It is the student's responsibility to meet the course requirements by frequent visits to the Canvas course portal.

### **Examinations**

Written Examinations (quizzes or finals) are scheduled periodically during each formal lecture series and each departmental rotation. The scheduled dates are to be followed except in rare cases when a legitimate conflict arises. The instructor will inform the students of the time for taking quizzes, exams and finals. Exams may be written or online through Canvas. All written exams will be taken in the testing area located in the administrative area of the laboratory.

Examinations and quizzes may contain multiple choice, matching and short answer questions.

Examinations will be designed to test the following taxonomy levels of material covered in the stated objectives:

- Level 1. Recall Knowledge and Comprehension Recall are at the basic taxonomic level and involve recall or description of information.
- Level 2. Interpretation Application and Analysis Interpretation is a higher level of learning and involves application and examination of knowledge.

• Level 3. Problem-Solving – Synthesis and Evaluation – Problem-solving skills test the highest level of learning and involve construction and assessment of knowledge.

Examinations are criterion referenced - the passing score is predetermined. Students must keep examination material confidential.

Exams are not to be shared with other students. This is considered academic dishonesty and is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program.

### **Examination Guidelines**

- 1. Departmental examinations must be taken at a time agreeable to department supervisor or instructor.
- 2. All examinations must be completed before leaving the department.
- 3. Written examinations must be taken in a space designated by the faculty member. Exams in Canvas will be taken at an assigned computer.
- 4. No study materials are allowed during examinations.
- 5. After beginning the exam, do not leave the room prior to completion. Exception may be use of the restroom.
- 6. Upon completion of a written examination submit the examination to your supervisor, or if in Canvas, it will be submitted online. Discussion among students about the exam should not occur until all students have completed the exam.
- 7. The instructor will assign a completion time for the exams.
- 8. If the student feels the answer to an exam question is incorrect, the student must submit a written rebuttal to the instructor with supporting references that are part of assigned curriculum.
- 9. Special considerations for exams taken in Canvas:
  - a. Under no circumstances are students allowed to go to any website during an examination. The history log of the computer will be checked upon completion of the exam.
  - b. No study materials or electronic devices, including cell phones, are allowed when taking an exam in Canvas.
  - c. Under no circumstances will students be allowed to print out the exams. The instructor will make exams available for review on a limited time basis.
  - d. Printing of exams will be considered an act of academic dishonesty and may result in dismissal from the program.

10.In summary, examinations are designed to evaluate all aspects of the students' progress and development of MLS skills and practice: knowledge and comprehension, professionalism and integrity.

# **Grading Policy**

- 1. Lecture grades the grading rubric will vary by course and will be included in the course syllabus. The didactic lecture exam average determines the lecture grade. A grade of 75 or above is required to successfully pass the course.
- 2. Departmental Clinical Laboratory (Rotation) Entry Level Competency During the rotation students will be evaluated on their ability to complete specific tasks in a manner that demonstrates entry level competency. "Entry level competency" is the expectation that employers have that graduates will have the ability to correctly perform most routine laboratory procedures. Students will complete the clinical competencies for all required skills at an acceptable level of performance in accordance with departmental objectives in terms of parameters such as: accuracy, precision, ability to organize work, manual dexterity, initiative, etc. influences the grade in each department.
- 3. Departmental Clinical Laboratory (Rotation) Grade by Department The calculation of the clinical laboratory grade varies with each individual clinical department based on the number of exams, practical's, and the final exam. The grading rubric will be provided in the course syllabus.
- 4. A grade of 75% or above is required for each lecture and laboratory course. Inability of the student to maintain an average grade of 75 in any course will require the student to meet with the Program Director for academic counseling. The department will provide remediation in the student weak areas. No student shall be certified to be eligible for the board of certification examination until all departments have been satisfactorily completed. If a student fails one complete department or lecture series the student will face academic dismissal pending Program Director's approval.
- 5. Students are required to obtain a passing score on laboratory practical exams. Failure to do so will necessitate retaking of the practical and the appropriate portion of the department rotation must be repeated. During this time remediation will be provided for areas the student is weak in. Failure to pass practical after second attempt will necessitate reevaluation of student's status for completion of program.
- 6. Clinical competencies are "pass/fail" and must be successfully completed to pass the clinical rotation. For failed competencies the student will receive remediation, additional practice and an opportunity to demonstrate competency. A failed competency for the third time will result in a failed course grade and dismissal from the program.
- 7. The MLS program administration will notify the university liaison for 3+1 students enrolled in the program as soon as it is documented that the student will not be successful in a rotation or lecture course.

- 8. A transcript will be provided to the educational facility for 3+1 students as required by the university.
- 9. The grade scale is as follows:
  - 90-100 = A 80-89 = B 75-79 = C Below 75 = Fail

### **Clinical Evaluations**

Students will be evaluated on their performance in each clinical department by the Departmental Supervisor. These evaluations will include grades as previously noted, and factors considered important to the overall evaluation of the student as a potential practicing Medical Laboratory Scientist - attitude, cooperation, honesty, stability of emotions, leadership, ability to work with people, etc.

## Exit Exam

An Exit Exam is given upon completion of training. This exam is modeled after the American Society of Clinical Pathology (ASCP) Board of Certification (BOC) exam content outline. The exam consists of 100 multiple choice questions and the time limit is two and a half hours.

The student must obtain a passing score to be eligible for graduation. Students will be given up to two (2) opportunities to achieve a passing score of 65%.

### **Progressive Discipline Policy**

The faculty are committed to assisting students to be successful in the program. Therefore, students who are not meeting course objectives in class, clinical or lab will be apprised of their performance status using the progressive discipline process. Examples are failure to maintain a grade of 75% or above on exams, failure to progress in skills after repeated remediation, violating state or laboratory policies, violating the Honor Code.

For academic issues the faculty will remediate the student by carefully discussing areas of weakness, strategies to overcome that weakness and offering additional educational resources to strengthen their knowledge.

# Warning - Verbal

A verbal statement to a student that the student has failed an exam or clinical competency, state or laboratory policies, or is in violation of the Honor Code. The faculty member will make a record of the warning.

## Written Warning

A written warning informing a student of additional exam failure, clinical competency failure, continued violation of state or laboratory policies, or continues to be in violation of the Honor Code. For some courses with limited number of exams this may go to probation. Remediation will be provided for the student's weak areas. If the student is a 3+1 student from an affiliated university the university liaison must be notified.

### **Probation**

The students continued failure to meet the terms in the written notice. The terms of probation will be written up in the probation document. If the student is a 3+1 student from an affiliated university the university liaison must be notified.

# Dismissal

Terms of probation were not met. The student is terminated from the program. If the student is a 3+1 student from an affiliated university the university liaison must be notified.

### **Causes for Dismissal from the MLS Program**

- 1. Failure to complete prerequisite requirements.
- 2. Failure to obtain a passing course grade.
- 3. Failure of a practical exam on the second attempt.
- 4. Unethical, immoral, or illegal conduct (including, but not limited to, dishonesty, theft, intoxication, or possession or use of narcotics during student hours).
- 5. Violations of MLS program or hospital policies especially those related to patient privacy and protected health information (HIPPA).
- 6. Unexcused or extended absences for reasons other than illness or emergencies.
- 7. Consistently unsatisfactory evaluations. This would include behavioral characteristics which reflect poor growth potential and/or evidence of low motivation.
- 8. Failure to rectify a situation which has provoked a warning from the MLS Program Director.
- 9. Disorderly conduct, including the use of profane or abusive language to either employees, patients, visitors or others within the hospital.
- 10.Intentionally falsifying, omitting, or altering information contained in the program application and related materials for admission to the program.
- 11.Violation of the school honor code including the use of cheat sheets, sharing information about exams or practicals, copying exams or using any reference material while taking an exam.

Decisions regarding probation and/or dismissal from the hospital program will be made by a committee consisting of the MLS program faculty, laboratory director and MLS program director.

Appeals regarding probation or disciplinary action may be made in writing to the Program Director. The Program Director will meet with you and reply within five working days or within five working days after returning from leave.

## **Advising, Performance Counseling, Grievances**

# Advising

Students are encouraged to meet with the laboratory manager or program director when issues arise which interfere with the students' progress in the program. Students are eligible to seek assistance for problems unrelated to the program through the agency Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

The program assures that appropriate confidentiality and impartiality will be maintained for any meetings which occur with the student and ASH staff members.

### **Performance Counseling Sessions**

Performance counseling sessions will be held as indicated in situations such as: consistently failing grades on exams, student's failure to meet and keep up with departmental clinical practical requirements in terms of procedures learned and acceptably performed, etc. The performance session will involve the student, the clinical supervisor, and the Program Director.

The student may be placed on probation and, if the terms of probation are not met, dismissed from the program. All records of performance sessions will be kept confidential.

### **Student Grievances**

The following process is used for arbitrating student grievances pertaining to the Medical Laboratory Science Program:

- 1. When a problem arises, the student must seek a solution at the earliest possible time. Don't let an uncomfortable situation build. Take the initiative.
- If the student feels comfortable in discussing the problem directly with the person involved, do so. Frequently this sort of discussion can be more comfortable for both parties involved if a third person is present. That third person can be any of the following individuals:
  - a. Department Supervisor
  - b. Laboratory Manager
  - c. Program Director
- 3. Academic Grievance Appeal Process
  - a. If after pursuing the resolution of an academic grievance the student is not satisfied, then they can appeal their case to the grievance committee.

- b. The grievance committee will be composed of the department supervisor, faculty member (if different than the supervisor), laboratory manager and the MLS program director.
- c. The grievance committee will hear the student's case, review the appropriate materials and decide within one week of the meeting.
- d. The student will be notified in writing of the decision.
- e. All decisions made by the committee are final.
- 4. Non-Academic Grievances
  - a. Since students are temporary employees of the State of Texas, no grievance privileges are available regarding specific hospital related policies and procedures.
  - b. These are outlined in the ASH Regulations Manual which is available to students in the laboratory office.

### **Student Records**

All student records will be maintained by the program in accordance with state law. This will include:

- Application packet.
- Immunization records
- Exams
- Clinical competencies
- Clinical evaluations
- Program Transcripts

Students may view their records at any time by making an appointment with the Program Director.

# **American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) Student Membership**

Students are required to join ASCP and upload proof of membership into the MLS 090 Seminar Course in Canvas. Student membership is free! Students will be reminded to renew their membership prior to graduation to receive an additional free year. Board of Certification (BOC) Medical Laboratory Scientist Exam

## **Overview**

Upon completion of the program, students are eligible to sit for the ASCP BOC Medical Laboratory Scientist national certification examination by Route 1. The program will provide information about the application process. Students will be required to sign an integrity pledge as part of the application process.

NOTE: If special accommodations due to a disability are required the student must follow the instructions provided in the Procedures for Examination & Certification on the ASCP website (ascp.org).

### **Posting of Certificates on Social Media**

To protect the integrity of ASCP BOC credentials and records, and for patient safety and welfare, it is important for individuals to protect their certificates from misuse. Please share the following with your students:

- Do not share your wall certificate, score report, or ASCP Member ID card (if applicable) with anyone.
- Do not post a copy or image of your wall certificate, score report, or ASCP Member ID card (if applicable) on the Internet or social media.

# Passing Certification Exam Not Required for Awarding Degree or Certificate

Issuance of a degree or certificate is not contingent upon the student passing a national certification exam.

### **Dress Code (Professional Appearance)**

The Laboratory staff and students are expected to maintain a professional appearance and attitude. This guideline for appropriate attire follows both professional and safety considerations:

- 1. Hygiene: Students must bathe regularly to avoid offensive odor. Conservatively applied makeup is permitted.
- 2. Fragrances: Do not use perfume, body spray, cologne or aftershave lotion. Some individuals may have allergies to fragrances, or the odor may make them nauseous.
- 3. Clothing:
  - a. Scrubs are required and are mandatory for off-site rotations.
  - b. Scrubs must be clean and not extremely tight or loose in appearance.
  - c. Protective lab coats will be provided by the laboratory. These are to be worn, closed from top to bottom, when working in the laboratory departments. Lab coats must be removed when going on breaks or to lunch.
- 4. Shoes: Must be closed-toed and soft-soled, non-marking. Tennis or similar shoes are strongly recommended. The following types of shoes are not allowed: porous mesh material, clogs, crocs or other types of shoes with no back or holes in the top.
- 5. Body piercing: Only pierced ears are allowed. Dangling earrings, nose, eyebrow or other body piercing are not acceptable. There is the possibility of patient forcibly removing jewelry and injuring employee.
- 6. Identification Badge is required and must be worn at all times above the waist, preferably on a lanyard.
- 7. Hair: Must be clean and neat. If the hair length is at or below the shoulder, or if it has tendency to hang in the face, it must be drawn back with a clip, hair tie or band. Loose or drawn back hair that has the tendency to fall into the workspace must be secured with additional clips or bands.
- 8. Jewelry: Jewelry should be limited to wedding rings and a wristwatch. A conservative necklace that is kept close to the skin (not dangling) and conservative earlobe earrings (no more than one pair) that do not extend more than ½ inch below the earlobe are acceptable.

### **Health and Safety**

#### **Immunization Requirements**

Students must meet the immunization requirements of the clinical facilities they will be attending. Each student must complete the program Immunization Form which provides proof of the following:

- 1. Hepatitis B vaccination series.
- 2. Tuberculosis (TB) test required by clinical affiliates.
- 3. Measles vaccination for two dates, which must be after January 1, 1968, or positive titer.
- 4. Mumps vaccination for one date, which must be after January 1, 1977, or a positive titer.
- 5. Rubella vaccine or positive titer.
- 6. Tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis (Tdap)
- 7. Varicella (chicken pox) vaccination, titer or medical history (doctor documentation) of this disease.
- 8. Covid 19 vaccination required by clinical affiliates.
- 9. Influenza vaccine when it becomes available.

### **Health Insurance**

Students will be provided with health insurance after completing sixty (60) days of service in the program as part of the benefits offered as a state employee through the program.

## **Laboratory Safety**

Students must adhere to all safety standards and procedures. Safety training will be provided at the beginning of the program. Initial training will require students to complete designated modules in MediaLab. Each student is responsible for becoming knowledgeable regarding the expectations and policies of the MLS Program and the Clinical Affiliate where the student is placed.

- 1. Since medical history and examination cannot reliably identify all patients infected with blood borne or other transmissible pathogens, Blood and Body Fluid Standard Precautions are to be adhered to at all times.
- 2. All health care workers must routinely use appropriate barrier precautions to prevent skin and mucous membrane exposure when contact with any blood or body fluids may be anticipated.

- 3. Gloves must be worn when handling specimens and items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids, when performing specimen collection procedures, or any time when exposure may occur.
- 4. Hands must be washed immediately after gloves are removed and prior to leaving the laboratory. Hands and other skin surfaces must be washed immediately and thoroughly if contaminated with blood or other body fluids.
- 5. Until further notice masks must be worn from point of entry to the campus until time of exit. The only exception is the employee breakroom. Maintain social distancing while in the break room.
- 6. All health care workers must take precautions to prevent injury caused by needles and other instruments or devices during procedures. Appropriate engineering controls, personal protective equipment, and safe work practices should be used at all times. To prevent needle stick injuries, needles should not be recapped, purposely bent or broken, removed from syringes, or otherwise manipulated by hand. Needle safety devices should be engaged as soon as possible.
- 7. Laboratory work involves dealing with chemical reagents and other hazardous materials. For this reason, all personnel, including students, are required to wear face protection and gloves while working in designated areas of the laboratory.

### **Accident Protocol**

If a student has an accident or blood or body fluid exposure during the performance of their duties as an MLS student, they must report the incident immediately to their supervisor. The student will follow the protocol proscribed for any employee related injury.

## **Liability Insurance**

Each student is required to purchase liability insurance which meets the requirements of the hospital and clinical affiliates which is 1 million each occurrence, 3 million aggregate which will be in effect for one year (August 15<sup>th</sup> of the current year through August 16<sup>th</sup> of the following year). Proof of insurance must be provided to the Program Director by uploading the entire policy into Canvas. The program encourages students to use Proliability.

#### Please complete by the end of the third week of August.

- 1. <u>https://www.proliability.com/professional-liability-insurance/students-individuals.html#</u>
- 2. For profession select "Medical Technologist".
- 3. For 2023 the cost is \$37.00 per year.

# **Additional Program Policies**

# **Email Policies**

Students will be assigned an HHS email address. Faculty and staff are not allowed to use your personal email for program related business. This allows documentation of official communication between the program and the students should issues arise.

Students are required to check their email accounts at least once daily. Email is how you will be informed of important announcements such as due dates, meetings, schedule changes (both lecture and clinical) and other important activities. Although laboratory staff may inform you verbally it is your responsibility to read every program email notification.

## **Alcohol and Substance Abuse Testing Program**

Pre-employment alcohol and substance abuse testing is required by the Austin State Hospital. Based on reasonable suspicion, the Hospital may require employees suspected of using or abusing a controlled substance or misusing alcohol to take an alcohol/or controlled substance test. An employee found to have engaged in prohibited behavior will be required to be evaluated by a substance abuse professional. A positive confirmatory test may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment.

## **Service Work Policy**

Medical Laboratory Science students are not allowed to take the place of qualified staff during any clinical rotation. After demonstrating proficiency students may, with qualified supervision, be permitted to perform procedures. Students are not allowed to perform service (paid) work at Austin State Hospital. If the student is employed at a clinical facility the work must be performed outside academic hours and be noncompulsory.

# **Patient Information and Results**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires that all patient information and results must be kept confidential and may be reported only to those professionals directly involved with the patient's treatment and care. Failure to comply may result in probation or immediate dismissal from the program depending upon the level of the violation.

## **Social Media and Portable Electronic Devices**

Social media platforms are technology tools and online spaces for integrating and sharing usergenerated content to engage constituencies in conversations and allow them to participate in content and community creation. You must not share any proprietary information or pictures of the ASH laboratory, staff or clients in your posts. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Blogs: Wordpress, Blogger
- Social Networking Sites: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
- Virtual Social Worlds: Second Life
- Collaborative Projects: Wikis
- Content Communities: YouTube, Flickr

## What are Portable Electronic Devices (PED)?

Any non-stationary electronic apparatus with singular or multiple capabilities of recording, storing, processing, and/or transmitting data, video/photo images, and/or voice emanations. This definition generally includes, but is not limited to, laptops, PDAs, pocket PCs, palmtops, Media Players (MP3s), memory sticks (thumb drives), cellular telephones, PEDs with cellular phone capability, and pagers.

### **Publishing Information to Social Media**

When publishing information on social media sites, the student needs to be aware that information may be public for anyone to see and can be traced back to them as an individual. There is no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. If you are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, ask your faculty member. Social media typically enables two-way communications with the audience therefore an individual has less control of how materials will be used by others. Social media may be used to investigate student behavior.

As a student in the MLS program, you may encounter confidential information within the classroom or clinical laboratory during rotations. It is the responsibility of the student to follow the following policy related to Social Media.

## **Social Media Policy**

All postings to social media platforms must comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), applicable facility policy, and state law. Do not share, post, or otherwise disseminate any information, including images, about a patient or information gained because of your presence in the clinical laboratory setting or as a result of a student-patient/client relationship.

Do not identify patients/clients by name or post or publish information that may lead to the identification of a patient/client. Examples include, but are not limited to date of care, facility name, diagnosis, and treatment/surgery. Limiting access to postings through privacy settings is not sufficient to ensure privacy.

During clinical rotations, any use of electronic devices (cell phones, laptops, etc.) must be with faculty approval within the guidelines of facility/program policies.

Do not take photos or videos of patients on personal devices, including cell phones.

Maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media. Online contact with patients/clients or former patients/clients blurs the distinction between a professional and personal relationship.

Student must have permission from the faculty to videotape or audio tape in the classroom.

Personal phone conversations or texting are NOT allowed at any time while in patient/client areas or in the classroom. If the student needs to respond to an emergency text or call during class, the student is asked to leave the classroom. Cell phones must be placed on mute and stowed away during the day.

## **Cell Phone Use**

Employees may not use privately owned cell phones while on duty in patient clinical areas or in the presence of patients. Personal cell phones cannot be used to photograph or text any protected health information (PHI). A PHI breach or HIPAA violation may result in immediate disciplinary action which may include dismissal from the program.

Laboratory employees may use personal cell phones on breaks, during lunch, or in personal emergencies. Personal cell phone use must occur outside the departmental testing areas and in "clean" areas of the laboratory.

### Consequences

Violations of patient/client privacy with a portable electronic device/use of social media platforms will be subject to HIPAA procedure/guidelines and consequences.

Students who violate HIPAA through the inappropriate use of social media platforms or portable electronic communication devices do so at the risk of disciplinary action that can be failure in a course and/or dismissal from the program.

### **Release of records**

The student will be asked to sign a statement giving Austin State Hospital permission to release information to future employers and allow the program to collect an evaluation of entry level performance from the employer. Signing the form is voluntary.

# **Withdrawal Policy**

If a student voluntarily withdraws from the Medical Laboratory Science program or is dismissed due to academic failure, he/she shall follow the employee termination process as outlined by the DSHS. This includes:

- a written declaration of resignation,
- return of ID badge and keys, and
- completion of applicable paperwork.

## **Pinning Ceremony and Class Speaker**

To celebrate the achievement of program completion a pinning ceremony will be held in your honor. You are welcome to invite guests to this event, which is being held on Friday of the second week of August. This will be on the lecture/clinical schedule.

The student with the highest grade point average for MLS course work will have the honor of being the class speaker. This will require a very short speech, 5-10 minutes long, to be presented as part of the ceremony.

The class speaker is encouraged to work with the class to develop a class presentation which gives an overview of your experiences as an ASH student throughout the year.

The speech and presentation must be approved by the program director one week before the ceremony.

#### **Program Closure**

NAACLS requires the MLS program to have a "teach out" plan in case the program unexpectedly closes due to natural or unnatural disasters or permanent closure by the hospital. Intentional closure of the MLS program will be communicated to all students immediately.

## **Prospective students:**

- In the case of permanent closure prospective students will be informed that the program will not take a new cohort due to program closure.
- Students will be counseled in applying to other local MLS programs.
- Program closure information will be posted on the ASH MLS website.

#### **Current students:**

- Students will be informed of program closure.
- In the case of a natural or unnatural disaster the program will offer alternative methods for achieving course goals or work with other state laboratories to continue education and training until training can resume at the hospital laboratory.
- In the event of a permanent closure current students will be allowed to complete MLS coursework.
- The Program Director will be designated to clear students applying for the certification exam.
- In case of disaster the Austin State Hospital will inform students of a plan for continuation of their education as soon as that information is available.

# **Textbook List – Updated July 2023**

Each student is required to purchase the following books. No exceptions. Students must purchase the textbooks or e-book prior to the first day of class and/or clinical assignment.

Course	Author, Title and Edition	Year	Publisher	ISBN	Price
Clinical Chemistry	Burtis, C. and Bruns, D, <i>Tietz</i>	2020	Elsevier	9780323530446	\$126.00
	Fundamentals of Clinical Chemistry and				
	<i>Molecular Diagnostics, 8</i> <sup>th</sup> edition.				
Hematology/Coagulation	McKenzie, S., Laboratory	2020	Pearson	9780134818108	\$29.99
	Hematology, 4 <sup>th</sup> edition.				
Hematology/Coagulation	Rodak, B, Clinical Hematology	2021	Elsevier	9780323711920	\$52.00
	Atlas, 6th edition.				
Urinalysis/Body Fluids	Strasinger S., Urinalysis and Body	2020	F. A.	9780803675827	\$78.95
	<i>Fluids,</i> 7 <sup>th</sup> edition.		Davis		
Immunology/Serology	Turgeon, M., Immunology and	2018	Elsevier	9780323431477	\$82.95
	Serology in Laboratory Medicine,				
	6 <sup>th</sup> edition.				
Immunohematology	Howard, P., Basic & Applied	2021	Elsevier	9780323697392	\$94.95
	Concepts of Blood Banking and				
	Transfusion Practices, 5th edition.				
Clinical Microbiology	Prokop, etc., Koneman's Color	2017	Wolters	9781451116595	\$133.99
	Atlas and Textbook of Diagnostic		Kluwer		
	Microbiology, 7 <sup>th</sup> edition.				
ALL	BOC Study Bundle- required	NA	NA	NA	\$89.40
	BOC Compendium - optional	2020	ASCP	978-0-89189-6616 978-0967043449	\$89.00
	Rec: Clinical Laboratory Review 6 <sup>th</sup>	2020	LSU		\$94.50
	- optional				

#### **Course Descriptions**

**MLS 080 INTRODUCTORY LECTURES**: Six days (9 hours) Presentations provide a brief overview of program policies, laboratory safety, laboratory information system, ethics, professionalism, and quality assurance. Introductory lectures provide an overview of Phlebotomy, Chemistry, Hematology, Microbiology, Serology and Immunohematology.

**MLS 980 CLINICAL CHEMISTRY LECTURE:** Fifteen weeks (114 hours) Introduces the principles and procedures of various tests performed in clinical chemistry. Presents the physiological basis for the test, the principle and procedures for the test, and the clinical significance of the test results, including quality control and reference ranges. Also includes basic chemical laboratory techniques, chemical laboratory safety, electrolytes and acid-base balance, proteins, carbohydrates, lipids, enzymes, metabolites, endocrine function, and toxicology.

**MLS 980L CLINICAL CHEMISTRY LABORATORY**: A thirteen-week (325 hours) rotation which covers practical aspects of clinical chemistry including manual and automated procedures. Emphasis is placed on the pre-analytical, analytical and post-analytical components of clinical chemistry. This includes principles and methodologies, performance of assays, problem-solving, trouble shooting, techniques, interpretation of clinical procedures and results, statistical approaches to data evaluation and principles of quality control and quality assurance. Students attend enrichment rotations at Dell Seton Medical Center and Clinical Pathology Laboratory for exposure to equipment and procedures not performed at ASH.

**MLS 880 CLINICAL MICROBIOLOGY LECTURE:** Eight weeks (60 hours) This course will introduce students to the microbial species that cause human disease. The course will cover pathogenic bacteria, fungi, viruses, and protozoa, and discuss current topics including antibiotic resistance, public health threats, and global health. Instruction will cover the theory, practical application, and pathogenesis of tests and organisms encountered in microbiology, including collection, quality control, quality assurance, safety, setup, identification, susceptibility testing, and reporting results.

**MLS 880L CLINICAL MICROBIOLOGY LABORATORY**: A twelve-week (300 hours) rotation which focuses on processing of clinical specimens submitted for microbiological evaluation which includes the pre-analytical, analytical and post-analytical aspects of testing. Includes isolation and identification methodologies for disease producing microorganisms, antimicrobial susceptibility testing, hospital environmental surveillance and infection control as well as clinical mycology and parasitology techniques.

**MLS 680 HEMATOLOGY AND COAGULATION LECTURE:** (82.5 hours) Lectures and discussions of theoretical and clinical applications of the hematologic and

coagulation disorders. Presents the foundation for the formation of blood cells, identification of normal and abnormal blood cells as they correlate to disease, and hematologic principles of diagnostic test procedures. Also included is the study of coagulation, the clotting and fibrinolytic mechanisms of the blood and principles of diagnostic test procedures. Emphasis is placed on the clinical significance of laboratory results obtained as they relate to diagnosing hematologic and coagulopathy blood diseases and disorders. Special emphasis is placed on case study presentations using audio-visual aids and the use of critical pathways and clinical decision making.

**MLS 680L HEMATOLOGY AND COAGULATION LABORATORY**: An 11-week rotation (275 hours) which focuses on the practical aspects of clinical hematology and coagulation with emphasis on principles, methodology, quality control, instrumentation, specimen procurement, problems, and clinical evaluation. Focus is placed on pre-analytical, analytical and post-analytical element of clinical hematology. This is accomplished by problem solving, trouble shooting, cognitive skills and interpretation of clinical results, and quality control. Outside rotations to Texas Department of State Health Services and Dell Seton Medical Center provide the student with additional experience in instrumentation and procedures such as bone marrow and hemoglobin electrophoresis.

**MLS 580 IMMUNOHEMATOLOGY LECTURE:** Five weeks (30 hours) Lecture topics to be covered include: donor screening; preparation of components; component therapy; antigens/antibodies of the ABO, Rh and other blood group systems; pre-transfusion testing procedures; compatibility testing; hemolytic disease of the fetus and newborn; neonatal and obstetrical transfusion practice; autoimmune hemolytic anemias; and adverse effects of transfusion.

**MLS 580L IMMUNOHEMATOLOGY LABORATORY**: A seven-week (175 hours) rotation on practical immunohematology with emphasis on pre-analytical, analytical, and post-analytical to include ABO typing, antibody detection and identification, compatibility testing, diagnosis and work up of hemolytic disease of the fetus and newborn, transfusion reactions and component therapy in the transfusion service. Case studies in all aspects of transfusion medicine included.

**MLS 480 IMMUNOLOGY/SEROLOGY LECTURE:** Three weeks (15 hours) Students will review the function of the innate and acquired immune systems. Students will conduct a comprehensive study of immunodeficiency disorders, autoimmune disorders and hypersensitivity reactions. Students will also become familiar with various serologic, immunological and molecular testing methodologies used in the clinical laboratory.

**MLS 480L IMMUNOLOGY/SEROLOGY LABORATORY:** A three-week (75 hours) rotation on practical Serology detailing pre-analytical, analytical, and post analytical to include principles, methodology, and interpretation of serologic assays. Emphasis on molecular, automated and manual techniques. Representative case studies will be presented utilizing critical pathways and clinical decision making.

**MLS 280 URINALYSIS AND BODY FLUIDS LECTURE:** A three-week (22.5 hours). An introduction to the study of urine and body fluid analysis. Includes renal anatomy, physiology and pathology, characteristic clinical and laboratory findings in common renal disease, and the role of dialysis and transplantation in renal failure. Representative case studies will be presented utilizing critical pathways and clinical decision making.

**MLS 280L URINALYSIS AND BODY FLUIDS LABORATORY**: A three-week (75 hours) rotation using pre-analytical, analytical, and post-analytical processing of urine and other body fluids submitted for evaluation. Emphasis is placed on specimen identification, processing of routine urinalysis, microscopic examinations, and special urine chemistries.

**MLS 081 LABORATORY MANAGEMENT**: Two weeks (15 hours) of lecture and case studies covering principles of management to include the principles and practice of quality assurance/ quality improvement as applied to the pre-analytical, analytical, and post-analytical components of laboratory science. Application of safety and governmental regulations and standards as applied to laboratory practices. Principles of interpersonal and interdisciplinary communication and team building skills. Education techniques and terminology, human resource management and financial management.

**MLS 090 SEMINAR**: Informal lecture/discussion designed to supplement the basic didactic lecture schedule with emphasis on critical pathways, clinical case studies, recent journal articles, principles of interpersonal and interdisciplinary communication and team building skills. Information concerning the eligibility, procedures and application information for the ASCP Board of Certification Exam

**Note**: Students from an affiliated University will receive 30 semester credit hours upon completion of the Medical Laboratory Scientist program.

# Appendix A. Program Officials and Faculty

	FACULTY INFORMATION		
Program Director	Terry Kotrla, MS, MLS(ASCP)BB- LAB MANAGEMENT		
Phone	512-560-5361		
Email	terry.kotrla@hhs.texas.gov		
Lab Manager	Carrie Dillon, BS, CLS (ASCP) – LAB MANAGEMENT		
Phone	512-419-2038		
Email	carried.dillon@hhs.texas.gov		
Instructor	Joe Garcia, BS, MT (ASCP) – CLINICAL CHEMISTRY & CHEM I		
Phone	512-419-2031		
Email	josel.garcia@hhs.texas.gov		
Instructor	Karla Wolfmueller, BS, MT(ASCP)- IMMUNOHEMATOLOGY		
Phone	512-419-2029		
Email	Karla.Wolfmueller@hhs.texas.gov		
Instructor	Maria Nuyda, MSHA, MLS(ASCP) <sup>cm</sup> – HEMATOLOGY and COAGULATION		
Phone	512-419-2608		
Email	Maria.nuyda@hhs.texas.gov		
Instructor	Lianzhi (Liz) Cao- CLINICAL CHEMISTRY and CHEM I		
Phone	512-419-2036		
Email	Lianzhi.cao1@hhs.texas.gov		
Instructor	Lauren Lee, MLS(ASCP) - MICROBIOLOGY		
Phone	512-419-2028		
Email	Lauren.lee@hhs.texas.gov		
Instructor	Lynn Six, BS, MLS (ASCP) – URINALYSIS, CLINICAL CHEMISTRY and		
	CHEM II		
Phone	CHEM II 512-419-2036		
	CHEM II		
Phone Email	CHEM II      512-419-2036      Lynnita.six@hhs.texas.gov		
Phone Email Instructor	CHEM II      512-419-2036      Lynnita.six@hhs.texas.gov      Tara Butler, AS, MLT(ASCP) - CLINICAL CHEMISTRY & CHEM II		
Phone Email Instructor Phone	CHEM II 512-419-2036 Lynnita.six@hhs.texas.gov Tara Butler, AS, MLT(ASCP) - CLINICAL CHEMISTRY & CHEM II 512-419-2036		
Phone Email Instructor	CHEM II 512-419-2036 Lynnita.six@hhs.texas.gov Tara Butler, AS, MLT(ASCP) – CLINICAL CHEMISTRY & CHEM II		
Phone Email Instructor Phone Email	CHEM II 512-419-2036 Lynnita.six@hhs.texas.gov Tara Butler, AS, MLT(ASCP) – CLINICAL CHEMISTRY & CHEM II 512-419-2036 Tara.butler@hhs.texas.gov		
Phone Email Instructor Phone Email Instructor	CHEM II 512-419-2036 Lynnita.six@hhs.texas.gov Tara Butler, AS, MLT(ASCP) – CLINICAL CHEMISTRY & CHEM II 512-419-2036 Tara.butler@hhs.texas.gov Tasha Kelly, MLT(ASCP) – IMMUNOLOGY/SEROLOGY		
Phone Email Instructor Phone Email	CHEM II 512-419-2036 Lynnita.six@hhs.texas.gov Tara Butler, AS, MLT(ASCP) – CLINICAL CHEMISTRY & CHEM II 512-419-2036 Tara.butler@hhs.texas.gov		

**IMPORTANT:** If you are unable to reach someone in your clinical department by 7:15 a.m., call 512-419-2041 and ask for a message to be relayed to your departmental supervisor.

## **Program Pathologist and Affiliate Contacts**

- 1. Susan Pacinda, M.D., ASH Consulting Pathologist
- 2. Silvia Ray, BS, MT (ASCP), Automation Coordinator
- 3. TBA, Training Coordinator, Laboratory Services Section DSHS
- 4. Wendy Sivilay, BS, MLS(ASCP)CM, Laboratory Manager, Dell Seton Medical Center
- 5. Lorraine Fernandez, QA and Education Coordinator, Clinical Pathology Laboratories
- 6. Jenna Stulberg, Laboratory Training Coordinator, We Are Blood
- 7. Nickie Williams University of Texas at Austin, Academic Advisor
- 8. Lauren Wyatt, MA, Academic counseling and Exploration, St. Edward's University

### **Appendix B. Signature Page**

#### Name (PRINT)

**Instructions:** After thorough review of the Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) Student Handbook please sign and date each of the following lines. After signing, upload the form into Canvas.

#### **Student Handbook Statement of Understanding**

I have read the MLS Student Handbook and have had an opportunity to have my questions answered. I agree to abide by the rules and policies as set forth.

Signed:

#### **Essential Functions**

I have read and understood the Essential Functions and believe, to the best of my ability, I can meet them with or without reasonable accommodations.

Signed:

Date:

#### **Confidentiality Statement**

As a student enrolled in the Austin State Hospital (ASH) MLS program, I am cognizant of my responsibilities to maintain the confidentiality of Austin State Hospital patients, research designs and protocols. I hold inviolate the confidence (trust) placed in me by patient and physician.

#### Signed:

Date:

Date:

#### **Release of Information**

I give ASH MLS Program consent to release or obtain information

- about my performance as a student in this program to future employers
- from my employer by having them complete an Employer Survey of your graduate entry level skills to be utilized for program improvement.
- to academic institutions for those students who are enrolled in a 3+1 degree.
- to certification agencies as requested to approve application to take the certification exam.

Signed:

#### Date:

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# Appendix C. Honor Code

#### Name (PRINT)

Any form of dishonesty is a serious offense in an academic setting. It is imperative that every student understands the standards of academic honesty because lack of awareness will not be excused for dishonest conduct.

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

- 1. **Cheating on examinations, practicals or tests.** Use of cheat sheets, copying exams, use of reference material while taking an exam and sharing information about exams or practicals with other students will not be tolerated.
- 2. Submission of work as one's own that has been prepared by another person.
- 3. Forgery or falsification of academic documents.
- 4. Knowledge of another student violating the Honor Code without reporting it to the Program Director or Lab Manager.

If a student has been found in violation of the Honor Code, it may be cause for dismissal as outlined in the MLS Program Student Handbook. Any disciplinary action due to Honor Code violations can be appealed to the Program Director in writing. The Program Director will reply within five working days.

My signature below acknowledges that I agree to abide to the provisions of the Austin State Hospital Program in Medical Laboratory Science Honor Code.

Signed:

Date: