

# UC Davis Health CLS Training Program- Frequently Asked Questions

Will UCDH offer an MLT to CLS bridge training program?

- No, UCDH Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine will continue to focus on traditional CLS generalist training for California licensing and National Certification.
- Bridge training may be reviewed by the department every three years or earlier if a need arises for additional CLS graduates via a bridge training route.

Does the UCDH CLS program allow CLS students to work outside of CLS training hours?

- No, the UC Davis Health CLS training program requires 40 hours of state mandated training time within a CLIA laboratory each week. Additionally, 20-30 hours outside of scheduled training time are required each week to complete assignments and to prepare for daily training. The UC Davis Health CLS training program is a 52-week, full-time training program. Training hours are Monday through Friday, 8am-4:30pm.
- UC Davis Health CLS training is competency based (not on the job training), and trainees are held to a robust training standard with high training expectations.
- The UC Davis Health CLS Training Program does not encourage CLS trainees to work while in training. **UC Davis Health does not allow CLS trainees to be UC Davis Health employees.** If work is necessary, students must work outside of established training hours with an external organization. Any accepted CLS student who is working outside of training is required to sign an additional statement of expectations that program performance will be maintained within 20% of their peer group.

Who should apply?

- Each successful applicant must demonstrate a strong interest in Clinical Laboratory Sciences. The applicant must also understand the role of a clinical laboratory scientist and must meet both the California State (CDPH) CLS training license requirements and UCDH program requirements.
  - The state requirements include a posted degree which includes minimum coursework requirements. Please see the CDPH licensing website.
    - <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/osphld/lfs/pages/cls-trainee.aspx>
  - UCDH continues to require an **Analytical Chemistry or Quantitative Analysis Course**. The state issued CLS training license will now accept clinical chemistry to meet both the biochemistry and the analytical requirement. UCDH is not in alignment with the state and ***only applications with an analytical or quantitative analysis course will be considered for training with UCDH.***
- Local applicants meet the training mission and vision to support CLS needs within the immediate community. Applicants with work/career experience in the Greater Sacramento area or affiliate training sites located in Placerville and Modesto are **preferentially selected**.

What are the course prerequisites/ requirements to apply?

- The applicant must have a B.A. or B.S. science degree
- The applicant must be qualified to be issued a CLS training license by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Laboratory Field Services prior to the start of training.
  - The CLS training license requires 16 semester hours of chemistry and 16 semester hours in biological science. Minimum coursework requirements must include Analytical Chemistry (UCDH requires Analytical Chemistry- UCDH does not accept a clinical chemistry course to meet both biochemistry and analytical chemistry), Immunology, Biochemistry, Medical Microbiology/Pathogenic Bacteriology, Hematology and a college math, statistics or physics course.
  - Degree and required courses must be completed at least 3 months prior to the anticipated training start, to ensure both grades and degree are posted to official transcripts.

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- Prior to training start the CA issued CLS training license must be in place. CDPH currently accepts electronic transcripts, which expedites the issuance of the training license. Please plan your application, degree, and completion of required courses accordingly.
  - UCDH continues to require an analytical chemistry or quantitative analysis course. Students completing Chem **2ABC at UCD** or **Chem 31 at CSUS** have met the analytical chemistry requirement.
  - UCDH requires Medical Microbiology, Immunology, Hematology, to have B- grades or better.
  - UCDH requires Medical Microbiology, Immunology, Hematology, and Biochemistry to be completed 5 years or more recent to first time application.
  - UCDH requires Analytical Chemistry to be completed 7 years or more recent to first time application.
- The applicant must have practical laboratory instruction in medical microbiology, hematology, and analytical chemistry. Online coursework without a hands-on laboratory (no virtual labs are accepted) are not preferred.

What are the CLS Training Program specific requirements?

- Local applicants are preferred, currently working/living within a 45-minute commute to a CLS training site.
- UCDH requires a GPA of 3.0 or greater in both the sciences and overall GPA. The program will not accept any applications with a GPA listed as < 3.0, all self-reported GPA scores are verified through official transcripts for each applicant advancing to interview.
- UCDH requires an Analytical or Quantitative Analysis course.

My GPA is lower than the program requirement; however, I can explain my GPA. I also have lab experience and a strong desire to be a CLS. May I still apply and be considered for your CLS Program?

- No, UCDH training is competitive and receives numerous qualified applications. UCDH will not accept nor consider any application with a GPA less than 3.0 in both the sciences and in overall GPA. Lower GPAs do not have sufficient points to yield a high enough paper application score to advance to interview.

I have an advanced degree (Ph.D. or M.D.). Does this benefit my application when applying to the CLS training program?

- The CLS training program is a post-baccalaureate 12-month NAACLS accredited and CA state approved CLS certificate program. This training opportunity does not require a master's degree, Ph.D., or M.D. There is no benefit afforded to applicants who have earned additional advanced degrees.
- Program metrics demonstrate that recent coursework is a benefit to all accepted trainees. For potential applicants who have completed didactic required coursework in biology more than 5 years ago, these courses must be retaken to meet the course recency requirement.
- Program metrics also note that hands on laboratory instruction in hematology, medical microbiology, and analytical chemistry prepare the prospective CLS trainee for CLS Training. Hands-on laboratory experience in hematology, medical microbiology, and analytical chemistry is **strongly preferred**.

Is financial aid available?

- No, the UCDH CLS training program is fully supported by the UC Davis Medical Center. This training is not tuition based, making financial aid unavailable.

What training costs must be covered by the CLS student?

- UCDH does not have an application fee or tuition requirement.
- UCDH provides all required textbooks and ASCP preparatory books to the accepted CLS students.
- UCDH CLS students pay for any required vaccines, volunteer services processing (\$25), living costs and parking at the main hospital.

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Are international students eligible for training?

- The UCDH CLS training program does not accept students with temporary visas. Applicants must have legal residency and be able to remain in the US throughout the training year.

I plan on taking a couple of the state required courses to meet the minimum coursework requirements for the state issued training license. May I apply to the training program while this coursework is in progress?

- Yes, coursework may be in progress at the time of application. Please mark the appropriate box on the application so the selection committee may more accurately evaluate your readiness to begin training. All the coursework required must be completed three months prior to training start. This will allow time for the state to review official transcripts and issue the required training license prior to program start. All applicants invited to train must be issued a state CLS training license before any training may begin.
- UCD students graduating in June may not apply to the July CLS training start as the UCD registrar's office will not post the degree in time to allow for CDPH to issue the required CLS training license. Please hold your application for the winter/February training start.

Who should write a letter of recommendation?

- CLS training is competitive, the letters of recommendation (LOR) are carefully evaluated by the selection committee to ascertain if an applicant has the knowledge and ability to succeed in a rigorous science-based training program. The LOR should be written by an employer or a professor who understands your abilities and strengths. Recommenders who can attest to the applicant's laboratory skills and science abilities are preferred.
  - UCDH CLS training is unique in that training is not on the job training, but competency based.
  - Competency based training is more rigorous and structured than on the job training.
- Preference is placed heavily on recent letters of recommendation. Recommendations submitted detailing an experience more than five years from first time application fail to assist the selection committee in the applicant's current abilities. Recent letters of recommendation tend to score higher as they reflect an applicant's current abilities.
- No personal letters of recommendation are accepted.

I was not selected for an interview or invited to participate in training. How can I strengthen my application?

- Applicants who wish to re-apply after not being accepted into a cycle must email their desire to reapply to the Program Director.
- All re-applicants must request one NEW letter of recommendation to be submitted on their behalf AND update any application elements which may strengthen the application, such as employment history.
- A previous application may be strengthened by gaining laboratory experience (if applicant previously had no lab experience), improving the personal statement, and/or completing any remaining required coursework with outstanding grades.

Is Laboratory experience required? How can I gain laboratory experience?

- Previous laboratory experience is not required. CLS training is competitive and applicants with laboratory experience (either research, industry, clinical, or in a college media kitchen) are beneficial. Previous laboratory experience strengthens laboratory skills and may also provide meaningful exposure to the role of a CLS professional.
- Applicants may gain laboratory experience through working in a college laboratory, research laboratory, or by volunteering or working in a clinical laboratory.

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- A phlebotomy certificate does not strengthen the CLS application as phlebotomy training is included in CLS training. A phlebotomy certificate only enhances the CLS application if the phlebotomist is working in a lab environment and performing laboratory duties beyond venipuncture.

How do I apply to the program?

- The on-line application and all required application forms and instructions may be accessed through the UCDH CLS training program website.

What is the Program admission rate?

- Program admission is typically 3-10% depending on the cycle and qualified applications received.
- It is expected that 4 students will be accepted into the CLS summer (July) training cycle and 2-4 students will be accepted into the CLS winter (February) training program each year. The rate of acceptance is approximately 3-5% of all qualified applicants. The program currently preferentially selects applicants with employment/career ties in the greater Sacramento area or to our clinical training affiliate sites located in Placerville, CA and Modesto CA.

What is the application deadline?

- The application deadline for the summer class (July training start) is January 1st and the deadline for the winter (February start) class is September 1st. No late applications are accepted for any reason.

When does training start?

- UCDH CLS training has two starting dates. The winter class starts early February, and the summer class starts late July.
- The CLS Training Program is a 52-week continuous full time training program. Training is held Monday-Friday, 8am – 4:30 pm. All UCDH holidays are observed.

What is the cost of the program?

- The UCDH CLS Training Program is a small hospital-based training program which is fully supported by the UCD Medical Center and does not charge tuition. All required training materials are provided to each accepted student.
- Students must pay for parking, required vaccines, personal health insurance, living costs and transportation.

What are my chances of gaining admission to the program?

- The acceptance rate varies depending upon the application cycle but is typically between 3-10%.
- CLS training is highly competitive, and the selected applicants have typically surpassed the minimum program requirements.
- Accepted applicants typically have laboratory experience with excellent communication skills. Successful CLS applicants are motivated and dedicated to this training opportunity as expressed through the statement of interest.

Is the UC Davis Health CLS training program NAACLS accredited?

- Yes, the UCDH CLS training program is both approved by the California Department of Public Health- Laboratory Field Services (CDPH-LFS) and National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS). CLS students completing training with UC Davis Health will sit for the ASCP Board of Certification, Medical Laboratory Scientist (MLS) exam the day after training completion via ASCP route 1 (NAACLS accredited training program).

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- All UC Davis Health students are prepared to sit for the National MLS certifying exam immediately after training completion. After Passing the ASCP MLS exam- program graduates are immediately nationally certified. An additional step is required to apply for and receive the state issued CLS license. Since 2007 CDPH no longer requires an independent state licensing exam, CDPH currently accepts the passing ASCP entry level competency MLS exam for state CLS licensing.